



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

Self-initiated expatriates' cross-cultural training and adjustment: A closer look at Norwegian engineers.

What kind of cross cultural training does self-initiated expatriate engineers in Norway receive and does this affect their cross cultural adjustment? Are the theories related to company expatriates applicable?

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This Master's Thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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Executive Summary

Today many people move on their own initiative to foreign countries to work as a result of increased globalization and human mobility. At arrival in the new culture the self-initiated expatriate m meet a culture that might be different from what they are used too. Cross-cultural training can provide the expatriates with tools and information that can enable the self-initiated expatriates to more easily adjust.

This thesis aims to gain more knowledge on what kind of cross-cultural training self-initiated expatriate engineers get in Norway. Also we want to find out if this cross-cultural training has any effect on the self-initiated engineers' cross-cultural adjustment. The theoretical foundation is based on past research which has been done on company expatriates since the 1960s.

In-depth interviews of self-initiated expatriate engineers were conducted to gain more information on the self-initiated expatriates and their cross-cultural training and adjustment. The interview sample consisted of eight self-initiated expatriates who worked as engineers in two international oil and gas companies in Kristiansand: National Oil Well and Aker Solutions. The self-initiated expatriates originated from Sweden, India Syria, Poland Portugal and Iran.

Through the study we found that the self-initiated expatriates received interaction training, language training, didactic training and experimental training. This was both provided by the company and the expatriates themselves. We also found that the cross-cultural training did not have a big effect on the self-initiated expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. But some of the expatriates said that cross-cultural adjustment could enable the expatriates to become cross-cultural adjusted a little faster. At the end we identified were the theory did not correspond with our findings.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give a short presentation of the background, problem formulation, and structure of this thesis.

1.1 Background

As a result of the increased globalization of the world and human mobility, more and more people travel abroad to work as expatriates in foreign countries. They might either be corporate expatriates, sent by their employer in their home country to work in a subsidiary, or they might be self-initiated expatriates, who on their own initiative have searched and found work abroad (Froese, 2012). While they are abroad these expatriates meet with cultures and environments that are different from their own home culture. The expatriates might encounter norms, values, customs and behaviours that are totally different from what they are used to and might not understand. Previous research indicates that cross-cultural training can help expatriates with the adjustment to new cultures and environment by giving them insight into the culture and an understanding of their new surroundings (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991).

In my master thesis I wanted to study a topic that I believe is important and interesting. As my specialisation was “international management and strategy” it was natural to choose a topic which focused on the adjustment of the international expatriate. These expatriates are becoming a big part of the Norwegian work environment. It would therefore be interesting to gain more knowledge about them.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Cross-cultural training and adjustment are subjects that have been extensively researched since the 1960s and the 1970s (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, & Riedel, 2006). However, research on expatriation and expatriates have mainly focused on corporate expatriates who are sent abroad by companies (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). Only since the late 1990s have the self-initiated expatriates gained some attention and still the literature regarding self-initiated expatriates are limited (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013b; Froese, 2012). There is therefore still a lot to uncover regarding self-initiated expatriates. By gaining more insight into the self-initiated expatriate companies who employ some or many self-initiated expatriates may acquire better adjusted and efficient workers (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

Because there still is so much to uncover about the self-initiated expatriate this thesis intends to explore the self-initiated expatriate's cross-cultural training and their cross-cultural adjustment. More specifically, it intends to find out what kind of cross-cultural training self-initiated expatriate engineers in Norway get and how their cross-cultural adjustment is. The research question is as follows:

What kind of cross cultural training does self-initiated expatriate engineers in Norway receive and does this affect their cross cultural adjustment? Are the theories related to company expatriates applicable?

To approach this research question we will first present the self-initiated expatriate. Then we will take a look at the theories and terminology related to cross-cultural training and adjustment that previous researchers have come up with, based on studies that have done on company expatriates. For instance, cross-cultural training can be given both before and after the arrival in a host country and it may take many different forms (Littrell et al., 2006; Wang & Tran, 2012). Additionally, cross-cultural adjustment consists of different aspects that are effected by many different antecedents, that also may moderate the relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Littrell et al., 2006).

To increase the knowledge on this topic interviews with self-initiated expatriate engineers were conducted. Their answers on the issues were later analysed based on the theory collected.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In the beginning of the thesis is chapter 1 which is the introduction. Here the background, the focus and research question of the thesis is introduced.

Chapter 2 presents relevant theory and terminology that are appropriate to answer the research question. At the end of this chapter the conceptual framework of the theoretical relationship that is going to be researched is drawn up.

In chapter 3 the choice of research design, sample, collection method and analysis approach are identified and explained.

Chapter 4 presents the relevant and interesting finding from the interviews with the self-initiated engineers.

In chapter 5 the findings are discussed based on previous research and the theory presented in chapter 2

Lastly, in chapter 6 we summarize the findings and discussion and come with a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the different theories and terminology the study is based on. More specifically, the expatriate is presented and theories about cross-cultural adjustment and cross-cultural training are introduced.

2.1 The expatriate

Generally an expatriate is anyone who is temporarily living and working in a foreign country (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013a). We can differentiate between two different main groups of expatriates: company expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. Company expatriates are expatriates sent by a company in their home country to work in a foreign subsidiary. Self-initiated expatriates have on their own initiative searched and found work abroad (Froese, 2012). The company expatriate have had most of the attention from the researchers in the past five decades (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell et al., 2006). But finally the self-initiated expatriates are starting to get some more well deserved attention (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). In fact, recent studies, which have differentiated between self-initiated and company expatriates, have shown that about 30 to 70 percent of expatriates are self-initiated (Froese, 2012).

This thesis is mainly focusing on the self-initiated expatriate, but since the theories we are using in this study are derived from the research based on the company expatriate it is relevant to also explain who the company expatriate is in comparison to the self-initiated expatriate. In the case of company expatriate the company initiate the expatriation due to a need they have in one of their subsidiaries. These expatriates therefore have a job in the host country before they leave their home country. The company usually gives the expatriates pre-departure language and cultural training, and compensation packages. These packages might include rental supplements, education for their children and so on (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Further, the time perspective of the company expatriate is most often restricted and controlled by organisational needs (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). It usually lasts between 3 months to about 5 years (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

The self-initiated expatriates have arranged the expatriation by themselves. Sometimes they have secured a job in the host country before arriving. Other times they find a job after they

have entered the country. In either case, their expatriation is funded with their own money as they are not financially backed by any company (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). The self-initiated group consist of a heterogeneous population. They are employed in all organisational levels and they vary from low skilled to highly skilled (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2012). According to Doherty et al. (2011), self-initiated expatriate’s main motivators to expatriate are the desire for adventure and gaining international experience. In contrast, company expatriate main motivators are career development and career opportunities. This does not mean that career is not important for the self-initiated expatriate, but it is not one of the main drivers to the expatriation (Doherty et al., 2011). Another difference from the company expatriate is the length of time the self-initiated stay in the host country. The self-initiated expatriate decide for themselves when they want to go home to their country. This means that if they feel like it, they can stay longer than if they were company expatriates (Doherty et al., 2011).

	<i>Self-initiated expatriate</i>	<i>Company expatriates</i>
Initiation	Self	Company
Pre-departure preparation, training, etc.	Self	Company
Time-perspective	No limit	Limited
Job secured prior to expatriation	Yes or No	Yes
Compensation package	No	Yes
Support in non-work issues	No	Yes

Table 1: Overview of differences between self-initiated expatriates and company expatriates

(Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010)

According to Doherty et al. (2013a) has the concept “self-initiated expatriate” not yet a clear and absolute definition. This is among other things because the concept is relatively new; because there are so many different variations of international mobile individuals, and since the boundaries between concepts have started to become blurred as we get more knowledge about expatriates. One example of blurred boundaries between concepts is one subgroup of both self-initiated and company expatriation called “global self-initiated corporate expatriate”. This type of expatriates find work in a foreign subsidiary on their own initiative within the same company they work at in their home country (Doherty et al., 2013a). Another blurry boundary is between expatriates and immigrants. The difference between these two groups is

related to permanence. Immigrants are living in a foreign country permanently, while expatriates are assumed to be in a foreign country only temporarily. The temporary nature of a self-initiated expatriate may change over time and become permanent, maybe even without knowing about it. It can therefore be difficult to know if a person is an immigrant or an expatriate at a given point-in-time (Doherty et al., 2013a).

Another example of change of status that causes a small problem in definition is when a company expatriate terminates his contract with the company he initially expatriated through but at the same time stays in the host country on his own initiative. According to Doherty et al. (2013a) are some scholars arguing that this expatriate would become a self-initiated expatriate because he stays in the country on his own term. However, Doherty et al. (2013a) propose that this expatriate would fall outside both the concept of company expatriate and self-initiated expatriate. They base this argument on the essential components of self-initiated expatriation; relocation across a national border and individual term. Despite the fact that the expatriate stayed in the foreign country on his own term, he has not gone across a national border when he stopped being a company expatriate. Therefore, Doherty et al. (2013a) are not viewing this kind of expatriate as neither company expatriate or self-initiated expatriate. In this thesis we will view expatriates who have stopped being a company expatriate and continued to work and live in the host country as a self-initiated expatriate.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Caligiuri (2000, p. 52) defines cross-cultural adjustment as “the extent to which individuals are psychologically comfortable living outside of their home country”. In other words, an expatriate is well adjusted when he is psychologically balanced which enables him to function effectively in the host country (Aycan, 1997). Expatriates who are able to adjust to their new host country might experience less stress and increased effectiveness while they are abroad (Aycan, 1997). Cross-cultural adjustment was by early researchers first viewed as a unitary construct, but was later found to be multifaceted (Black & Gregersen, 1991). According to Black and Gregersen (1991) there are at least three aspects to cross-cultural adjustment. These are; 1) work adjustment, 2) interaction adjustment with host nationals, and 3) general adjustment to the non-work environment.

- *Work adjustment* refers to the way expatriates adjust their behaviour to fit into their new workplace. A well work-adjusted expatriate may be more positive toward the

work role, work more efficiently and have a better performance level at work (Aycan, 1997; Froese, 2012).

- *Interaction adjustment with host nationals* involves the expatriate's ability to interact socially and engage in positive relationships with people from the host country (Aycan, 1997; Wang & Tran, 2012).
- *General adjustment to the non-work environment* refers to how the expatriates handle living in the host country. This includes among other things daily life issues and life conditions in the host country (Froese, 2012; Wang & Tran, 2012; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005).

2.2.1 Antecedents of Cross-Cultural Adjustment

According to Black and Gregersen (1991) and Waxin and Panaccio (2005) there are three categories of variables that affect the expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. These categories are; individual, contextual and organisational antecedents.

2.2.1.1 Individual Antecedents

The individual variables consist of the expatriate's individual ability to adjust as well as previous international work experience (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). Black et al. (1991) identified three individual skill dimensions which affect an individual's effectiveness and adjustment in a cross-cultural setting. The first one is "the self-dimension, which encompasses skills that enable the expatriate to maintain health, psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and effective stress management" (Black et al., 1991, p. 294). The relationship dimension is the second dimension. It includes the range of skills that are needed to develop relations and relationships with the host country nationals. The third and last dimension is the perception dimension which is a cognitive ability to perceive and evaluate the host environment and people in the right way (Black et al., 1991). If one has these abilities and skills the expatriate is more likely to easily adjust in the host country.

Further, before the expatriates arrives in the current host country the expatriates may have gained prior international work experience from other countries. This experience from when they had to adjust in the past can help the expatriates to know what to expect when they enter new country and culture. This in turn can help the expatriate better adjust by reducing uncertainty (Black & Gregersen, 1991). This positive relationship between prior international work experience and cross-cultural adjustment has been empirically supported. However,

research shows that work adjustment has stronger positive relationships with prior international work experience compared to interaction and general adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black et al., 1991).

2.2.1.2 Contextual Antecedents

The contextual antecedent consists of among other things length of time, novelty of the culture and spousal support (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). First, length of time is an important variable when it comes to adjustment. Expatriates do not culturally adjust at once when they arrive in a host country. Adjustment takes time. However, how much time it takes and if the adjustment time is different for different individuals is there no exact consensus on (Black & Gregersen, 1991). According to the u-curve theory of adjustment expatriates go through a four stage adjustment process when entering a foreign country. At first when they arrive in the foreign country they go through a honeymoon stage. At this stage the expatriates are fascinated by the new culture and environment they are in. After some time the expatriates go into the culture shock stage. At this stage the expatriate starts to question the foreign culture and the real daily living conditions. This causes the expatriate to experience frustration and hostility towards the new culture and environment. At one point they will go into the adjustment stage, where they start to gradually culturally adapt to the different aspects of the foreign culture. They start to get an understanding of the foreign culture's norms and values, and can use this understanding to start acting more appropriately. When they are more or less completely adjusted to the new culture they enter the last stage,

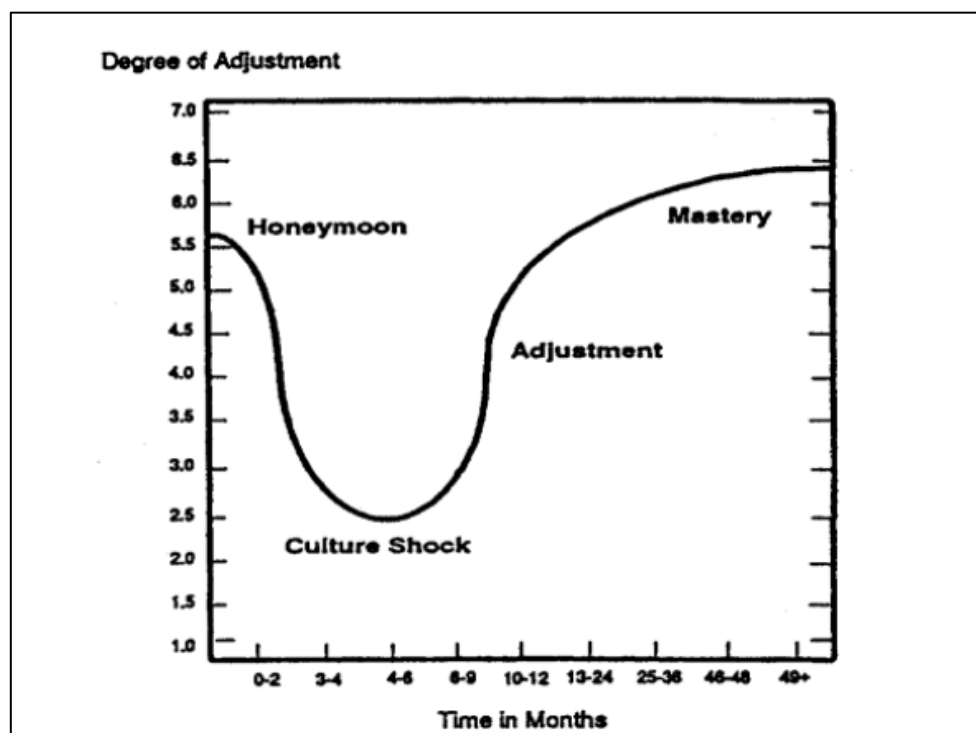


Figure 1: The U-curve theory of adjustment

(Lee, 2005)

the mastery stage. Here the expatriates can function effectively in the foreign culture with out too much problem (Lee, 2005; Littrell et al., 2006). To get to this point the expatriates use some time. However some might use shorter time on this process while others might use longer time.

A second contextual antecedent is the novelty of the culture, also referred to as cultural toughness or cultural distance. According to research, the more different and distant a foreign culture is in comparison to the expatriate's culture at home, the tougher it is to adjust (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black et al., 1991). This is due to the fact that more culturally distant expatriates might experience more uncertainty because the foreign country's norms, values, customs and behaviour might be harder to understand (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Hofstede created a concept of four dimensions which different national cultures were ranked against. These four dimensions were: power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity. These dimensions are today used in research to among other things look at differences in country cultures and the distance between them (Hofstede, N.D.). For instance, we can use these dimensions to see that expatriates from Japan might have more difficulty with adjusting to living and working in Norway compared to British expatriates.

Sometimes an expatriate does not expatriate to a foreign country alone but brings his or her spouse and family. Many failed corporate expatriation assignments have failed because the spouse and family have not managed to adjust. These family adjustment situations may affect the expatriates' general adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black et al., 1991).

2.2.1.3 Organisational Antecedents

According to Waxin and Panaccio (2005, p. 52) , do “organizational antecedents include job-related variables (such as role clarity and role discretion), variables related to the organizational social support (such as supervisory, co-workers, and home-country organization support), organizational culture dissimilarity between the home-country organization and the host-country organization, and finally, cross-cultural preparation”. Organisational dissimilarity between home and host country organisation, and home-country organization support will not be relevant in this thesis because the self-initiated expatriated does not have a home country organisation. Cross-cultural preparation, or in other words cross-cultural training, will be presented in section 2.3 as this is one of the main topics of this thesis.

However, the two job-related variables job role clarity and role discretion are according to Black and Gregersen (1991) two very important variables that affect work adjustment because they can reduce the expatriates uncertainty in the workplace. “Role discretion is important because it allows individuals to adapt their work role and setting to themselves rather than adapting themselves to the situation” (Black & Gregersen, 1991, p. 501). With role discretion the expatriates can use work behaviour that they are used to using before they came to the foreign country. The opportunity to use past behaviour can decrease the uncertainty at work (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Work role clarity will also reduce the uncertainty at work. By having a clear job role and a clear set of responsibilities the expatriates can know better what is expected of them at work (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

2.3 Cross-Cultural Training

The purpose with cross-cultural training from a multinational corporations (MNC) perspective is to increase expatriates probability of successful expatriate assignments by giving them tools and information that may help them to more rapidly adjust to the new host country (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell et al., 2006). It is probably safe to assume that the self-initiated expatriates also want to have a successful stay when they are in the host country. Their definition of success might on the other hand be different from MNC’s definition. According to Littrell et al. (2006, p. 368) “should [cross-cultural training] provide expatriates with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for cross-cultural adjustment, effective business performance and cross-cultural interactions”.

2.3.1 Pre-Departure and Post-Departure Training

An expatriate can undertake both pre-departure training and post-departure training. Pre-departure training is training which takes place before the expatriates leave the home country (Wang & Tran, 2012). For corporate expatriates pre-departure training is primarily training that aims at developing cultural awareness, appropriate cultural behaviour, a positive attitude and realistic expectations towards the new host culture (Littrell et al., 2006; Wang & Tran, 2012). This is done by presenting the expatriate with general and essential information about local conditions and differences in the norms and values (Wang & Tran, 2012). After arrival, expatriates may take additional post-departure training. Post departure training which is provided by MNC, provide the corporate expatriates with essential resources to enable the expatriates to deal with problems and real-time issues connected with cross-cultural adjustment (Littrell et al., 2006; Wang & Tran, 2012). These resources can among other things come in the form of social support and mentoring systems (Wang & Tran, 2012).

2.3.2 Gertsen's Typology of Cross-Cultural Training Methods

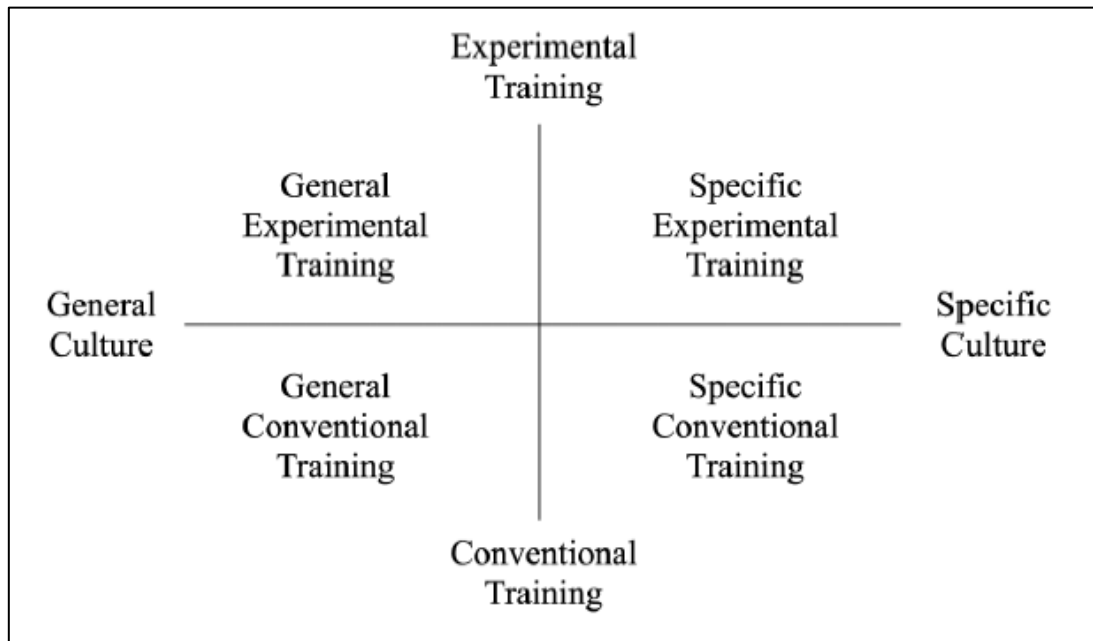


Figure 2: Gertsen's typology of cross-cultural training methods

(Waxin & Panaccio, 2005)

According to Waxin and Panaccio (2005) did Gertsen put forward a typology of cross-cultural training methods which consisted of four categories. These categorize are made up of two kinds of training and two types of orientations. The two types of training Gertsen identified were: “conventional training, where the information is transmitted through an unidirectional communication ..., and experimental training, where the trainer gets the trainees to participate by simulating real life situations” (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005, p. 53). The two orientations identified were specific culture and general culture. Either the training will focus on a general understanding of culture or it will focus on one specific culture. When combining the two kinds of training and the two orientations four types of training are created. These are general experimental training; specific experimental training; general conventional training; and specific conventional training (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). Figure 2 shows an illustration of this.

2.3.3 Cross-Cultural Training Delivery Mechanisms

The choice of cross-cultural training method depends on three variables: 1) the cultural distance between home and host culture 2) the level of integration with the host country’s people and environment and 3) expected length of the expatriation (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). In Littrell et al. (2006) analysis of 25 years of cross-cultural training reaserch, seven

different types of cross-cultural training delivery mechanisms are identified. These are: attribution, cultural awareness, interaction, language, didactic, and experimental.

With attribution training expatriates get an understanding of host country behaviour. They learn how host national would explain host national behaviour by learning to make behavioural attributions like host nationals would. This way they enable the expatriates to interpret behaviour the same way as one would do in the host country (Littrell et al., 2006).

Cultural awareness training aims to teach expatriates to appreciate cultural differences by giving them deeper insight into their own culture. They think expatriates whom have a better understanding of their own culture will be more will be more effective in the foreign country (Littrell et al., 2006).

With interaction training the expatriate learn about business practices and general life in the host country from other expatriates who have the same position in the company. It is done by having an overlapping period where the already settled expatriate teaches the new expatriate how to do the work and at the same time share information he has gathered during his time in the host country. This form of training is also known as on-the-job training (Littrell et al., 2006).

Language training teaches the expatriates the host country's language. This type of training is in its essence a form of didactic training in most cases. However, because of its importance with regards to enabling cross-cultural adjustment it is considered to be its own category. By learning a little bit of the host language the expatriate will be able to carry small conversations with locals and at the same time show interest in the country's culture. Learning the host language will also help the expatriate at work by enabling him to read work-documents that is written in the host language (Littrell et al., 2006).

Didactic training involves different factual information-giving activities. These activities help the expatriate develop cognitive skills with regards to understanding the host culture and they may give the expatriate a framework which he can use to evaluate new situations that may arise in the host country. These information-giving activities give the expatriates information about work and living conditions in the host country and cultural differences. More specifically, these activities may provide information ranging from small things like travel arrangements, shopping and dress codes and so on to bigger themes like geography, history, politics, climate and religion. The most used didactic training methods are informal briefings,

<i>Approach to training</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Attribution	Enabling the expatriate to make isomorphic attributions	
Cultural awareness	Understanding own culture to appreciate cultural differences	T-group
Interaction	On-the-job training	Overlaps
Language	Facilitating intercultural adjustment	
Didactic	Providing expatriate with factual information	Informal briefings, traditional formal training activities, and cultural assimilators
Experiential	Learning how to learn	Look-see visits, role plays, intercultural workshops, and simulators

Table 2: Summary of Cross-Cultural Training Delivery Mechanisms

(Littrell et al., 2006)

traditional formal training activities and cultural assimilators. Informal briefings may be given through casual conversations, structured information sessions (with host nationals, former expatriates or experts) or through information booklets with information about the host country. Traditional formal training is normally provided through classroom-based lectures. With cultural assimilator the expatriate is trained to react to realistic cross-cultural situations by getting presented cross-cultural scenarios, alternatives and an expert's point of view (Littrell et al., 2006).

With experimental training the aim is to develop the expatriate's skills to interact and work with host nationals. This is done by using different learning by doing techniques. Some of these techniques are role-plays, look-see visits, intercultural simulations and workshops (Littrell et al., 2006).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Cross-cultural training does according to theory, provide the expatriate with information and tools to adjust to the host culture and environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell et al., 2006). However, Littrell et al. (2006) states that this relationship is also affected by the antecedents of cross-cultural adjustment, among other things. These antecedents of cross-cultural adjustment may act as moderators between cross-cultural training and cross-cultural adjustment. The presents of these, or lack thereof, may affect the need or effect of cross-cultural training on cross-cultural adjustment.

First, according to Littrell et al. (2006) the company antecedents affect if cross-cultural training is effective. For instance, the presence of high job discretion decreases the need for cross-cultural training. While with a low level of job clarity expatriates will need more training to adjust effectively to the culture. When companies have other social support systems available cross-cultural training becomes more effective.

The individual antecedents are also a very important moderator. Littrell et al. (2006) state that some individuals have certain personality and skills traits (for instance flexibility, adaptability, tolerance and ambiguity) that make it easier to adjust. Previous international experience may also decrease the need for training (Littrell et al., 2006).

Last the contextual antecedents do also moderate the relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment. The spouses and family's adjustment and satisfaction can indirectly affect the success of the cross-cultural training as they are a very important factor in the expatriates adjustment. Further, the bigger the cultural difference the more cross-cultural training is needed (Littrell et al., 2006).

Based on the theory presented above and information provided by Littrell et al. (2006) about moderators between cross-cultural training and adjustment we drew up the framework presented on the next page.

This framework below and the theory presented above are based on previous research conducted on company expatriates. Will the theory about cross-cultural training and adjustment apply also for self-initiated expatriates? In addition to this question we will in the findings and discussion chapter see and discuss what cultural training the self-initiated expatriates get in Norway. Further, we will evaluate if the presence of cross-cultural training,

or lack thereof, does effect the self-initiated expatriates' adjustment and if some of the moderators can give some insight into the relationship between them.

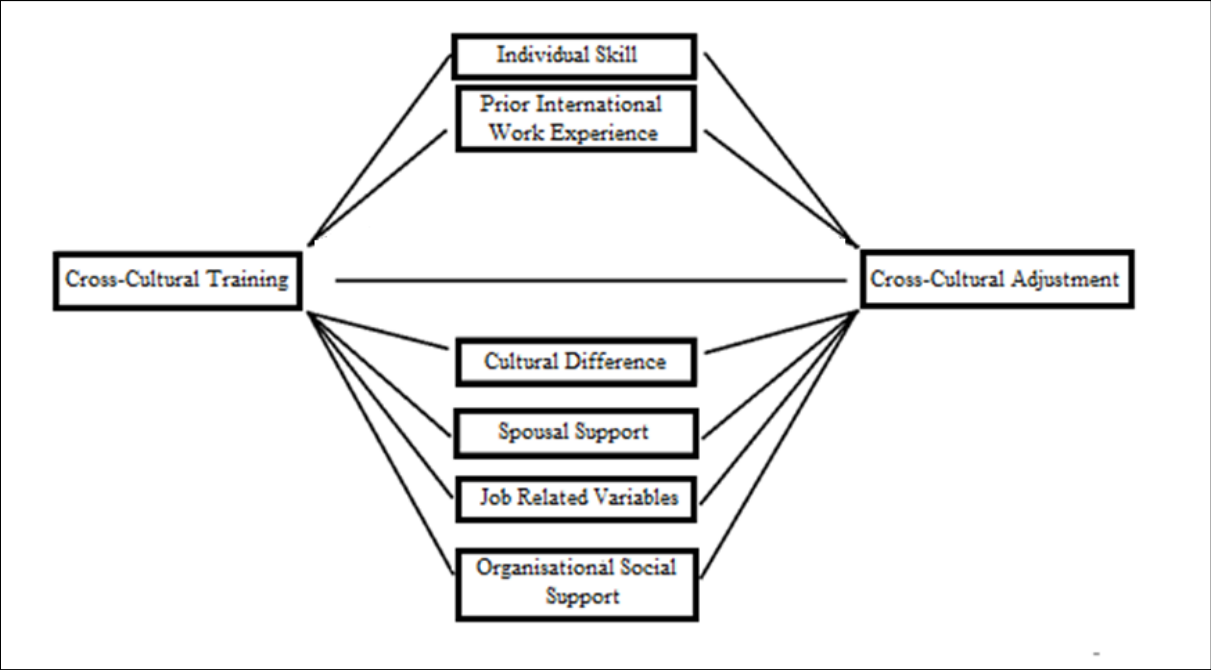


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework: Cross-cultural Training and Adjustment with Moderators (Littrell et al., 2006)

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

In this chapter the research approach used in this thesis will be presented. Choice of research design, sample, collection method and analysis approach will be explained.

3.1 Problem definition

It is important to have a clear research question to avoid getting the research process misdirected. A well-defined research question can avoid this by giving the research a set of research objectives (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010). In the introduction, we presented that this thesis aim was to get a deeper look into self-initiated expatriates' cross-cultural training and adjustment. Based on this, the following research question was defined:

What kind of cross cultural training does self-initiated expatriate engineers in Norway receive and does this affect their cross cultural adjustment? Are the theories related to company expatriates applicable?

3.2 Research design

Before deciding on what method to use, it is important to define what type of research one will be doing so that one can design the study accordingly. It can be defined as exploratory, descriptive or causal research. Exploratory research is used when one is trying to understand a problem better which has not been clearly defined. Descriptive research is used to gain knowledge about the characteristics of certain groups. Causal research is used to find out about cause and effect relationships (Zikmund et al., 2010). In this thesis we are using a descriptive research design because we are using theory that is already extensively researched with regards to company expatriates, and since we use this theory to find out more and describe the self-initiated expatriates' cross-cultural training and adjustment.

The two main research methods are quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative method studies different phenomenon from an empirical and statistical point of view. It is very useful when one is trying to test hypothesis and generalize the findings. The qualitative research method allow the researcher to research a phenomenon more in depth and gain more insight into the research problems. This is done through observation, listening and interpretation (Zikmund et al., 2010). In this thesis we are using the qualitative method because we want to get to know more about the self-initiated expatriate and his cross-cultural

training and adjustment. Since there has not been conducted a lot of research on this topic with regards to this kind of expatriate it was a natural decision to use a qualitative research method.

3.3 Sampling Method and Data Collection

In this thesis we are using both primary and secondary data to research the research question. Primary data is data that is collected for the purpose of the research at hand. Secondary data is data that is already gathered and published by other people (Zikmund et al., 2010). The secondary data was used in this thesis to build up the knowledge surrounding the thesis topic and write the literature review. This data was mainly collected from various academic articles. These were found through the online database EbscoHost. The articles were found by using different combinations of the thesis's keywords in the search engine. Additionally, some articles' bibliographies were used to find other relevant research articles on the topics. The primary data in this thesis was gathered through interviews with eight self-initiated expatriate engineers. The interview process and details will be presented in the next section

3.3.1 Interview

With a qualitative approach to a research question one can choose between several techniques to gather the necessary primary data. For instance, one can collect the data through observation, focus group interviews, projective techniques, etc. (Zikmund et al., 2010). However, in this thesis it was decided to use individual depth interviews. Individual depth interview is a one-on-one interview where only the interviewer and the respondent are present. This type of interview is better at getting more insight into the respondents and sensitive topics compared to focus groups (Zikmund et al., 2010). Cross-cultural adjustment can be viewed as a private subject and therefore the individual depth interview technique were chosen as the best alternative.

Further, it was decided that the interviews should be semi-structured. This means that an interview guide with questions are prepared before the interviews take place but one do not need to follow the guide step by step (see appendix 1 for the interview guide). Instead the semi-structured approach allows the researcher to ask probing and follow up questions to the respondent's answers where it would be useful to know more (Jacobsen, 2005; Zikmund et al., 2010).

3.3.2 The Sample

In the introduction it was pointed out that in this thesis self-initiated expatriate engineers in Norway would be the focus. This is the sample population. Due to time limitations on the thesis it was decided that a small sample of between 5 and 10 respondents would be enough to gather the data. In the end eight self-initiated engineers were interviewed. Convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling, were mainly used to select the engineers. More specifically, the engineers were approached and selected through people in the researcher's network who worked in companies with many engineers. One respondent was found through snowball sampling as he was recommended by another respondent. It is important to keep in mind that the use of a nonprobability sampling method can lead to a systematic sampling error.

The eight self-initiated expatriates whom volunteered to participate came from five different countries: India (1), Iran (1), Sweden (2), Syria (1), Poland (2), and Portugal (1). All the respondents were male and they were between 27 and 36 years old. Their current expatriation had lasted between 3 months to 6 years. However one of the engineers had previous to the current expatriation lived and worked in another industry in Norway for 6 years. All of them had masters in engineering and one had in addition PhD in material science. The engineers originated from two different companies. Six of them worked at National Oil Well and two at Aker Solutions. These two companies are two big players in the oil and gas industry in Norway. One of the respondents was at first a company expatriate when he came to Norway. But as stated in the theory chapter we will view a former company expatriate as a self-initiated expatriate. Four of the other expatriates had found their current position through recruitment agencies in their home countries. The remaining three had found the job through internet or friends. Further, all the expatriates stated that they were not sure how long they would be staying in Norway. As they did not state that they were permanently settled in Norway they would not be classified as immigrants. The expatriates will in the result and discussion section be referred to as Expatriate 1, Expatriate 2, Expatriate 3, Expatriate 4, Expatriate 5, Expatriate 6, Expatriate 7, and Expatriate 8.

3.3.3 Interview Situation

Before the interviews a time and place were agreed upon through e-mail correspondence. The interviews took taking place at different locations. Three of the interviews were conducted at National Oil Well's office building in Kristiansand, three interviews were conducted in a study room at University of Agder, one interview was conducted over the phone and the last

took place in the respondent's home. In hindsight, the interview should have been done under the same surroundings, as the respondents have a tendency to give different information depending on their surrounding environment. Difficulty in finding volunteers to participate in the study was the reasoning behind the different locations, as we tried to facilitate the respondents' preferences with regards to time and venue due to work and family commitments. In two of the interviews the respondents were speaking Swedish while the interviewer was speaking Norwegian. The interview took place over a period of two weeks. The interviews mainly lasted between half an hour to an hour depending on how much they had to say. However one interview took two hours.

At the start of each interview the researcher stated the purpose of the interview and shortly presented what the thesis was about. The respondents were asked if it was all right with them that the interviews were to be recorded and informed that the interview would be kept anonymous. Tape recorder was used so that the researcher could be more focused on what the respondents were saying instead of having focus on writing notes. The respondents did not seem to be affected by the tape recorder.

3.4 Data analysis

After the interviews had been conducted the next step was to analyse the data. This process started with the transcript of the data recorded in the interviews. This step is very time consuming but necessary to be able to analyse the data. The interviews were more or less transcribed word by word, but thinking words and incomplete sentences that did not give any meaning was at times excluded.

The data collected in the interviews were then organized. First, we divided the information about what kind of cultural training the self-initiated expatriates had received into two main groups; formal and informal training. These two groups were further divided into two groups: company provided training and self-provided training. This was necessary because we found that it was not only the company who provided the training to the self-initiated expatriate. Last we found it necessary to divide the self-provided group (under both formal and informal training) into pre-departure and post departure training. This was not needed for company provided training because they only provided post-departure training. Second, we organized the data related to cross-cultural adjustment. These findings were divided into three groups: work adjustment; Interaction adjustment; and general adjustment to the non-work environment. Lastly, we organized the data that could explain and give us insight into the

relationship between the self-initiated expatriates cross-cultural training and adjustment. Here, the self-initiated expatriate's view of cross-cultural training and adjustment will be presented. Then findings related to the moderators between cross-cultural training and adjustment will be presented.

In the discussion the findings related to the cross-cultural training will first be discussed. After this we will discuss the relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Validity refers to if we are measuring what we want to measure. Reliability refers to if we can rely on the findings(Jacobsen, 2005). The result of this thesis cannot be generalized because the result may not be representative for the whole self-initiated population since only a small group of self-initiated expatriates have been questioned. This study may also have different errors due to for instance:

- The interviewer might not have received the necessary information because I lack experience with regards to conducting in-depth interviews.
- The respondents might not tell the whole truth or withhold information which might be relevant.
- The respondents might not entirely understand what the interviewer is asking due to a language barrier and/or because they are not familiar with the terminology.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter the result from the eight individual in-depth interviews are presented. First, the findings related to cross-cultural training will be presented, secondly the findings related to cross-cultural adjustment and at last the findings related to the

4.1 Cross-Cultural Training

The interviewed expatriates were in the beginning of the interview questioned about what kind of knowledge they had about Norway before they went on their expatriation and if they had had any pre-departure training specifically about Norway. To this question most of the expatriates expressed that they had little prior knowledge about Norway. Expatriate 1 did for instance only know that Norway was “*the land of the rising sun*”. The two Swedish expatriates, Expatriate 2 and Expatriate 3, did not have much specific knowledge about Norway but they assumed that Norway would be exactly like Sweden with only a few differences. Expatriate 4 did also have this impression as he had been studying a few years in Sweden prior to coming to Norway.

4.1.1 Formal Training

4.1.1.1 Company Provided Formal Training

4.1.1.1.1 Language Course

All six of the respondents from National Oil Well recognised that the company provided language training to the foreign workers in the company. Of those six interviewed from National Oil Well three had used the opportunity to learn Norwegian. They also informed that in the Norwegian course they did at times also learn something about the Norwegian culture.

“Now I’m doing a Norwegian class. Learning Norwegian and at the same time the teacher show us some cultural behaviour and Norwegian customs as well... [The teacher] usually talks about different things. For instance: we Norwegians are like this; in this case we are similar to those; but in that case we are different”,
expatriate 4

“NOV paid for Norwegian lessons so I’m just catch this chance. And it was a Norwegian course so the teacher says something about Norway. The teachers try to explain something about the Norway and culture. It was not big area, it was just short.

From time to time he or she in the course, it was two teachers, explain something about Norway and culture: How it is in Norway; how was in Norway”, expatriate 6

“I had a course, a Norwegian course. We learn about Norway also. Like Norwegian royal family. The principal cities”, expatriate 8

Expatriate 6 explained the setting of the Norwegian course as followed:

“We sit in like a group. The people are sitting face by face. This last one was, how to say, friendly atmosphere. It was not like a school it was more like a friendly discussion. It was pretty, pretty okay”, expatriate 6

The other expatriates from National Oil Well who attended the course described it to have a normal school setting.

However, not all the expatriates who were interviewed from National Oil Well had the Norwegian course that the company offered. The two Swedish expatriates did not get the opportunity to take the course because their language and culture was so similar to the Norwegian language and culture.

“No, we do not get [the language training]. Swedish people do not get it. But if one are from other countries is it available...Norway probably expects that we know the Norwegian culture because it is so similar to the Swedish”, expatriate 2

Expatriate 7 explained that he did not take part in the Norwegian Course because he lacked motivation and time to do it. More specifically he said:

No [I have not had language training]. First because there was and still is no motivation really. The problem is that there is no problem with English. If less people were speaking English there would be a bigger pressure for Norwegian. I started of course learning, but when motivation is low then the results is also low... [Secondly], then I still was working on my thesis. So I was busy at work and then it will be busy at home to get rid of this writing. And just time was just passing. And some days ago I woke up and I thought “wow, 5 years””, expatriate 7

One of the workers from Aker Solutions did not receive any language training from the company. He believed that this was something the company did not offered:

“No, there is no such formal training”, expatriate 1

However, the other expatriate from Aker Solutions informed us that language training was only given to permanent employees in the company. In the beginning he provided this kind of training to himself because he did not have a permanent contract. But after three years and after becoming a permanent employee the company provided him with further language training. He said the following about this:

“It depends on if you are permanent or contract worker. Because when I came first 2 years I was in contract. When one was on contract no you have to follow your life, you have to follow language. They can help but cannot support you. But when you are permanent yes. If you want to join course they can accept to support you. They can pay course. But they not have problem if you improve your language or not because we talk English at work. The main language is English. But of course better to learn Norwegian. I went school. First two years I went alone because I was in contract. But I could not go to the morning class. That is way I attend evening class. It was not useful for me because evening class only was two days per week and only two hours. It was not enough to learn. After three years I talk with my boss because I want to go morning, because morning you can go every day and it is three hours. That is way in the four months I was in school morning, of course I went three hours, but I work late... I improve lots of things with my language but not talking... I can read, I can write, when you talk I can understand, but since I not talk every day I lose this practice. When I was in school we talk but after I went to work I not talk Norwegian [and] like at home I am alone”, expatriate 5

4.1.1.1.2 Standard of Communication Course

In the interview with expatriate 5 he mentioned that all the employees in his firm were at one point given a course about standards of communication which in a way reflected the Norwegian culture. It had among other things presented how one should communicate and act with other companies. It did for instance emphasis that when one are in contact with other companies one should not accept gifts or dinner invitations as this could affect the judgement of the workers that is in the field.

4.1.1.1.3 Company Expatriate verses Self-Initiated Expatriate

When we asked the expatriates if company expatriates get more or the same type of cross-cultural training as the self-initiated expatriates from their company, none of the expatriates seemed to have knowledge about this. Some answer with silence while others just said “I do

not know”. Expatriate 3 and 4 did however express that they thought that it should at least be the same for everyone in their opinion. Also Expatriate 6 and Expatriate 8 mentioned they knew that the language course at their company was offered to all the foreigners even though they did not know specifics on what is offered to whom.

4.1.1.1.4 What Should be Provided by the Company

The expatriate were questioned about what type of training they thought a company should provide to their employees who are expatriates. To this question Expatriate 2 did answer that he thought companies should provide a crash course about social norms that clearly explain the Norwegian culture. Expatriate 6 expressed that he would have appreciated if the company had provided a course about the history of Norway as history was a special interest of his. Three of the expatriates said that they thought the language training that the company already provided was the most important training to provide. However, Expatriate 7 emphasised that if they were to have language training one should put more pressure on the expatriate to learn it. Expatriate 8 who also thought language would be the most important training did initially think that if expatriates wanted cultural training one should go and find it on their own.

“I think the company should not give any, I think you should search for it yourself if you are interested. I think the company, yes ok. It is important for them that we have good integration, but most important is the language... I think the company dose enough. I think they cannot do more because it is not main thing they do. I think they do what they should do. And then it is up to you. They should not treat you like a child. They give you the first steps and then it is up to you”, expatriate 8

4.1.1.2 Self Provided Formal Training

4.1.1.2.1 Pre-Departure

The expatriates were asked if they had had any pre-departure training. Only one of the expatriates said he had had some type of formal training before arriving in Norway and that was about general culture. The training had not been related to this specific expatriation to Norway but rather to another opportunity to have a summer internship in a foreign country which he in the end did not go on. He had attended a weekend meeting where they received psychological training. In his words:

“[It was a] weekend meeting with some coaching of those psycho stuff...Like psychological training. There were a few psychologist and they were saying what to

do to not get lost in the foreign culture, how to be active or proactive, how to change your approach, to be talkative”, expatriate 7

4.1.1.2.2 Post-Departure

Only one of the expatriates interviewed had sought out formal cross-cultural training on his own. This was Expatriate 5. As mentioned in the section 4.1.1.1.1 (about company provided formal language training) had Expatriate 5 during his first two years of his stay in Norway found a Norwegian language course on his own initiative. He had however found this with the help of the company. He had checked with the company and they informed him about the school. He then made contact with the school himself. He later also joined an additional course at this school about the Norwegian society to get a permanent visa in Norway. He said the following about this course:

“At school we have one subject called Norwegian Society. [Here] we learn the history of Norway, health, work and some political things about party; how many parties in Norway and their names, and labour rules... [This class] is separate. Like if we had four days for Norwegian course we had one day for the society course... But this kind of course we not get it in the company. I must attend because of [visa] rule from UDI. After three years we can get permanent visa [if] ... you complete 300 hours Norwegian course: 250 Norwegian language and 50 hours society“, expatriate 5

The other expatriates essentially said that they had not tried to find any type of courses about culture while they have been in Norway.

“To be very honest, I have not thought about it or tried to look for such cultural courses. I have not heard anything about any professional cultural courses. At least I’m not aware”, expatriate 1

4.1.2 Informal Training

4.1.2.1 Company Provided Informal Training

Through the interviews many types of informal cultural training methods were mentioned. For instance, expatriate 1 informed us that at get-togethers and team building events they would learn about Norwegian culture indirectly. However, Expatriate 5 pointed out that how much you learn about Norway, especially the language, depends on where the people you work with are from.

“No, there is no such formal training, but there are of course get-togethers, team buildings. So in a way we could call that cultural training. For say if we are partly studying in a teambuilding we have everybody from our department and most of them are Norwegian, so you get to talk to each other, which are part of work. So my answer is yes to that. It does not say that it is social cultural training. But the idea is the same”, expatriate 1

“When we are working in projects and like we are sitting five people in the room. Only one is from Norway, and like two from India, one from UK, two from Poland. That is way we have to talk English. Daily English. That is way it depends on where you are. I have one colleague he is working in one group they are from Norway. He improves his language. Because everybody talk Norwegian, and he is listening and he try to talk with them and he learn”, expatriate 5

Expatriate 5 also stated that he sometimes attended meetings that were held in Norwegian, giving him the opportunity to practise his understanding of Norwegian. However, as he was not confident enough about his Norwegian he would answer any question directed at him in English.

Some of the expatriates emphasised that they learned about Norwegian and general culture and how-to do their job from their co-workers. Expatriate 3 said that environment at work is so international that he learned about culture everywhere and not just about Norwegian culture. Expatriate 6 mentioned that he learnt how to do his job from his colleagues who had more experience than him.

“The basic source for me to know about Norwegian culture are like my colleagues”, expatriate 1

Expatriate 2 mentioned that when he started working in the company that he had been provided with a mentor. This mentor was another expatriate from Portugal who taught him how to do his job. Expatriate 5 informed that in his company he had been a mentor for many people. But mentors were mainly provided to employees who came directly from school and who did not have too much engineering experience.

4.1.2.2 Self Provided Informal Training

4.1.2.2.1 Pre-Departure

The expatriates who had little knowledge about Norway before arriving had not had any kind of pre-departure training about Norway, at least not of the formal kind. For instance, expatriate 2 from Sweden said he had had a Norwegian friend in Sweden. Because of him he found it easier to understand the Norwegian language when he came to Norway.

However, Expatriate 5 and Expatriate 8 felt that they had a little bit more knowledge about Norway before they arrived. Expatriate 5 had not had any formal pre-departure training but he had however been reading and gathering information from friends.

“After I got position and before travel, I read about Norway -about where I’m going, where I have to live. Then I called some friends here because one person was working here. Then he gave some background about the job and the city”, expatriate 5

Further, Expatriate 8 had been recruited to Norway at something called Mobility Days in his home country. At this event the expatriate had received a presentation about the life in Norway. He also had the opportunity hereto search for more information. Like for instance how one works in Norway and how the practices are. Some of the information he had gathered was the following:

“Like here in Norway is it very relaxed. You don’t need to use like a suite to get to working. It is wary relaxed. Their main interest is winter sports”, expatriate 8

Further, Expatriate 3 had not had any formal general cultural training but he recognised that during his studies to become an engineer he had had some university courses that had some international aspects woven in. His classmates during the studies were also from many different foreign cultures. From the university courses with some international aspects and the international classmates he felt that he in the end gained some knowledge about general culture.

4.1.2.2.2 Post-Departure

Even though most of the expatriates had not found any formal cross-cultural training on their own they used informal channels to get information about Norwegian culture and culture in general. One of the expatriates mentioned that he used to go to university to look at the bulletin board to look for activities related culture.

“I went to university to take a look at the board to see if there are any cultural ceremonies or activities. For example some famous Norwegian ceremonies that I don’t know about. I was looking for some ads on the notice board to see what kind of ceremonies or activities are held here. For instance, now there is the international day in Swedish universities. I was looking for if there are such activities or ceremonies here or not. But at the time I do not have time to follow more than that. ...When summer comes there might be more activities and I can be informed by my colleagues and friends”, expatriate 4

In the interview Expatriate 1 stated that he used many sources to gather knowledge and learn about the Norwegian culture surrounding him. Mainly he asked friends, searched the internet and observed cultural events in the society.

I have one really very good friend of mine, who is Norwegian, and I get to know many things from him. So that is the biggest source that I have. And then all the socials, like Christmas and Easter or New Year and the constitution day of Norway, the 17th of May. I try to follow all of these and going around in the city and see what is happening. And I really rely on going on the internet to get to know about whatever I have in my mind, like doubts and queries. Or I just go ahead and ask my friends, who know more than I do. And that’s how I learned the culture... The internet is the best, that’s widest and it is close”, expatriate 1

Some of the other expatriates also mentioned that friends were an important source of information regarding culture, general and Norwegian. For instance, when Expatriate 4 was asked about where he normally gained knowledge about the Norwegian culture he answered the following:

“Normally I ask my friends. For example, in the lunch time some Norwegian and I ask about everything that just happened in my mind or I face something. Usually I ask my friends. Norwegian friends”, expatriate 4

Expatriate 5 gave credit to his neighbour and his sports team for gaining knowledge about Norway and other cultures.

“My neighbour at home she is 85. I have very good relationship with here. She is talking with me for hours every day... I learn a lot of things from her”, expatriate 5

“When I play sport I meet a lot of people from different places and different society. I learn many things from them. I learn many things about their countries because we talk”, expatriate 5

Expatriate 5 especially said that one would learn if one participated in society and talked with people who are around you. He also mentioned that museums were one source of information about culture. Theatres would also have been a source but he did not seem to find any in Norway he could go to.

“I think essentially you learn from speaking to people, participate in events. Unfortunately there are not many theatres over here. Well I go to museums and so on... I have been on all of them. I almost visited all of the museums”, expatriate 8

4.2 Cross-Cultural Adjustment

In this section we will present the respondents’ answers to how they feel they have adjusted to the Norwegian culture. Firstly, we will present how they feel overall with regards to their adjustment. Further, we will go more specifically into their adjustment with regards to work, interaction with host nationals and to the non-work environment.

4.2.1 Overall Adjustment

During the interview the expatriates were asked to locate where they felt they were in the adjustment process. They did this by circling where on the u-curve of adjustment they would put themselves at the time of the interview. In appendix 3 these curves can be viewed. Five of the expatriates felt that they were fairly adjusted to the Norwegian culture as they put themselves in the area between the third and fourth stage of adjustment. Two of the expatriates felt that they were at the third stage of adjustment as they still felt that they were adjusting to Norway. One of these expatriates had only been in Norway for 1 year and the other had been here for 6 years. Expatriate 1 had a phone interview and did not get the opportunity to pinpoint his position on the adjustment curve. But given his statements we concluded that either he would be at the end of the third stage or already at the fourth stage. To a question about his overall adjustment to Norway he said:

“Yes of course [I have adjusted well]. I think I have had no problems getting myself rendered into the Norwegian system here. And that is one of the reasons why I have stayed here for the last, almost, 6 years now. I feel like everything is streamlined and everything is planned and everything is going in the right direction. So I think

everything in my life is in the place that it should be. So I'm happy about it", expatriate 1

Some of the other expatriate had this to say about their overall adjustment:

"I'm adjusted to all, because there is no shock for anything. So it should be here around [at the end of the third stage]. I should know language to go to this way [to the fourth stage]", expatriate 4

"To live here is easy for me. It is very easy", expatriate 5

"I still try to adjust myself to Norway", expatriate 6

Expatriate 5 and 7 did also take the liberty to draw how they felt their adjustment curve had been during their stay as they felt that the original curve of adjustment was not representative for them. They did not feel that they had such a big dip in their adjustment curve. Instead their adjustment curves were less steep in their opinion.

4.2.2 Work Adjustment

The expatriates were asked how they felt they had adjusted to the workplace. All the expatriates seemed to have a very positive experience with their new work surroundings. However, it is worth pointing out that five of the expatriates stated that before they started working in Norway they had little work experience in the industry from their home country since they recently graduated from university.

"Very easy [to adjust to work]", expatriate 8

"I think I am adjusted. I never felt like denied. It was always easy", expatriate 7

"Norwegians are very open people so I have no problem to cooperate with them, to deal with them actually", expatriate 6

"It has been very easy [to adjust to work] I must say... It works very well. I have had very good colleagues", expatriate 3

Expatriate 1 expressed that the work culture in Norway is very good and the it was the best he had ever experienced. Because of this he managed to keep a good balance between work and home-life. Expatriate 7 said that he felt that business in Norway gave value to the workers and contributed to good health in the society.

“In fact, I should say it is many times better than what I have been working with before. So it was very easy and I’m happy to say that I can maintain a balance in my work and life, professional life and personal life. So work culture is extremely good. In fact, I should say it is the best I have had. And that is one of the prime reasons which got me to stay here in Norway. So the work culture is fantastic”, expatriate 1

“My feeling about business in Norway is like the country allows doing business because it is healthy for the citizens. And as long as it is healthy for its citizens then it is good. While in Poland it was rather the opposite. It is like “no you need to work to survive. So go to work”. While here it is like “work is value. So go to work”. I like this approach. You are not working for money you are working because work is good and it gives satisfaction and so on. So this approach I like much more”, expatriate 7

Expatriate 2 from Sweden felt that it was not much difference in working in Norway compared to Sweden. He did however think that might the relationship to work in Norway were somewhat more relaxed than in Sweden.

“It is exactly the same as in Sweden. I mean the relationship you have to the work place. But maybe it is a bit more relaxed attitude here in Norway. It is maybe a little more discipline in Sweden. People come and go like they want too. Yes it is a bit more flex in Norway compared to Sweden. Something that is positive I think. Also in Sweden it is safe, but it is maybe even safer in Norway. Here it is a bit more social benefits sort of”, expatriate 2

4.2.2.1 Pressure and Stress at Work

Like Expatriate 2 all the other expatriates comment on the small pressure, lack of stress, and relaxed attitude in the workplace. They view this as a positive side of the work. Here are some of their comments:

“No stress at work”, expatriate 8

““I want to say that the work environment is good. It does not make you have a bad feeling... It is less stressful. It is quite easy-going. Everybody likes to work. It is not that much stress even though you are very busy. There is not that much pressure that can affect your mind you know... There is no pressure by your supervisor, because there is no pressure on supervisor by boss, and because there is no pressure on boss from manager... On some occasions for instance I expect a big pressure, but I do not

feel that. I feel that I'm very busy and that I have to do that, but I do not think that I bring this feeling to my home", expatriate 4

"I never work for this kind of company in Poland. [But] I think here in Norway it is more comfortable because it is not big stress about the job. It is the more relaxed. So this is very okay here in Norway... No stress. Of course it is kind of stress, but not so big. I appreciate this kind of job. It is very okay", expatriate 6

"When I was working in Dubai the work was perfect but did not matter what was going on with the person. If I was sick I have to go work... This is something that is not here. And also it was a lot of pressure there because when we worked on a project that required three people they put only one [person] because they can get more money and cost would be less. Here [in Norway] they have balance they look to the cost but they also look to the person to not put too much pressure on him. If he is sick he has to take sick day... [Here] now I'm working with many projects at the same time but I'm not alone. Like now I'm lead in my project. But they always ask me if I need more people... This is something here that got me to stay", expatriate 5

Despite Expatriate 6's positive attitude towards the small pressure at work he at first characterised the small pressure at work as a shock because he could not see how people could work without some pressure.

"Everything is fine now [with regards to adjusting to work]... But before it was a shock that people can work if they are very relaxed at work. It was a shock. If you for instance had to prepare some documents if you could not because it was too much job nobody blame you.. This was a shock for me. But, now I have adjusted myself to this kind of situation and this is now normal. This is a positive thing", expatriate 6

Expatriate 8 mentioned that less pressure at work was a result of among other things that the company divided the responsibility of projects to groups rather than only one worker. This again helped him to be able to do other things at work that were also important, like for instance keep updated on new technology and help other people at work.

"[Less pressure]... has helped me to look for other things because I have to work. I have to improve my knowledge of technology because our field always we have new things. If I don't have time to follow that technology after some period I will lose a lot of things. That is why now when I work I have time to read about new technology, new

catalogue, and new standards. That helps. That is something very important of course. Also it gives me time to help other people. If I had a lot of work I could not have helped. They consider these things. They consider we have to work 60%, I have to rest 10% (I have to read internet, I have to eat, I have to drink, I have to talk with colleagues), 20% for learn new technology, and these last 10% for helping. Before [in Dubai] they did not consider this. They considered only work”, expatriate 5

4.2.2.2 Communication at work

Some of the expatriates said that the general communication at work was going well despite the fact that they did not know how to speak fluent Norwegian because at work they mostly spoke English.

“Everybody talks English. So I had no problem with communicating about my work”, expatriate 4

However, Expatriate5 and 8 emphasised that even though English was the main language at work it would be beneficial to understand Norwegian. According to Expatriate 8 this would prevent him from losing certain information that was given in Norwegian.

“The main language is English [at work]. But of course better to learn Norwegian”, expatriate 5

“You need to know the language if you want to get more safety and to not lose so much information. Because sometime I get information and was in a meeting and they start in Norwegian. Since I do not speak Norwegian they have to turn to English which is not so good. It is not a good feeling because there is like 10 people over there. So that is why we have to learn fast language”, expatriate 8

Expatriate 5 did in a way express that he felt that he did not have a boss and as a result of this the communication were better.

“There I don’t feel like I have boss. I never fight with anybody discuss in a different way. It is very cool”, expatriate 5

4.2.2.3 Work hours

When it came to the work hours in Norway the expatriates said that it was just like the work hours in their home countries. However, Expatriate 6 also emphasised that he liked that in

Norway one had flexi hours which give the workers a better opportunity to control their own time.

“I like here in Norway the flexi hours. You can take some hours extra and you can take few hours off another day. This is okay. And also if you need some free time during your job you can go out and try to cover this time later. So this is very good”, expatriate 6

4.2.3 Interaction Adjustment with Host Nationals

The expatriates were asked if they had adjusted to interacting with the people in Norway. In answering this question all but one expressed that overall they were adjusted to the host nationals.

“The people around me here they are so friendly. Even at work place and in kindergarten. My daughter goes to kindergarten here. I met many people over there. I found everyone very friendly, always good to talk too and always welcome with a smile. So I never find it difficult to talk to anybody. Also everybody speaks English, so it makes me even more comfortable to talk to them. So it was easy to patch up with them. The connection of wave length was very easy”, expatriate 1

“[The adjustment to Norwegians}...is going well. I even almost think Norwegians are a little nicer than Swedish”, expatriate 2

“I think everything is fine. I have good relations with my friends because all the people from Norway I know. So it should be fine. I think relations are okay”, expatriate 6

However, Expatriate 7 expressed that this had been a hard process for him. He said that he had not experienced anything bad with regards to interacting with the Norwegians.

“It is kind of hard. But I never experienced anything bad. Some could say that I have very few friends because I have two Norwegian friends and one American who is living here. Friends, friends not colleagues...But I don't know if it is not me making that hard. No I don't know really. I thought that it was hard”, expatriate 7

Even though the other expatriates felt they had adjusted they explained how they perceived the Norwegians to be and gave examples of things they had reacted to. Many of the expatriates described Norwegians to be cold, closed and shy.

“Maybe you have more relaxing people, but cold. Kind of cold. You are more closed”, expatriate 6

Expatriate 8 said pointed out that because Norwegians were a little shy one had respect that Norwegians needed some distance. This he was not used to from where he came from. He also said that when one had received contact Norwegians they were easy and happy people to speak with.

“Norwegian people are shy, so it is not so easy to get them. So you have to not to keep the distance, but respect the distance. So it is not like South European countries where it is normal to approach somebody in the street. Here we have to be careful”, expatriate 8

“I have some contact [with Norwegians] and it is very easy to communicate with them. We see that they are shy and so on, but it is very easy to speak with them. All of them are speaking English. There is always a smiling face and they are happy to help. For me it is five stars. I have not had a problem with them until now”, expatriate 8

Expatriate 5 connected the coldness in the society with the Norwegians habit of going straight home after work and only hang out with friend in the weekends. Expatriate 3 and Expatriate 6 did also mention this behaviour. Expatriate 6 also expressed that this was a behaviour that was difficult to deal with for him as he was group person and like to have people around him also during the week.

“Here it is cold society. If one person finishes work he goes home. After that he will not go out. He has to be with family, girlfriend or kids. If you want any communication with that person it will only be in the weekends. On a normal day I cannot. Everybody is busy I understand that. But they not make activity during the week. Only in the week end like Friday and Saturday”, expatriate 5

One thing I noticed when I first came here was that there were very few people out. I came in at winter in December. It felt like I came to a ghost town. There were so few. There were no people...But later people started to come out, maybe in April/May. Then you saw people. But otherwise it was dead”, expatriate 3

The Polish people like to meet each other- sitting talking, have fun- during the week as well, not only in the weekend. I see that in Norway people after work they go home

and not in the streets. Outside the city you can't see so many people. Sometimes I think "where are they?" In Poland I think it is more people outside after four O'clock... Not here in Norway. Maybe if you go to centrum yes there is... This is hard for me [to adjust to]. This is hard. I'm like a group animal. I like to be with people", expatriate 6

Even though, Expatriate 5 perceived the society to be cold, he did not find it difficult to connect with the host national. He mentioned that some of his foreign friends had this problem. But he stated that he understood that Norwegians could not accept everyone to be their friend just like everyone else. This understanding was also shared by expatriate 4 from Iran. He understood that Norwegians like to communicate with people who know their language.

"It is not a big deal for me to make connection with Norwegians. But from other people I heard a lot of complaints. Other people say you can't make connection with Norwegian people, it is not easy to make friends; and they are closed. For me I find it with some people of course. Even for me I can't accept every one [who approaches me]. That is why it depends on how the communication is" expatriate 5

"I did not find it more difficult to approach Norwegians than Swedish. I found it easy. But I agree that if I know language it ease the process very much because language is very important. And of course they want to have communication with those who know at least the language. It is very normal. But even now that I don't know that much Norwegian I have no problem with communication", expatriate 4

Expatriate 2 from Sweden recognised the language to be a barrier to be with other people from other countries. He said that speaking with Norwegians in their mother tongue takes more effort. Therefore small barrier is created and if he had the choice to speak with a Swedish person he would speak with the Swedish instead of a Norwegian. Expatriate 3 who is also from Sweden thought it was difficult in the beginning to communicate with the Norwegians . He said the following:

"Yes, [the adjustment to Norwegians]...have been going very well. In the beginning it was little difficult to understand [Norwegian]. I did not understand certain words, especially that dialect that is here in the south. That one is a bit harder to understand. It was difficult in the beginning, but I got over it relatively quickly", expatriate 3

Expatriate 5 Did however point out that in Norway one can live without speaking the native language because almost everyone can communicate in English.

“I can live here without learning Norwegian because everybody speaks English.. Like at work or in society, cafes, or market everybody knows”, expatriate 5

Expatriate 4 from Iran mentioned that he had not adjusted to his neighbour’s behaviour of being noisy late at night. This was a behaviour he had heard other people in the society also had problem with.

“Actually, I adjusted too many behaviours, but not to my neighbour’s behaviour. I’m not accustomed to having very late night. At the weekend it is okay, but in the weekday it is very troublesome. It is many times a week... They don’t consider neighbour at all. This is a real shock actually. That was a real shock because for example even if I think that I have a right to do something if I see that it is a little troublesome for the other person I consider his or her situation. I do not do that. Or at least I do that for less time. But I have heard a lot about this here. I’m not adjusted to this”, expatriate 4

4.2.4 General Adjustment to the Non-Work Environment

Following the question about adjustment to the host nationals we asked the expatriates how they have adjusted to the non-work environment in Norway. Two of the eight expatriates said that this process had been difficult. These were Expatriate 6 and Expatriate 8.

“This is a hard process. Very hard. For instance, the food is completely different compared to my country and the weather is a problem for me. I like the spring and summer very much, but the winter not. It is very hard for me. So this is what I have to working on”, expatriate 6

“Well it is kind of difficult because one of the things in Portugal and Spain when you get out of the job you normally go out for a drink a beer and we don’t talk about job or work. But here finish the work and they go each one to their own house... Also one of the main things is the food and the weather. The food and the weather is a big difference. For me the most difficult thing is the weather and the food... I have now adjusted to the food, but not the weather”, expatriate 8

The other six expatriates said that the process of getting adjusted to daily life here in Norway had gone well and that they were somewhat adjusted. However, they pointed out small things

they had reacted to. Some of the things they addressed were the slow speed of the society, the strict adherence to rules, the distance between destinations, the weather, the high cost of living, the food and the timing of the different meals.

“Well yes [I feel like I have adjusted]. No complaints, it is wonderful. Except for winter, everything is just perfect. But one thing, but that’s a very small thing. Say in India, our eating habits were a bit different. The times, I mean, were different. When I was in India I used to have my lunch around 12 and 1 and dinner around 9. And now I have lunch at half past 10/ quarter to 11 in the morning and I have my dinner by half past 5 or 6 o’clock. I think that is a change, for good”, expatriate 1

«Yes [I have adjusted to the daily life].Except for the fact there is much more expensive here is there no obstacle. It is not more difficult to do things here in Norway compared to home in Sweden. For instance, there is sometimes a little difficult to find things to do because there are such long distances to get to it. Something you have go up to the hill for, and then back and forth. One sports centre is over there and another sports centre is on the hill over there and so on. Where I come from it is a bit more gathered... Norwegians are also maybe a little more principled. They are strict on laws and rules and so on. It is a little too strict here in Norway I think. They have tunnel vision on certain things. For instance you get a parking ticket after just 15 minutes. That does not happen in Sweden. There are also the prices. I’m not used to things that usually are cheap at home cost more here. I become a little disappointed because then I cannot live the same way as I do at home. One has to maybe change the routines and so. Can for instance not use the car as much because of road toll you have to payall the time. This kind of things hold you back and keep you more inside in Norway compared to at home in Sweden”, expatriate 2

“Yes that has gone well. It has not been a big problem... Most things are similar. But still there are small differences. For instance, the society feels in a way a little slower sometimes. Not all the time. It feels like it takes a long time to do small things. This gets me a little irritated sometimes... For instance, when I found were going to create a bank account here in Norway I had to go seven times to the bank”, expatriate 3

“Even before coming here I were adjusted to food, accommodation, everything because I knew what I should expect here. I knew it was a little expensive, more expensive, than Sweden. I had an idea of Swedish culture. So I was quite adjusted. But

in general the food I very expensive so nobody can adjust with that. And accommodation is expensive also. But it is okay”, expatriate 4

“When I came to Norway for a few months it was cold. I manage myself then it is okay. It depends on the person how he can manage”, expatriate 5

“Oh yes. No a problem [to adjust to daily life here]. Of course there is always some differences but for me those were never like a shock. Nothing except the price of that baked potato in the city which was when I came here 65 NOK. And it was like what the hell you can eat a family dinner in Poland in restaurant for that money. Maybe I exaggerate of course but. So then it was a shock for me but it past very quickly. It is just a regular price when you compare it to the price of work... [Also] maybe at the beginning I find [life here] a bit “felt without pleasure”. I don’t know how to explain it but I think food was my pleasure in the beginning. I was able to spend 10,000 NOK just for food each month. ...So maybe in the beginning I was not compatible and I was compensating with food. I did not know that I was not [adjusted] in the beginning, but when I think about it now... But now it is like daily life is daily life”, expatriate 7

4.3 Cross-Cultural Training and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

We asked the expatriates if they thought expatriates needed cross-cultural training to adjust. Some of the expatriates thought cultural training would be a very useful thing to help the adjustment go smoother.

“Well. I think that is a very wise idea... It will definitely help expatriates to know more about the Norwegian culture and get them to blend in to it and to become confident”, expatriate 1

“Yes, maybe even we Swedish should have some”, expatriate 2

“It is very important. Everywhere, not only in Norway... If you don’t have direct training you have to learn by trail and effort in the society. And it is not good at all because you can misunderstand something. I could understand that the reason that Norwegian are not coming to talking is because they are shy. But somebody may not understand that. They say “okay they don’t like us” and it causes some misunderstanding. This may cause many bad effects in society. But I think a direct training remove all this misunderstandings”, expatriate 4

“If you get training it is better than to learn alone. You will save time and you will get easy experience. When I learn language alone I can learn but it will take time and it will be difficult. Maybe I will learn something wrong. But if I go to school and I have training, I will learn in it in a shorter time, I will learn correct, and I will get experience. That is in training. If there is training of course it will be better. Save many things”, expatriate 5

However a few of the expatriates felt that it would not be necessary. According to them observation and experience was a better way to get used to the new environment.

“No... you learn a little how things work where you are automatically- about the culture and society and so on”, expatriate 3

“Not for Polish. I don’t think”, expatriate 7

“No, no. It is most important to be social person”, expatriate 8

Expatriate 6 pointed out that it would probably depend on the person.

“I don’t know. It depends on the people maybe. I like to look at the environment and then I try to experience myself. Probably for many people Norway and the Norwegian culture could be kind of a shock. So you need the time to adjust yourself. I think best way for me is just to be here... This is my opinion. In my opinion you can’t push something. It should be like that. People should look around and try to have a kind of experience and then they should adjust”, expatriate 6

Further, the expatriates were asked to specify what kind of cross-cultural training they thought in general was necessary to adjust. Expatriate 2 and 8 emphasised that the thought it was most important to be social and Expatriate 2 therefore thought a type of body group with a Norwegian leader would be a good way to learn about the culture and be able to adjust. Expatriate 4 thought that learning about Norwegian social behaviour were essential. Expatriate 5 the Norwegian society course had taken were very important as one did learn a lot about many aspects of Norwegian culture and society. Expatriate 3, 6 and 7 said he thought language training were most important because knowing the language is important to get to know a society. Also Expatriate 7 pointed out that:

“I think that language course is very much connected to adjustment....Very often the language courses are organised to explain what is going on in a country. It is both a lesson in Norwegian and the lesson of Norway. So that is the best way” expatriate 7

4.3.1 Moderators of the Relationship: Antecedents of Cross-Cultural Adjustment

As pointed out in the conceptual framework; can the antecedents of cross-cultural adjustment act as moderators between cross-cultural training and adjustment? The finding related to these will now be presented. Some information about these has also been presented indirectly above.

4.3.1.1 Individual Antecedents

4.3.1.1.1 International Experience

In the beginning of the interview the expatriates were asked if they had any previous international experience before they came to Norway. Six of the expatriates had previous work experience before coming on the current expatriation to Norway. The two expatriates who had no previous work experience had however been studying in other countries. Expatriate 1 from India informed that when he had been working in the service industry he had been on several work assignment in different countries that lasted between three and four weeks each. Expatriate 2 from Sweden had been working a little in the restaurant industry in the US. Expatriate 3 from Sweden had been studying in Spain for a short time. Expatriate 4 from Iran had been on a work mission in South Korea for a month where he worked in the automotive industry. In addition to that just before he came to Norway he had been studying engineering in Sweden for three years. Expatriate 5 from Syria had been working in Dubai for 10 years. During this time he had also been going on work assignments in connection with international projects. These assignments lasted each a few months. He mentioned that he had been in China, Algeria, Iran, France, Germany and the UK. Expatriate 6 from Poland said he had been working summer jobs in Norway for the last 6/7 years. He had been working in the farming industry and the building industry. Expatriate 7 from Poland did not have any international work experience but he had been studying one semester in Portugal and completed his PhD in France. Expatriate 8 from Portugal had been working four months in France before coming to Norway.

When asked if they thought they had learned something from their international experience not everybody gave an answer. However the expatriates who answered said the following:

“Yes, you learn when you are in the society”, expatriate 3

“Of course... Like I was in the UK. In the UK they in engineering they are working in detail too much. Not like Norway. In Norway they are not working in detail. Each country they have different way to work and they have different standard. That is why if you work in different places you collect all those standards and experience from it. That is why I get lot of experience when I travel. Not travel to visit, but travels to different countries and work”, expatriate 5

“Yes differences are not that big”, expatriate 7

“Yes. We are always learning. Just need to watch and listen, and compare”, expatriate 8

4.3.1.1.2 Individual Skill

Three of the expatriates emphasised that it was they themselves that were an important element in their adjustment. Expatriate 2 did for instance say that the fact that he was a social being had helped him to adjust. Expatriate 5 pointed out that he had an ability to be flexible and change the surroundings. Expatriate 8 said that his curiosity was an important factor.

4.3.1.2 Contextual Antecedents

4.3.1.2.1 Time

The expatriates stated in the start of the interview some background information about themselves. Among this they said how long they had been in Norway. Expatriate 4 had only been here three months, Expatriate 2, 3, and 8 had been here one year, Expatriate 7 had been here five years, and Expatriate 1 and 6 had been here six years.

4.3.1.2.2 Spousal Support

When it came to the variable of spouse and family only Expatriate 1 could inform us that he had one. All the other expatriates were single. Expatriate 1 said the following about his family and adjustment:

“Everybody in my family are well educated and I believe this makes it easy to adapt to new cultures.”, expatriate 1

4.3.1.2.3 Cultural Difference

We did not ask the expatriates specifically about their culture and how it differed from the Norwegian culture. However, Expatriate 7 said the following regarding this topic:

“The [cultural] differences here in Europe appear to me to be very little. Even the beginning I thought there were some bigger differences, now I don’t think so... We are in the zone of western culture. That does not differ that much. Western culture is pretty much the same. ”, expatriate 7

When it comes to cultural differences we will mainly refer to Hofstede’s four dimensions of national culture. As it is not a result of this study, these dimensions will not be presented here. However, an overview of the five different cultures participating in this study can be viewed in appendix 2.

4.3.1.3 Organisational Antecedents

4.3.1.3.1 Organisational Social Support

When we asked the expatriates if they could identify what had helped them to adjust and what had made it difficult. All of the expatriates gave in one way or another some of the credit of their adjustment to the company and the work environment it provided. Expatriate 7, said that the company gave them the opportunity to be social at work with other co-workers. Expatriate 8 pointed out that the company helped the expatriates to become adjusted and integrated by providing events for employees so that they could get contacts and support elements in the society. Expatriate 2 said that the company for instance at that time had a sport activity that got the employees active and engaged in their free time.

Through the interview most of the expatriates said that the company provided sport alternatives for the expatriates and the other employees. This alternative helped the expatriates to integrate into the Norwegian society. Both of the companies the expatriates came from, provided this social alternative.

“We get...[sports alternatives] through work. The company help with that kind of things. They try to get us to integrate through training and friends and so on. It is to their benefit as they want us to stay”, expatriate 2

“In Aker Solutions we had football team they are from Norway. I play with them... My life is work and sports. I spend a lot of hours in sport. Watching or playing. Like

other people they are not that into sport. They have different things to do, but for me I do a lot sports. Since I'm alone I do sport... When I play sport I meet a lot of people from different places and different societies. I learn many things from them", expatriate 5

I'm participating in the group, sports group. This is called "styrke". It is a gym group or something like that. And also I play football with the NOV people. And also there are many, many different sports groups. Bicycle group or whatever. But that is not for me... We have good relations. You meet people in the gym and in the football field or whatever", expatriate 6

4.3.1.3.2 Job Related variables

The relaxed environment at work presented under section 4.2.2 about work adjustment may show that the two companies allow the self-initiated expatriates to have role discretion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter we will first discuss what kind of cultural training the self-initiated expatriates have received during their expatriation. After that we will discuss what kind of affect this seems to have on their cross-cultural adjustment and if the moderators can give some explanation to the relationship. The discussion will be based on the result from the interviews and theory presented in chapter 2.

5.1 Cross-Cultural Training in Norway

As we know there are many different ways expatriates can get cross-cultural training. According to (Littrell et al., 2006) there were six types. The self-initiated expatriates in this research paper could in theory have received attribution training; cultural awareness training; interaction training; language training; didactic training; and experimental training. However, based on the result from the interview we could only find the presence of four of these; interaction training; language training; didactic training; and experimental training.

5.1.1 Formal Training

The result from the interviews shows that none of the self-initiated expatriates had taken any type of pre-departure formal cross-cultural training courses to prepare for their current expatriation. This might imply that either the self-initiated expatriates were already confident and positive towards the new culture they were about to enter into because it was their own choice to expatriate in the first place. They may not have seen the necessity of seeking out this type of formal training courses. This can maybe be supported by some of the expatriate's attitude towards training: "you learn ... how things work where you are automatically" (Expatriate 3). The case might also be that some expatriates might not take additional pre-departure training because, like expatriate 7, they have already taken some general cross-cultural training for previous expatriations to other countries. Some of the expatriates might also have chosen to not take any formal pre-departure training by default. Either they might not have known about the opportunities or they might have been too busy at the time, like in Expatriate 4's case.

After their arrival the self-initiated expatriates said that their companies provided language training to their expatriates that qualified for it. One of the expatriates had found a language

training course on his own. The language courses provided by the company and found by themselves is according to the theory a didactic training mechanism (Littrell et al., 2006). However, based on the self-initiated expatriates statements in the interviews these language courses are about more than just learning the language. The self-initiated expatriates said that in addition to learning how to speak and read Norwegian they also learned about many other aspects of Norway and Norwegian culture. Based on this we can perhaps classify the language training as a formal didactic training that provide factual information about the Norwegian society.

In one of the companies, an expatriate said that language training was only provided to expatriates who had permanent contracts with the company. According to him, many expatriates worked on contract over several years in his company. If this was the case in the other company, it was not specified by the other self-initiated expatriates interviewed. The self-initiated expatriates could however not say that they had noticed there were any differentiation between cross-cultural training provided by the company to the company expatriate and self-initiated expatriates. Generally, can it be that international companies provide language training based on if the expatriates have permanent contracts rather than if they are company expatriates or self-initiated expatriates? In table 1 it is specifies that training is provided by the company to the company expatriates and that the self-initiated expatriate provide it to themselves (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). This could then perhaps be updated. For instance, one could maybe divide the self-initiated expatriate into two different groups: permanent and contract. Another alternative, might be to change table 1 to state that cross-cultural training to self-initiated expatriates is both provided by the company and the expatriate themselves. This would be supported by our findings which show that the self-initiated expatriates find Norwegian language course and Norwegian society courses on their own (expatriate 5) and language training through the company. But before one were to do any of this further research would be required.

Further, it is interesting that the self- initiated expatriate who classified himself as a company expatriate when he first came to Norway did not receive any language training from the company? We did not get any knowledge about the reason why he had not received any training from the company when he first arrived. However, we can speculate. Could it be that even though he was a company expatriate he was not classified as a permanent employee? Or could it be that his initial expatriation assignment was too short to provide him with language training and that he became a contract employee when he changed his status to self-initiated

expatriate? As stated in the theory, the choice of cross-cultural training program depends on three variables. One of which is the duration of the expatriation (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). A short expatriation assignment in Norway might therefore be one reason that the company did not provide him with language training.

If there is any truth to the statement above one can wonder, can it be that company expatriate engineers in engineering companies get less cultural training than the self-initiated expatriate engineers as a result of the duration of the expatriation. As we know from the theory and from the interviews, self-initiated expatriates do not always have a set time period for their expatriation. Though, through the interviews the self-initiated expatriates who had been working in other engineering companies before they came to Norway informed that they, on many occasions, had been sent on assignment to other countries for some months. If they at these assignments are classified as company expatriates the duration of the expatriation assignments might not be long enough to receive language training or other cross-cultural training.

One of the other variables that the choice of cultural training program should be based on is the cultural distance between home- and host country (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). We can see from the findings that one of the companies does most likely to some degree evaluate who they provide the language course too according to this theory. Because in the findings it became apparent that the two Swedish self-initiated expatriates were not given language training because their language and culture were so similar to the Norwegian language and culture. If this is a general practise by all companies with regards to the self-initiated expatriates we cannot come to a conclusion here. But out from the findings it is a possibility that companies do not provide language training to self-initiated expatriates who have similar language and culture.

5.1.2 Informal Training

When it comes to informal pre-departure training three of the self-initiated expatriates had taken informal steps to get to know more about Norway before they arrived by either asking friends, reading about Norway or attending an informal information session at a recruitment event. These three self-initiated expatriates were from Syria, Portugal and Sweden. In other words they came from cultures that were both culturally similar to Norway and very culturally different from Norway (see appendix 2). After arriving in Norway the self-initiated expatriates said they obtained information about Norwegian culture through the internet and

bulletin boards. However the most important source seemed to be casual conversations with friends and co-workers who were from Norway or other countries. All these knowledge transfers could probably be categorized as informal didactic training. Through these different sources the self-initiated expatriates may gain factual information related to Norwegian culture or about general culture so that they can deal with situations they encounter in the Norwegian society or in their international work environment.

It came to light that at least one of the self-initiated expatriates had received a mentor on his arrival to the company. This mentor was from Portugal and taught him how to do the work. This situation have many similarities to interaction training where the expatriate according to the theory have another expatriate who teach the new expatriates the work and share information regarding his experiences in the host country (Littrell et al., 2006). If this is the intent from the company's side we can't know based on the information provided in the interview. It might have been a coincidence that the mentor was another expatriate. However, if the mentor was a Norwegian the self-initiated expatriate might still learn about Norwegian culture but in another way. Expatriate 5 pointed out that what you learn depends on where the people you work with come from. In either case the self-initiated expatriates may gain some knowledge through the mentor. Expatriate 2 said that he did mainly learn about work through the mentor and did not specify whether he learned about culture. However, it is probably not unlikely that the two talked about other things than work.

When it comes to who are provided with a mentor expatriate 5 pointed out that in his company newly educated employees who had little experience were provided with mentors. So in other words, it does not depend on if you were a self-initiated expatriate or a company expatriate but rather on how much experience you have. So if one happened to be a newly educated self-initiated expatriate one would in his company be provided with a mentor. Many of the expatriates interviewed in this thesis had come directly from university education. Many of these expatriates might therefore have received a mentor when they came to Norway. However they did not specify this in the interviews.

Some of the self-initiated expatriates did also mention that they learned about culture through observation of social events, and indirectly through meetings and teambuilding events at work. Can we possibly say that these are a type of informal experimental training? One can maybe say that through observation, meetings and teambuilding the self-initiated expatriates learn by doing or being present.

Based on the findings related to both formal and informal cross-cultural training we can see that they are provided by the company and by the self-initiated expatriates them self. According to the theory on antecedents of cross-cultural adjustment, cross-cultural training is grouped under the organisational antecedents. It might be correct to have it under organisational when it comes to company expatriates. But based on the findings in this thesis, is cross-cultural training not necessarily only an organisational antecedent with regards to self-initiated expatriates. Therefore it is of the opinion, one should maybe consider moving cross-cultural training to become a contextual antecedent or an individual antecedent.

5.2 Cross-Cultural Training and Adjustment in Norway

According to theory, cross-cultural training do help expatriates to adjust to a host country (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell et al., 2006). The self-initiated expatriates interviewed gave the impression of being well adjusted to the Norwegian society. Either they were on the third stage of adjustment or close to the fourth and final stage. None of the expatriates had difficulty with adjusting to the Norwegian work environment. When it came to adjusting to interacting with the Norwegians the expatriates seemed to be very positive despite the fact that they acknowledged that Norwegians had a tendency to be shy and at times cold. Two of the expatriates had not yet adjusted completely to the general non-work environment, but they were well on their way.

Though, overall the expatriates were fairly well adjusted to Norway only four of the interviewed expatriates had taken formal cross-cultural training (language training and Norwegian society course). These four expatriates were from the following countries: Iran, Syria, Poland and Portugal. Two of these four did not think that training was necessary for their adjustment. These two were also the two expatriates who had ranked themselves to be on the third stage of adjustment and emphasised that the adjustment to the non-work environment had been a little difficult. This may imply that cross-cultural training is not very important for self-initiated expatriates to adjust to the Norwegian culture and environment. If we compare Expatriate 1 and Expatriate 5 it can seem like this is also the case. For instance, Expatriate 1 from India had not received any cross-cultural training, while expatriate 5 from Syria had taken a Norwegian language and society course. However, both of these expatriates seemed to be equally adjusted to living in Norway.

Even though overall the self-initiated expatriates do not seem to have a big effect from cross-cultural training on their cross-cultural adjustment does not mean that the self-initiated

expatriates do not benefit from it or that some get more from it than others. Many of the self-initiated expatriates saw that cross-cultural training, especially language training, could give you easy experience and understanding of another culture. This could lead to a faster adjustment than what one might have had without cross-cultural training. However, Expatriate 6 pointed out that the need for cross-cultural training depends on each single person.

In the next section we will look at some of the moderators to see if they may explain why it may seem like there is a weak relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment when it comes to the self-initiated expatriates who were interviewed.

5.2.1 The Moderators Effect on Cross-Cultural Training and Adjustment

Based on where the different self-initiated expatriates come from and their cultural dimensions (see appendix 2) should most of the self-initiated expatriates interviewed, except the Swedish, in theory have more need for cross-cultural training to adjust better and more easily. Their cultures are according to Hofstede very culturally different from the Norwegian culture and therefore are more likely to experience more uncertainty upon arriving in Norway.

However, all of the self-initiated expatriates had had some prior international experience either through work or through their studies. This might have helped them to more easily adjust to the Norwegian culture by enabling them to draw from these past experiences and reduce the uncertainty they might have experienced when they arrived. Of the expatriates who were very culturally different from Norway all, except Expatriate 7, had been working in other countries before coming to Norway. They would therefore most likely have had close relations with other cultures. The possible reduction of uncertainty may have reduced the need for cross-cultural adjustment.

The self-initiated expatriates could also have some individual skills that facilitate their adjustment. Through the interviews some of the self-initiated expatriates gave the impression of being flexible and adaptable among other things. If these skills were shared by the other self-initiated expatriates we do not know. But it might be a possibility perhaps. Also, some of the expatriates emphasised that it was important to be social and that they were social beings. This may be interpreted to mean that they have relationship skills that enable them to obtain good relationships in Norway despite the cultural differences. These individual skills might decrease the effect of cross-cultural training because some of the self-initiated expatriates already potentially have a positive attitude toward new cultures and the skill to deal with problems that may arise.

When it comes to spousal and family support only one of the self-initiated expatriates had one and his family also seemed to be adjusted to the new host country. This self-initiated expatriate had however not received any cross-culture training. The presence of the family might have been one of the sources for his adjustment despite his lack of cross-cultural training. Had however the expatriate had training would an adjustable family probably increase the effect of the cross-cultural training in a positive direction.

Further, we found that the self-initiated expatriates thought the Norwegian work environment had less pressure and that they did not feel like they really had a boss. With this kind of environment the self-initiated expatriates might be able to behave more freely in their work role and use behaviour that they normally would use in their home-country to do their job. If this is the case, the self-initiated expatriates interviewed may not need as much cross-cultural training because they can use behaviour in the workplace that they already know and their uncertainty might therefore be reduced.

Both the companies do also provide other social support elements to the employees and the self-initiated expatriates. For instance, many of the self-initiated expatriates said that the company provided sports alternatives, like football, biking and so on. These kinds of social support alternatives can get the self-initiated expatriate to be more social with their co-workers and active in the society which will make the cross-cultural training more effective. They might through the social support have the opportunity to use the tools and information they gain in through the training to become even more adjusted. However, not all the self-initiated expatriates who were interviewed participated in sports teams.

Based on this, it may seem like many of the moderators explain why there might not be a big need for cross-cultural training to enable the self-initiated expatriate engineers to cross-culturally adjust to the Norwegian culture and environment. Only the cultural differences between the Norwegian culture and six of the expatriate's national culture seem to indicate that some of them will benefit a little from cross-cultural training.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In this thesis we have examined what kind of cultural training self-initiated engineers receive in Norway. We found that half of the interviewed self-initiated expatriates had received language training, which indirectly also taught them about the Norwegian culture. This was either provided through the company or by them self. We also found that the self-initiated expatriates received informal didactic training trough casual conversation with friends and co-workers. This was one of their main information sources about culture. In addition to this some received interaction training from the company and learned about culture through observation of behaviour.

When it came to the effect of the cross-cultural training on the self-initiated expatriate engineers' cross-cultural adjustment we interpreted the findings and concluded that it seemed like the training did not have a big effect. This was among other things because the moderators appeared to reduce the need for cross-cultural training. However, this did mean that the self-initiated expatriates who had taken formal cross-cultural they did not benefit from it.

Based on the findings we found that for the most part the theories presented in chapter 2 were applicable. However, when it comes to who provides the self-initiated expatriates with cross-cultural training we found that it were both the expatriate themselves and the company, instead of just themselves. In addition, it also came to light that maybe companies do not provide cross-cultural training based on if they are self-initiated or company expatriate. But instead might give cross-cultural training based on if they are permanent or contract expatriate employees. Further, we found that it would maybe be more preferable to not have cross-cultural training grouped under the organisational antecedents, since it is not just provided by the company.

This thesis has not gone in too much depth because of lack of time and resources. However, we suggest that future research on this topic for instance could be focusing on the companies and their policies regarding self-initiated expatriates and training. One could also have the same type of research but focus on self-initiated expatriates working in domestic companies, that are not multinational corporations.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

The following questions were the questions asked in each of the interviews with the self-initiated expatriates. In addition, to these probing questions have been used to delve deeper into certain areas of interest.

Background:

Tell me about yourself and your background

1. Where do you originally come from?
2. What is your age?
3. What kind of education do you have?

Tell me about getting the job here in Norway

4. How did you get the job? Were you in your home country or had you arrived in Norway when you got it?
5. What is your position in the company you work in?
6. How long have you lived and worked in Norway and how long do you intend to be in Norway?
7. Why did you decide to come to Norway?
8. What kind of previous international experience have you had?

Cross-Cultural Training:

9. How was it for you to come to Norway – what did you know about Norway, did you have any education, training, etc. about Norway, Norwegians, culture?
10. Before leaving your home country what kind of training/preparations have you received with regards to the Norwegian Culture and/or language, or culture in generally?
11. After arriving in Norway what kind of cultural training have you had?
12. As a self-initiated expatriate, how do you find cultural training programs? Do you have to find it on your own or does someone else help you with this?
13. What kind of training do you think companies should provide (or is needed) regarding cultural training to all expatriates?

14. Do you know if your company offer different cultural training opportunities to CE and SIE?

Cross-cultural Adjustment:

15. What does the term “cross-cultural adjustment” mean to you? Can you describe CCA?

16. After arriving in Norway have you experience any culture shock? Could you give examples?

17. Do you feel like you have adjusted to working in Norway? In what ways has the adjustment to working in Norway been easy and/or difficult?

18. What about the adjustment to Norwegians? Have you adjusted to interacting with the Norwegians?

19. In what way do you feel like you have adjusted to daily life here in Norway?

20. As of now, where would you put yourself on this graph of adjustment (The U-curve of adjustment)?

21. In general what has helped you to culturally adjust so far?

22. Is there something that has made it difficult to adjust?

CCT and CCA:

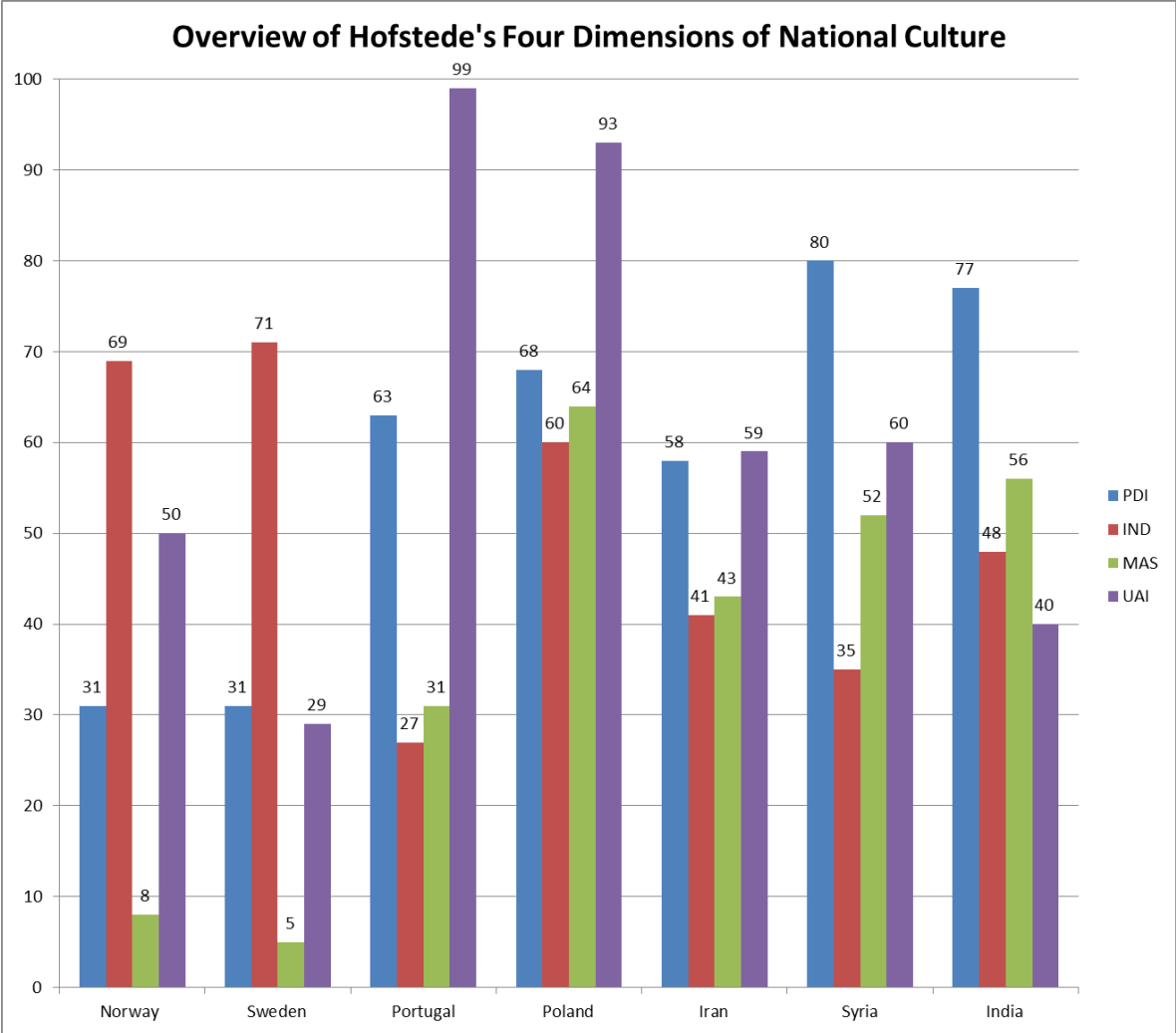
23. How difficult is it for self-initiated expatriates to get the training you need to be able to adjust better to the Norwegian culture? Why is that?

24. What cultural training is necessary to be able to adjust better to new an environment in your opinion?

25. Do you think one needs cross-cultural training to adjust?

26. Do you have anything more you would like to add on this topic?

Appendix 2: Overview of Hofstede’s Four Dimensions of National Culture



	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance
	PDI	IND	MAS	UAI
Norway	31	69	8	50
Sweden	31	71	5	29
Portugal	63	27	31	99
Poland	68	60	64	93
Iran	58	41	43	59
Syria	80	35	52	60
India	77	48	56	40

Table 3: Overview of Hofstede’s Four Dimensions of National Culture

(Hofstede, N.D.)

The table above show how the interviewed expatriates’ cultures look like in comparison to the Norwegian culture according to Hofstede’s four dimensions of national culture. Norway is a culture with little power distance between people. It is an individualist society where the “self” is important. The culture is also very feminine as it only has a score of 8 on this

dimension. This means that the Norwegian culture is more focused on caring for others and quality of life instead of being driven by achievements and competition. When it comes to uncertainty avoidance do Norway's score of 50 indicate that the Norwegians have no preference for or against avoiding uncertainty with regards to the future (Hofstede, N.D.)

As we can see is Sweden very similar to Norway. Only with uncertainty avoidance is there a small difference in attitude as Sweden do not have a tendency to avoid uncertainty.

Portugal is not similar to Norway on any of the four dimensions. On every dimension except for masculinity and uncertainty avoidance is Portugal on the other side of the scale in contrast to Norway. Both Portugal and Norway are feminine countries. But Norway seems to be more feminine compared to Portugal. Portugal has a very high score on uncertainty avoidance dimension and is therefore very different from Norway with regards to this, as Norway is neutral.

Poland is also very different compared to Norway with regards to the four national culture dimensions. Only on individualism does Poland and Norway score about the same. Both countries seem to have an individualistic culture. On the uncertainty avoidance dimension Poland score very high just like Portugal. On the remaining dimensions Poland and Norway score very differently and are on opposite sides of the scale.

Iran, Syria and India have very similar cultures according to Hofstede's four dimensions in that they are not very similar to Norway. On the uncertainty avoidance dimension they have a score of 59 and 60, while india has a score of 40. This means that Syria and Iran do not like uncertainty and India might prefer it a little, while Norway has no preference with regards to this. When it comes to masculinity Syria and India has a score of 52 and 56, while Iran has a score of 43. This means that Syria have a tendency to be a little bit masculine, while Iran is feminine culture, but not as feminine as Norway. On the two remaining dimensions, power distance and individualism are India, Iran and Syria on the other side of the scale compared to Norway.

To sum up, all of these cultures with the exception of Sweden is very different from Norway according to Hofstede's four dimensions of national culture. Some of the other cultures might have one dimension that are similar to Norway, but overall their cultures are different from Norway's culture.

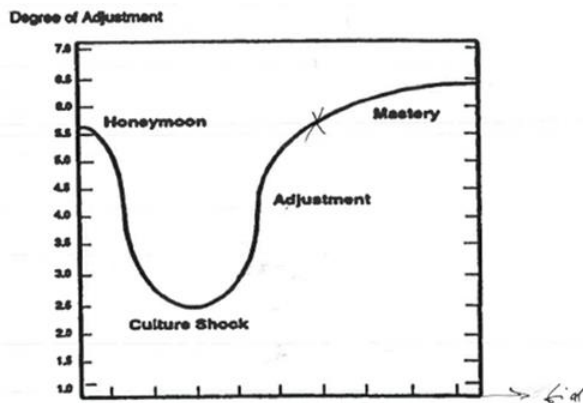
Appendix 3: Evaluation of Their Current Adjustment

The expatriates were asked in the interviews to evaluate how adjusted they were to the Norwegian society at time of the interview. They have in the following graphs of the U-curve theory of adjustment pinpointed where they feel they are in the adjustment process. As we can see five of the expatriates feel they are somewhere between the third and fourth stage of the adjustment process. Two expatriates feel they are at the third stage.. Expatriate 1 could not point out where he felt he was as he did a phone interview. However, when asked about how he felt overall expatriate 1 said *“I had no problems getting myself rendered into the Norwegian system here”*. From this we assume that he would put himself either at the third or fourth stage of adjustment. This expatriate had also been in Norway for 6 years and has had a lot of time to adjust. Two of the expatriates (Expatriate 5 and Expatriate 7) also took the liberty to draw how they felt their adjustment curve had been during their stay as they felt that the original curve of adjustment was not representative for them.

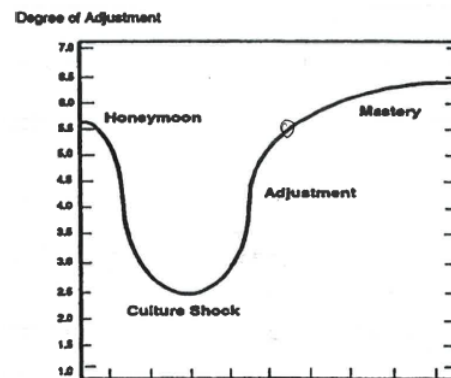
Expatriate 1:

He did not do this as he had a phone interview

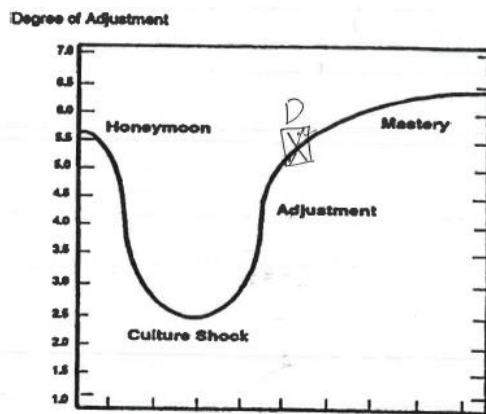
Expatriate 2:



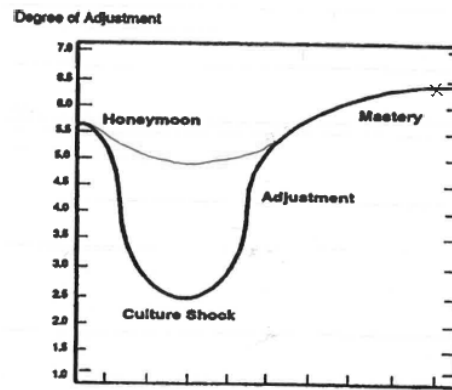
Expatriate 3:



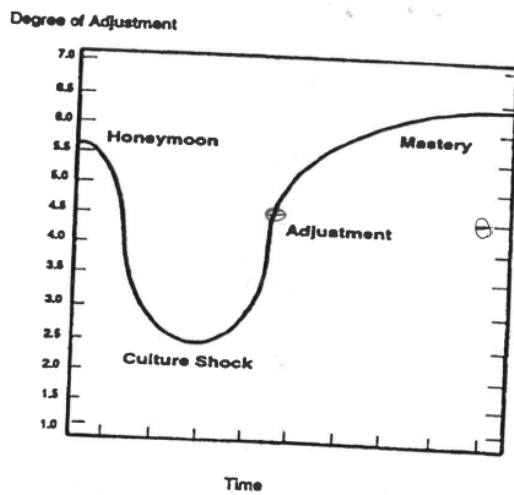
Expatriate 4:



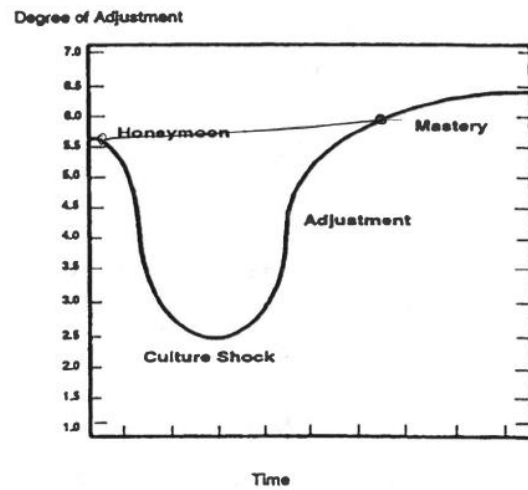
Expatriate 5:



Expatriate 6:



Expatriate 7:



Expatriate 8:

