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NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE WORK-LIFE EXPERIENCE OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES

Master's thesis

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Introduction

Expatriate management research has been a developing area in social science. Strengthening people's regional mobility as a result of softer cross-border systems and economic globalization has aided in the intensification of cross-border labor migration processes. As a result of these realities, business organizations are continually on the lookout for cost-effective options to hire specialists and outsource their practices (Brisco, Schuler, & Tarique, 2012). Additionally, many European countries have been experiencing labour shortages in recent years. To offset the impact of aging on labour shortages in national economies, European governments are taking a variety of steps, including hiring foreign experts from all over the world and Estonia is no different. Estonia's population is forecast to fall to 1.17 million by 2060, according to research (Maasing, 2021). According Maasing (2021), by 2050, it is estimated that the elderly population (those over the age of 65) will reach 24%. Additionally, it is estimated that the number of citizens of working age (20-64) will fall to 52% by 2050. After 2050, the population labour pressure index will remain below 1, indicating that more people will leave the labor force than join. In light of this, the Estonian government has implemented a legislative labor migration policy in recent years with the aim of recruiting foreign workers from outside the region. For example, police border guard reported that a five-year residency visa is now provided for recruiting foreign employees; hiring foreign workers in Estonian start-up companies is excluded from the job quota[1]. Regardless of the labour migration policy's essence, there are also several realities: employees do not come in sufficient numbers, and there is often an outflow of migrant professionals returning to their home countries or other countries (Maasing, 2021; Luik, 2019). Isn't it reasonable to ask why those foreign employees choose not to work in Estonia? Along with the Estonian researcher (Luik, 2019), I argue that, in addition to economic considerations, the situation is influenced by non-economic factors such as the attitude of the host country's population and, in particular, of colleagues in the new work environment, discrepancies in company context, and the likelihood of unfavorable relocation leading to departure. This and other aspects of self-initiated expatriates' (SIE) work-life story have been explored in this research.

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[1] https://www2.politsei.ee/en/teenused/residence-permit/tahtajaline-elamisluba/

SIEs are people with one country's citizenship who serve on a contract basis in another country and travel there voluntarily or on request, typically with the aim of obtaining a position that matches his high skills and material benefits (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). Earlier research (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Suutari & Brewster) examining the phenomenon of expatriates' relocation observed that the primary motives for expatriation are two-way economic incentives, for example, on the part of companies and expatriates. However, the large-scale migration of expatriates creates new challenges, not only because of the rise in social tensions created by the cultural divide between expatriates and the host population, but also because of integration challenges within companies (Caligiuri, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgi, 2001). SIEs begin their relationship with the host company by familiarizing themselves with the company's laws, regulations, and other policies. Such workplace experience is a critical step in an employee's career. According to the researchers (Jakubiak & Kondas, 2017), the phenomenon is a multi-level, dynamic mechanism with its own structure and sequence, connected with a certain personality restructuring associated with participation in new organizational relationships. Previous research (Gajda, 2019) has shown that an adapted employee, who is at ease with his or her work space and with his or her colleagues, cognizant of the importance of his or her status in the company and having a constructive attitude toward it, performs his or her duties more successfully than employees who do not share those values. It should be remembered that adaptation of employee in a broader context refers to how an individual perceives the organization's regulations and practices, as well as the sharing of experience; and this is also an area of historical significance for foreign expatriate management (Caligiuri, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgi, 2001). Numerous studies have been published in the Western academic literatures that concentrate on typical expatriates; however, this research focused on self-initiated expatriates. This research does not intend to investigate organizational culture or the adaptation process, but rather to substantiate Bangladeshi SIEs' work-life experiences in light of organizational influences. The analysis of SIEs' work-life experiences is significant as a subject because of its complexity, the varying degrees of SIEs' motivation for foreign workers, which are not just organizational influences but also due to the peculiarities of social stratification, and their standard of living.

Research objectives and related tasks

The aim of this research is to explore the work-life experiences of SIEs and to gain an understanding of the types of issues that arise in their international workplace. To execute the plan, the following research tasks were completed:

(1) To conduct a literature review to develop an understanding of the concept of SIE;

(2) To conduct interviews with SIEs about their work-life experiences; and

(3) To analyze their work-life narratives to substantiate various issues they encounter in their host country workplace.

Relevance and contribution of the research

The significance of self-initiated expatriate research is linked to important global social processes. International expatriate management has traditionally been constrained by a macro-analysis of state migration strategy, the political and social processes engaged in the migration process. However, self-initiated expatriates, their employment history, and work-life experiences remain beyond the scope of research (Andresen & Biemann, 2010).

According to the literature (Brisco, Schuler, & Tarique, 2012), SIEs may be seen as an attractive labor force in international companies since they are easily convinced to accept a competitive wage or a reduced pay than local people, and they have a versatile career path. The fact that expatriates are attractive to Estonian businesses is becoming a reality too, not just for those in the information technology, science, and academic areas, but also for those in the hospitality and catering industries. Due to a variety of factors, expats invited to work in Estonia may be a competitive resource. To begin, the pay standard must be desirable enough to encourage a foreign worker to migrate; and, in most cases, the government sets the minimum wage amount not just for the employee's subsistence in Estonia, but also for any family members who choose to relocate with him. Second, businesses incur the expenses associated with migration, such as visas, residency permits, accommodation, and transportation use. Not only are these expenses covered in whole or in part by the organization, but also businesses invest many resources in training employees to adapt to a new career, developing techniques to facilitate their incremental adaptation to a new occupation. Thus, if workers have difficulties early on, this may have a negative impact on the company and can result in employees leaving (Fang, Zhao, &

Worm, 2008; Gajda, 2019). It is important to understand how international employees experience the company in this regard.

Moreover, the topic of self-initiated expatriates from Bangladesh who have come to work in Estonia is a relatively new one, despite a wealth of literature on migration and integration of other nationalities from an Estonian perspective. As a consequence, additional research on this topic, especially on SIEs, often results in the addition of new empirical findings to existing academic knowledge. Additionally, The narrative approach to work-life experience has a strong potential for examining the process of expatriate inclusion and interaction (Riessman, 2007). The expatriate, as a messenger of international experience who tells his life story and opens the door to his daily life to the researcher, provides an opportunity to examine the phenomena of migration 'from the inside'. As a result, this research would be equally valuable not only to Estonia, but also to other countries that value the advancement of scholarly discourse on expatriate management.

As a principle, there is not just a single motivation that causes a person to abandon his home in moving to foreign countries, but a complicated mix of various kinds of motives. Throughout generations, these motives have played an important role in the growth of society and the creation of civilization. It's no less relevant in modern times either. Moving to another country for work is not only just relocation, a change of residence from one place to another but the reasons for moving to another place are dictated by multiple factors, such as economic, political, environmental, legal, social, cultural, psychological and humanitarian and so on. The paradigm of international expatriate study has matured, mellowed and mediated with different contemporary issues; and the topic of self-initiated expatriate is still relatively recent, making it more enigmatic as a research topic.

On the other hand, the narratives of self-initiated expatriates are far more complex than other traditional forms of expatriation and their work-life experience shows a kind of silence that confronts us with the complex structure of our everyday lives, social policy and cross-border freedom (Andresen & Biemann, 2010). By analyzing their work-life experiences, the cultural differences they face in foreign lands, and by revealing the involvement of host organization, I will obtain a broader aspect of the theory of self-initiated expatriate management, which will allow me to further my research on this topic in the future.

1. Theoretical overview of self-initiated expatriate

1.1 Defining Self-initiated expatriate

Companies' personnel may be divided into two categories based on the criteria of belonging to country; for example, 1) citizens of the country where the divisions and branches of an organization are located are considered 'local workers'; and 2) expats, or expatriates who are 'foreign workers'. The phrase expat is derived from the Latin words 'ex' (out of) and 'patria' (native country), and it refers to an employee of a company who works outside of his native country as an assigned or voluntary specialist (Oxford, 2017).

The basic definition of an expat as a person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country other than their home country to work often applies to artists as well as foreign professionals in jobs outside their home country (Andresen & Biemann, 2010). They travel to host countries either on their own or abroad through their employers, which can be private companies, universities, governments or non-governmental organizations.

Generally, expatriates can be classified into two types: one is a corporate expatriate (CE) and the other is a self-initiated expatriate (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). Corporate expatriates are appointed by the organization's head office in local branches and typically occupy management positions there. Sometimes they are called a traditional form of the expatriate. In comparison to corporate expatriates, self-initiated expatriate independently find jobs and travel to their place of employment (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). In most situations, the CE follows the personnel policy and procedure of the head office and its cross-border mobility is carried out within the career ladder of the organization. On the other hand, SIE does not always have this luxury on the part of the organization in which they are to serve (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). Defining 'self-initiated expatriate' does not yet have a cohesive approach to the migration phenomenon. Sometimes this term refers to young migrants, skilled migrants, unskilled migrants, even ethno-religious groups or ethnic minorities living outside their country, who are supposed to return to their homeland (Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010). The definition of SIE is easily confused with other terms such as migrants, emigrants, travellers, exiled foreigners, and so on, prompting the question of which category of migrants are expatriates/expats?

Researchers (Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010) differentiate between the terms SIE and migrant in many ways. To begin, unlike SIEs, migrants frequently move from developing

to developed countries or are forced to leave their home country for a variety of reasons, such as security, poverty, unemployment etc. SIEs may be more temporary in their overseas movements than migrants, who may eventually become permanent migrant workers if they remain in the new country. Furthermore, the term migrant can be used negatively compared to SIE (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014).

In the same way, other researchers (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014) found some differences when considering the question of 'who are migrants and SIE' in the context of cross-border movement: a migrant is a person who does not live in his home country, and migrants may be emigrants (people who have left their home country) or immigrants (people who have arrived in a foreign country); departments (people who have been expelled from the state or forcibly resettled elsewhere within the country); tourists (people who are temporarily visiting another country but do not have the right to live there permanently). An SIE may leave his country for an extended period without seeking jobs, for a variety of reasons, including political ones, such as living in a new country. In this sense, SIE's return to their home country is uncertain (Waldinger, 2008).

Biemann & Andresen (2010) has investigated the notion of SIE from the perspectives of crossing national territory. According to these scholars, SIEs are desirable migrants, expected, invited, or attracted to a specific country. SIEs are individuals with one country's citizenship and working under a contract in another country who moves to another country willingly or by invitation, usually intending to get a job corresponding to his high qualifications, while possessing the material resources necessary for full-fledged residence in this country.

This definition corresponds to a uniform understanding and the objectives of this study and can be used in constructing the concept of SIE – SIE is a qualified labor migrant who is in demand in a given country and who came by invitation or independently, who usually does not associate his future with the host country, does not always plan to assimilate with the local population and considers job offers, giving priority to opportunities for professional self-realization and income maximization. Figure one shows the conceptual understanding of expatriates and SIE.

Cerdin & Selmer (2014) suggested the mixed perception of recruiting SIEs because they encounter fewer difficulties in learning host cultural values, language, socio-cultural

issues, and that they can also avoid work place misunderstandings in a multi-cultural setting. One form or another, SIEs are a major part of the international labor force and are considered more accessible or convenient to hire than conventional corporate expatriates. It has been argued by academics (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014) that companies are becoming global day by day, and this has driven them to capitalize on the ability to outsource their workforce. This phenomenon has also made it possible to quickly hire SIEs from various locations (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014).
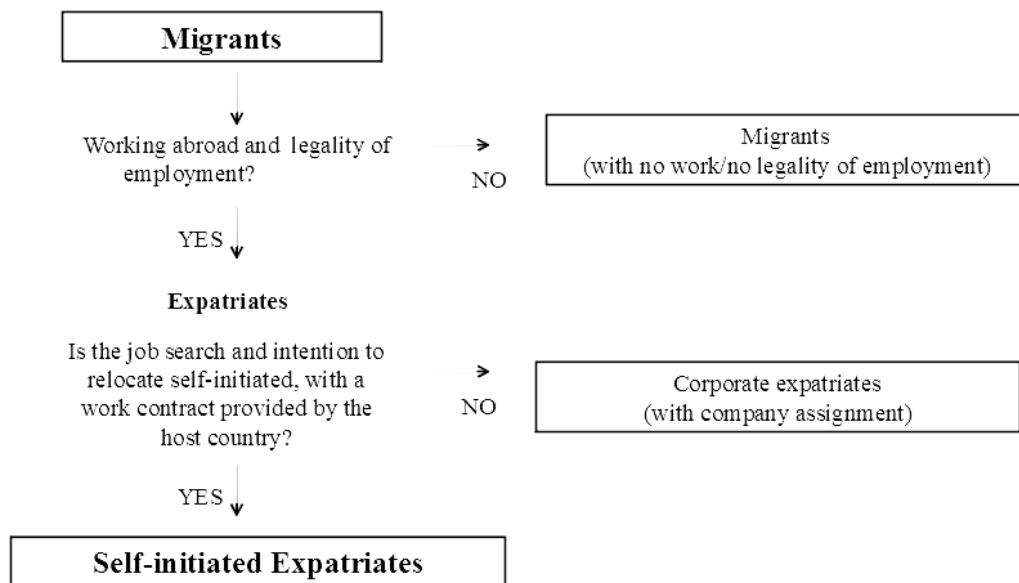
Figure 1: Migrants vs SIE (developed by author based on Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014)

However, amid much debate in the literature on the concept of SIE, the reasons why SIEs switch to various countries receive less attention (Ariss, Koall, Elgin, & Suutari, 2012). The choice of a career is also dependent on the individual (Ariss, Koall, zbilgin, & Suutari, 2012). Expatriates have traditionally been favoured due to their qualifications as scientists, teachers, or researchers, as well as managers with specialized professional experience (Ariss & Syed, 2011). Simultaneously, this practice is integrated into an evaluative approach to ordinary workers, artists, and others in which a certain level of expertise, competence, and long-term vocational experience is respected (Ariss & O¨zbilgin, 2010).

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Researchers (Ariss, Koall, Elgin, & Suutari, 2012; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) addressed several explanations why SIEs travel and choose various organizations and countries. The practice of organization is one of the explanations that deserve special attention. These scholars addressed organizational level heterogeneity, such as human resource management techniques, discrimination practices, diversity strategies/practices influence expatriates' career choices. Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino (2012) have also explained why expats have chosen to pursue a global career and what kind of challenges they face. Table one contains such factors.

Table 1: Experience of global career

Why the choice of global career	Challenge and Experiences	References
Personal choice/reason Family factors Work assignment	**Personal challenge** (Stress and coping, Identity transformation, work-family conflict, maintaining friendships and personal life) **Organizational challenge** (rules, regulation, workplace diversity, workplace motivational factor)	(Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012; Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991)

Kaulisch & Enders (2005) stated that while other nations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East are eager to employ foreign expatriates, they are unable to fully utilize their human capital because expatriates are often reluctant to adopt organizational practices. Researchers (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012) suggested that firms hiring expatriates, therefore, concentrate on personnel management tasks, including the established labor incentive and stimulation system, enhancing employee interest and quality of work.

1.2 Work-life experience of SIE

When we address the work-life experiences of SIEs, a variety of aspects of work and life in the host country immediately spring to mind. To explain work-life experiences, interdisciplinary approaches may be used. For example, in cultural studies, this experience is associated with cultural integration; in sociology, it is associated with corporate culture;

and in other business disciplines, it is associated with personnel adaptation. The aim of this research precludes a comprehensive evaluation of all of these areas, which is also not logical within the confines of a master's thesis. As a result, I summarize what SIEs experience upon their initial arrival in their host organization in this segment, as well as what is critical to their work-life.

When an SIE first arrives in a foreign country, he or she experiences the host company and learns about various facets of the organization, such as rules and regulations, diversity of employment, leadership and coworker behavior, incentive/wage, equality and justice, employee autonomy, appreciation, career growth, and organizational success (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). Understanding how SIEs perceive these variables in host organizations is critical because they affect a significant portion of their work-life; understanding about these factors will expose which organizational aspects SIEs dislike/like, as well as how supportive the organization has been in assisting SIEs in socializing in host country's local life. It can also reveal problems affecting SIEs work-life in general (Clark, 2001; Moncarz, Zhao, & Kay, 2009).

A vast body of literature has developed considering different organizational factors, substantiating evidence focusing on the employee as a whole, but little attention has been paid to whether these factors shape SIEs work-life experiences at the host company. It is considered that appreciation and compassion are a form of compensation for forming a life experience for employees (Aiken, Clarke, & Sloane, 2002). Employees interpret the organization's support as the extent to which the organization values their contribution to the job. This does not always entail cash payments, but rather managerial concessions to employee demands, assistance to the organization in difficult life circumstances, supplying workers with what they need to work (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

One of the volatile indicators influencing employees' experience of working in an organization is the level of material remuneration, such as wage/incentive (Bakotic & Babic, 2013). Many workers remain with the organization despite receiving little compensation whereas others may leave the organization in exchange for substantial monetary incentives for their efforts (Lai, 2011).

The general perception of fairness among employees is linked to organizational culture (Shields & Wheatley, 2002; Kamalian, Yaghoubi, & Moloudi, 2010). Many

employees believe the change is motivated by bitterness and unfair treatment from management. As a result, a lack of fairness distorts workers' experience of working in an organization (Ladebo, Awotunde, & AbdulSalaam-Saghir, 2008).

Many workers, including SIEs, want to advance in their careers. This criterion is particularly relevant for young employees. Opportunities for advancement make the organization appealing (Landy, 1985). At the same time, workers who realize their employer is unable to guarantee the realization of their abilities often begin to look for another place of employment where they can unleash their potential (George & Jones, 2002).

Coming to a new workplace means facing the organization's policies, regulations, and responsibilities. The experience with such a new phenomenon can be reflected by recognizing employees' struggles and ease of experiencing it. This is an individual viewpoint to understand SIE's work-life experience. That means, what employees experience in host-company can be related to the organization and how they experience can be related to their adaptation in organization. Adaptation is a complex notion, with distinct definitions depending on how well it is understood. Personnel adaptation in the workplace is the shared understanding of the employee and the organization, based on the gradual development of the employee under new professional and social conditions (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2008). Personnel adaptation is an ongoing process that employees experience from their entry into the organization to their retirement (Gajda, 2019). This makes sense that this continuing process is specific to the individual, for example, the experience of new hires is not the same as employees who have served for many years. In this way, how personnel will experience organizational practices, rules and regulation can take several forms with the evolvement of the overall organization. Personnel adaptation also refers to the assimilation of employees to a new social environment, and working conditions (Huselid, Beatty, Kerr, & Becker, 2009). Under this context, understanding of the team, diversity and new roles, assimilation of different behavioral stereotypes, personal interests and expectations with organizational ones are carried out (Watkins, 2016). Personnel adaptation is also defined as a two-way process in which attempts to adapt are made by both the employee and the organization (Jakubiak & Kondas, 2017). This definition represents the reality, in which both parties are involved, that is to say, an employee who wants to adapt as his or she aims to work within a given organization, offering monetary compensation and other benefits, as well as an organization that

requires an adapted and efficient employee. As previously stated, I have narrowed my research focus to 'what' elements, so pursuing this 'how' aspect is not within the scope of my research.

However, the review of the preceding literature allows us to recognize certain significant outcomes, such as organizational experience in group and individual context; and this experience is critical to understand how SIEs achieve coherent and successful relations within the group, as well as his identity in that group, survival within that group, career advancement, quality of life enhancement, income, and so on.

The organization is the shared social space in which the personnel's working life process takes place and in compliance with which the department of human resources of the organization are established (Fang, Zhao, & Worm, 2008). It advocates, with its most essential characteristics, the standards and principles, the rules and customs that underlie the functioning and growth of staff. Staffs are not only carriers, but also active producers of their culture, modifying and developing their key characteristics and parameters (Brisco, Schuler, & Tarique, 2012). In an organization, this phase is routinely carried out based on selected culture, i. e., practices, norms, rules and regulations etc.

However, grooming new employees to the workplace is regarded as one of the difficult duties for the organization, owing to the continuous confrontation between existing standards and the new conditions of the surrounding reality (Gajda, 2019). To facilitate new employees in the services offered by the organization, researchers (e.g. Huselid, Beatty, Kerr, & Becker, 2009) separately emphasize the orientation of employees, which includes a variety of activities from which employees receive knowledge about the organization. During this orientation process, the employee learns not only about the organizational responsibility entrusted to him but also about the host country and relocation matters, among other things. Providing these grooming and adaptation assistance to employees not only decreases the time and budgetary burdens of the organization, increases the value of the workplace, but also has a beneficial impact on the preservation of the teamwork, providing the preconditions for effective mentoring, training and career development framework (Frolenoka & Dukule, 2017).

For a new employee, after he has gone through all the stages of selection for a position, a difficult period of experience in the organization begins. When a new employee joins an organization he faces new social settings; he suffers not only emotional conflict

associated with the fear of failure at a new job but also material losses associated with connection and communication with colleagues. There is evidence, according to researchers (Caligiuri, Lazarova, Tarique, & Burgi, 2001), that many recruited employees quit during the probation period. The cause for this is the difference between individual expectations, for example, the conflict between personal perceptions and the corporate working atmosphere, monetary rewards, career growth, the actions of peers, employee autonomy, and what the organization expects of the newly hired employee, e.g., the manifestation of quality and effective performance (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2008).

Coping with change depends on motivation, rewards, personal skill, ability, work experience and additional support (Frolenoka & Dukule, 2017). Therefore, to minimize the issues associated with the workplace, the organization introduces various techniques relating to motivation, subjective satisfaction and sense of fulfillment (Frolenoka & Dukule, 2017). Proactive action to integrate into a new organizational environment can also play a decisive role in this case. According to researchers (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), the following practices assist new employees in adjusting to their new work environment: searching for and assimilating information, norms, and work rules to be accepted in the organization; aspiring for the reward for their work and, in general, for being in the organization establishing relationships with coworkers and managers. This effectively means that how workers experience the organization as a whole is influenced by what they experience within the organization. My investigation focuses on these aspects.

2. Empirical study

2.1 Explanation of research process

Narrative analysis as a research method

The function of different types of knowledge can be understood by considering their narrative and nature. One of the critical theoretical preconditions for conducting a narrative interview is the narrator's innate expertise in everyday narrative building rules. The storytelling technique's primary purpose is to clarify the elements of this competence. Another critical principle is that the speaker recounts and retells his life experiences in the order in which he recalls them, i.e. life history is repeated according to its significance to the narrator, and as an individual starts to discuss his life journey, he follows the dynamics of the narrative phase and can place fewer emphasis on opportunities for self-presentation due to the interview circumstance (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002). In this regard, two real-life poles of human life often interact in a narrative: the individual and the social. One of the purposes of the narrative is to enact the relationship between these two poles, rather than to articulate the individual. The events recounted by the narrator are phases of the subject's life experience in which he creates the discourse of individuality and difference, exclusion and inclusion. As a result, the narrative analysis appears to be methodologically central in the study of the issue of in-culture, being in culture, living life in culture, allowing us to relate the pole of individual experience of being a bearer of culture, on the one hand, and the pole of institutional conceptual layers, on the other (Riessman, 2007).

According to Riessman (2007), the narrative analysis enables those two layers, i.e., individual and social, to concentrate on one another and to see the event the narrator transmits as not only an individual, linked only to his personal life but also as a personal manifestation of the socially typical. The event will turn into a kind of micro-turn and hence remain a memory that will become a story in a person's life and this is particularly evident in the stories of those who had encountered circumstances, for example, going abroad, and cultural exchange and so on (Riessman, 2007).

Narrative analysis is a qualitative research approach that analyzes the stories constructed by research participants while also investigating the issues of narrative texts for a clear objective. That approach should help to understand how people stand up for themselves in their own life stories and experiences (Riessman, 2007).

According to Petrakis (2017) narrative inquiry is often accompanied by thematic analysis of narrative texts gathered. Researchers sometimes have ideas about what they might find in the content of qualitative interviews, for example, as a result of insight gained from a review of related literature. The absence or presence of the expected topics would be uncovered by the close reading and subsequent analysis (Petrakis, 2017). In this way, thematic analysis assists researchers in identifying the important subjects covered in an interview transcript and can provide insights into how, and even why, topics or concepts are described

Table 2: Research design

Methodological aspect	Methods	Data collection technique
Qualitative research	Narrative analysis	Semi-structured interview

The research design that was used is depicted in Table two. It is entirely fair to wonder why I choose qualitative narrative analysis as my research methodology. It has been proposed that the research objective should facilitate the selection of an approach for research design (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, after attending research methodology classes, talking to my professors, supervisor, and most notably doing initial literature reviews, it seems that work-life experience is a dynamic phenomenon. For the study of such a complex concept, narrative qualitative approaches will add meaning to the broad explanation and insights that I might use in my research. Besides, the qualitative narrative approach provides flexibility to get in-depth information and to gather facts and experiences that contribute to the individual's life stories (Riessman, 2007). According to Riessman (2007) narrative analysis is not only about getting the stories and retelling them but about upbringing together all the bits and pieces of an individual's life experiences in a manner that helps readers to see the patterns and themes that go beyond and restore the stories in a wider way.

However, the methodology of narrative composition is exceedingly difficult. Researchers (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002) sequentially proposed narrative analysis strategies. To begin, they characterize restoration as the process of gathering tales, analyzing them for their central theme, and then rewriting (re-writing) them to fit into a

sequential structure. Second, they provide further context for the collaboration that occurs between participants and researchers during the story compiling phase. One critical argument made by these researchers is that it is necessary to developing the aim for collecting stories and details prior to beginning the narrative study. This deductive purpose contributes to the sequencing of an event, a narrative, or a memory in order to enable the individual to reveal a wealth of information. I am focusing on the work-life experiences of self-initiated expatriates in order to get a better understanding of their perceptions of critical organizational aspects and their material connection to the host organization in a foreign country. The aim of this research is not to link their feelings of belonging to wider social mobility, but rather to illustrate their workplace experience.
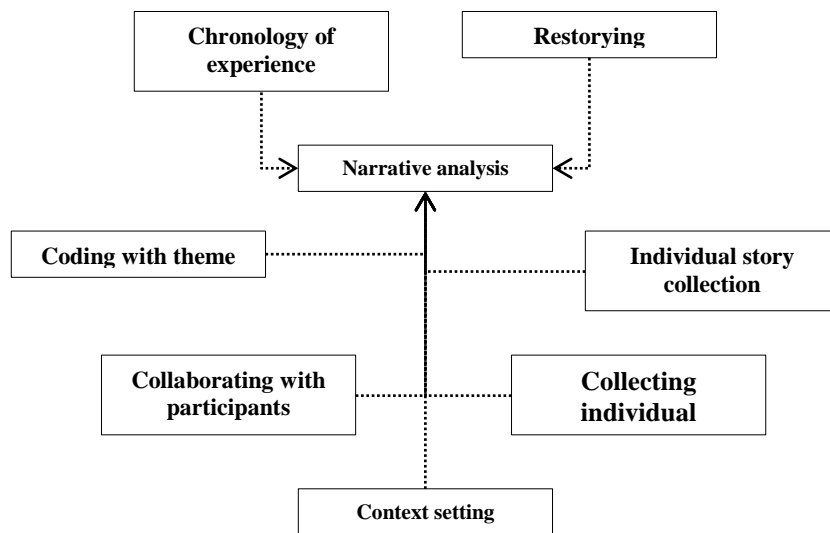
Figure 2: Narrative analysis sequence

In narrative analysis, the researcher must serve as a mediator between memory and experience (Riessman, 2007). The researcher would make it easy for the participant to recall and sequence all events to allow the participant to share the details needed. To do so, the researcher needs to establish a relationship with the research subject to the point that the participant can have a great deal of confidence in the researcher, and this is one of how a researcher can get to the depth of the individual's story that is needed for qualitative research (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002). My two years of relationships with Estonia have allowed me to meet the various expatriates from Bangladesh who live in Tallinn and Tartu. I have participated in several national events; I have exchanged stories and developed friendships with expatriates from this community, and this collaboration process has allowed me to understand research subjects in a more intimidating way. I will

discuss the operationalization of the research concepts and analytical strategy in the subsequent section.

Operationalization

Operationalization is, in reality, the method of choosing measurable processes to represent abstract concepts (Decarlo, 2018). I have set up a deductive analysis to turn my research goal into a measurable thought and to divide it into two phases. At first, I studied the various literature on SIE including the theory of organizational culture (Schein, 2004), theory of cultural difference (Hofstede, 2011) and personnel adaptation (Frolenoka & Dukule, 2017; Gajda, 2019) to understand what type of organization SIEs join, SIEs overall experience with the organizational aspects, i.e., introductory training, rules and regulations, diversity at work, leadership and co-workers behavior, incentive/wage, equity and fairness, employee autonomy, appreciation, career growth, organizational success; and later completed interviews through a semi-structured questionnaire based on these aspects.

During the interview, I asked about SIE's journey to Estonia, their motivation for joining the organisation, their overall experience with organizational rules, laws, coworker behavior, diversity experience, their subjective experience with pay and benefits, how they are treated at work, and whether they like the organization's reputation and success, as well as their future career plans. Second, after gathering and compiling narratives about work-life experiences at the host organization, I created themes based on similar narratives. During the review method, the audio text was transcribed and read in its entirety, and then divided into distinct thematic groups. Following that, I organized the codes and began formulating a subject, and it was during this period that the relevant topics became apparent.

Interviews

Interviews may be of a different type, for example, structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002). A structured interview consists of a standardized questionnaire and, in this case, the respondent or interviewee has less freedom to express views beyond the questionnaire choices (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). In the case of unstructured interviews, that's the opposite. I have selected semi-structured interviews, not because they are one of the common methods of data collection in

qualitative research, but because of some of the other reasons. First, the interview is essentially a conversation between the participants and the interviewer. Collecting someone's data just by conducting a normal conversation with them is not entirely incomprehensible (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Having said that it means, there shall be a clear purpose for the collection of data. In my study, I have set out my semi-structured interview questions according to my research purpose. Second, the flexibility of a semi-structured interview is that it helps the interviewer subtly adjust the wording and the order of questions that he/she poses to ensure that the interviewee maintains the most relevant information (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). A semi-structured interview often helps the researcher to ask the different interviewee about topics in a different manner, and this provides the researcher with a lot of extra ability to get details and clarity of information and additionally, the semi-structured interview also offers researchers the chance to ask additional questions about interesting things that may not have been expected in the first place (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Through semi-structured interviewing approaches were used to get the best out of the respondents in terms of details, they were time-intensive and restricted to a smaller geographical area, such as Tallinn and Tartu. Whichever type of interview researcher approaches the success of the interview relies on the interviewer, the interviewer's attitude of questioning and mindset is critical to fostering confidence and developing a personal connection with the interviewee (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002). Being a Bangladeshi national, it was easy to create a connection by speaking the same language. Although I conducted the interview in the English language but having a national connection took me more than an hour to talk to each participant and inquire about their background in the home country, the adjustment in the host country.

Sample

Purposive sampling is the traditional method of sampling in qualitative research; it entails the compilation of data cases with specific information about the research topic (Creswell, 2012). Since the purposeful sample is a group of individuals deliberately chosen to address the research topic adequately, it therefore means that, for qualitative analysis, the researcher selects key participants who adequately satisfy the research objective (Decarlo, 2018). Keeping this point in view, I interviewed 8 Bangladeshi self-initiated expatriates of whom 3 SIEs live and work in Tartu and 5 SIEs work and reside in Tallinn. Table three illustrates the demographic information of the participants. To recruit

participants I have posted about my thesis objective in the Facebook group, where all Bangladeshi expatriates living in Estonia are virtually connected.

Table 3: Demographic profile of interview participants

Interview number	Age	Occupation	Education	Interview format	Interview length
Interview 1	25	Chef	Diploma	via Skype	1 hour
Interview 2	27	Administrator	Masters	Respondent's office	1 hour
Interview 3	28	Administrator	Masters	Respondent's home	1.5 hours
Interview 4	29	IT	Bachelor	via Skype	1 hour
Interview 5	30	IT	Bachelor	Respondent's office	1 hour
Interview 6	34	IT	Masters	Respondent's office	1 hour
Interview 7	36	Chef	Bachelor	Respondent's office	1 hour
Interview 8	39	Chef	Diploma	Respondent's home	1.5 hours

It is rational to question why I have selected such a purposeful sample that belongs to non-homogenous occupations, for example, IT, admin and catering industry. The answer lies in the goal of purposeful sampling as mentioned earlier. The purpose of sampling of this kind is to pick a sample for an analysis in which the researcher has specifically identified an understanding of what he is investigating. I wanted to find a sample of Bangladeshi self-initiated expatriates who work in different occupations and belong to different social classes. Exploring the work-life experience of such a sample shall retrieve the comprehensive stories from three occupational perspectives.

Ethics and validity

Protecting the rights and interests of the participants, maintaining the quality of scientific knowledge, upholding the institutional and social standards, are the ethical

principles that the scientific knowledge-creating process should adhere to (Watt, 2007, Decarlo, 2018). Basic guidelines note that if a tape recorder is used to collect responses, direct consent must be received from the person being questioned; confidentiality and privacy must be maintained in the interview process (Watt, 2007). By acknowledging the participant's consent, I used a smartphone recorder to record the responses, and no substance in the recording and interview process could break the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

Qualitative research in general produces subjective results of a phenomenon; it brings out solid knowledge and understanding about the research topic (Creswell & Ollerenshaw, 2002). The role of the researcher in research of this kind is very crucial as he has to avoid bias, assure the quality of research (Riessman, 2007). It is not surprising to avoid using the term validity in the case of qualitative research because many researchers argue that truth is socially constructed and there is no single reality (Decarlo, 2018). As a result, various scholars have proposed different methods of increasing the quality of study in the case of qualitative research. For e.g, avoiding bias (Watt, 2007); indeed it is not entirely easy to prevent bias, but there are many approaches to minimize bias. To eliminate participant bias, researchers (Watt, 2007) proposed that the data collection process should be focused on a particular research question, and interview questions should be presented in such a way as to discourage participants from merely agreeing or disagreeing, and the interviewer should direct interviewees to have relevant and detail response. The designing semi-structured questionnaire has given me that flexibility. Another very useful way of being able to have proof of descriptive validity is to have several informants. If a researcher interviews several individuals from multiple viewpoints looking at the same scenario or the same phenomena, and they all come up with the same themes and the same general results, then that gives the descriptive validity (Watt, 2007). Each of these concerns has been considered in this study; I developed a semi-structured questionnaire that takes into account the theoretical support to understand SIEs experience of work-life in the host company. In the same way, respondents were from different demographic characteristics and presented their narratives on the same phenomena.

2.2 Analysis of Bangladeshi SIEs' work-life narratives

As Bangladeshi companies began expanding their operations in Europe in the late 1990s, they were adamant about not localizing their branches and, much more importantly,

maintaining Bangladesh's brand (Salway, 2008). One explanation for this was that Bangladeshi companies lacked confidence in government entities and were fearful of provincial constraints. As a consequence of Bangladeshi companies' internationalization, and in the absence of localization in local subsidiaries, staffs familiar with Bangladeshi business practices were clearly needed. They dispatched the CEs mainly from their headquarters in Bangladesh. Simultaneously, the labour market condition in Bangladesh has been dynamic for employees. The amount of vacancies for them had decreased significantly as a result of those industries' protracted economic struggle. Due to language and cultural barriers, businesses continued to favor local workers or Bangladeshi skilled employees willing to operate for a reasonable or lower wage overseas (Crozier & Others, 2003). Simultaneously, these companies' local branches maintained open positions.

On the other hand, young Bangladeshis, especially those with a bachelor's degree, face stiff competition for employment, and many find international work experiences appealing (Rahman, 2010). Simultaneously, they would have the opportunity to resume their education when working, which is an added incentive. Additionally, since foreign firms provide higher wages, young expatriates with little expertise or job experience choose employment openings that offer those benefits (Rahman, 2010). This reliance on international firms and expatriates has had an impact on the labor markets of Bangladeshi SIEs in European countries. According to a previous study (Rahman, 2010), what distinguishes Bangladeshi young expatriates from other expatriates is their special perspective on global lifestyle opportunities. As previously said, Bangladeshi migrants, with the exception of European migrants, tend to move in order to maintain their (upper) social class lifestyles and characteristics. Their expatriation is governed by a positive selection process, according to which the more prosperous an individual is in his homeland, the easier life would be in the country of emigration. It is widely accepted that the possibility of expatriation would alleviate the competition for social class membership.

However, young Bangladeshi expatriates enjoy more advantages than Bangladeshi youth who remain in the country and work. Furthermore, as a result of Bangladesh's deteriorating labour market conditions from the 1990s to the mid-2000s, Bangladeshi youth continue to face unemployment problems. Under certain labour market conditions, it will be rational to continue residing abroad in order to improve and sustain socioeconomic status in the home country. Previous research (Jan, 2008) has also shown that expatriation

is not a bad choice when international employers provide a better salary and job environment. I will address the narrative analysis of my respondents in this segment. Several themes arose from the narratives; table 4 details the aspects of certain work-life experience factors.

Table 4: Dimensions of work-life experience

Dimensions	Factors
Individual and Social	Career fulfillment, Friendships in host company
Organizational	Relocation training, language learning facility, rules and regulation, well equipped working environment, diversity in colleagues, workplace motivational factor, i.e., salary, appreciation

Individual and social factors

SIEs' experience in Estonian companies is inextricably linked to their time in the country. There were two peaks in this experience: those who came newly (1-3 years) and those who have lived in Estonia for more than 5 years. There are considerably higher shares of well-known influences in Estonian business rules and regulations for those who have lived in Estonia for more than five years.

After moving to a foreign country to work, SIE finds himself in a new social environment, which he defines as a new community of established norms, relationships, and a certain history. The nature of the partnership with the company's representatives and employees decides how rooted the new employee is, how secure he or she is to utilize his or her skills, and even how long the employee stays with the organization. As a result, the group's ability to tolerate this person is critical to the employee's success in the workplace.

According to the comments of the participants in this qualitative analysis, Estonian colleagues' positive attitude toward SIE, whose profession is IT and administration, and the absence of a distinction between 'friends' and 'aliens,' aids in inclusion to the organization. According to the respondents, the team is friendly, and if a person performs

cohesively and well, if their action is friendly against other team members, there would be no conflicts when entering the team.

Career fulfillment

According to the respondents' narratives, their explanations for relocating to Estonia are varied and complex. Almost all respondents emphasized the importance of career fulfillment as an individual factor.

> "As is customary, the explanation I changed my professional path to move here was nothing extraordinary in comparison to what others believed. I was working for a US-based business, but I was constantly on the lookout for European-based companies, especially in Estonia, because the IT sector is already well established here, and I reasoned that if I wanted to be more competitive in this sector, I needed to relocate. Thus, it was a chance to obtain this role that prompted my decision to relocate here" (Interview no 6).

The participants reported that Europe provides them with many opportunities to use their skills and advance their careers within European organizations. That is why they want to relocate from Bangladesh to Estonia. Since Estonia is a more rapidly developing nation in terms of the IT industry. Several participants reported that Estonia is a stable country that attracts a diverse range of businesses, not just start-ups. Indeed, they desired a better life in a new world outside of their native land. Additionally, they chose to relocate to Estonia in order to protect and build a strong future. According to them, it is therefore important to be cautious about this situation by searching for available positions on the organization's website.

> "I've been here two years. I was hired as a chef at an Estonian restaurant, where I felt in complete charge due to the restaurant's small size. This is because I am still involved with Asian cooking inside this organization. I discovered a way to combine preparing and serving my food here in the kitchen, and I figured it would be beneficial. I love preparing and serving food, and as a result, I've chosen to share some of my culinary abilities here. I'm extremely interested in discovering different foods from this new country." (Interview no 1).

Friendship in host-company

Getting together in touch with others is important for a successful social and professional life. If you are able to enjoy a high performance in your work, it reflects in your personal life. Those that are seen as socially influential advance as well as those that are simply more prominent in their fields, and are often found networking. Socializing and networking are difficult to separate. The respondents emphasized the importance of socializing and having friends at work. The respondents believed it was important to integrate individuals outside peers into social life in order for them to experience a sense of belonging both at work and in society.

> "Later that year, I was invited to join activities such as weddings and holidays here, as well as to come and go to a variety of other locations. I've been a member of this organization for quite some time, and they've enabled me to participate in a variety of activities, including social events and business outings. Since my experience here, I've been able to learn and communicate with their culture in order to get a greater understanding of their way of life. My travels brought me all over their country to different locations to experience Estonian society, allowing me to encounter new people and learn from them about the ways their community operates" (Interview no 3).

> "My workplace has always accepted me as a member, and to assist me in expanding my networking, my colleagues have introduced me to separate traditions and discussed a myriad of subjects with me to help me become more adaptable with them. My coworkers have welcomed me into their homes, introducing me to cultural values and activities in order to make me more approachable. This is how I build my network of Estonian and foreign contacts. As a result, I already have a strong network of Estonian and international contacts in Europe" (Interview no 4).

According to respondents developing friendships is not simple since it requires the discovery of a shared purpose or mode of communication. Language plays a critical part. Almost all participants acknowledged that they experience language barriers, making friendships impossible, even more so while working with coworkers who speak little or no English.

"Since we serve in a global market, we want to use English as a professional language. However, I am sometimes expected to talk a little Estonian during business meetings with Estonian people. In my official duties, I will sometimes use Estonian in corporate events to interact with Estonian citizens. This allows me to interact with local residents who need me to communicate in Estonian, which is difficult for me and with the cooperation of my colleagues. To be associated with people who are all fluent in Estonian and can assist with this will complicate matters, even though they work in my industry, and dealing with colleagues from other industries would only complicate matters. Although I am surrounded by them from both sides, there are moments when I am unable to get them together. In those instances, I must overcome them on my own" (Interview no 6).

Speaking about the work-life of SIEs in a new country and new organization, other factors may seem merely associated with the organization, but directly with the individual. These factors include the socio-demographic characteristics of SIEs, for example, gender, age, marital status, nationality of the spouse, etc. Some researchers point to the decisive role of individual characteristics and values in learning new things. Researcher (Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010) stated that those for whom freedom of choice is one of the most important life values adjust and learn more easily than those for whom freedom is not of particular importance. It is believed that the critical parameter of such learning is the person's age (Fang, Zhao, & Worm, 2008). The younger the person, the sooner and more painlessly the process of getting used to the new culture can go on. Along with the factors listed in the section, an additional factor may also contribute to the experience of working in a news organization. This is the marital status of the individual and the presence of relatives or friends in the country of arrival, as well as his knowledge of labour practices in the host country. The subjective factors of such experience include the experience of a different cultural environment. Experience in new conditions allows a person to use previously mastered behaviour patterns concerning a new situation.

The presence of family and children can presumably influence the work-life of SIE's in various ways: help expand the circle of communication with both Estonian-speaking and other nationalities, create additional points of contact for communication with colleagues who also have children, the topics of education, upbringing and family

recreation are not taboo in the Estonian team, finally, create reasons for informal communication with colleagues during family vacations, sports events, etc.

Organizational factors

According to more than half of the study participants, Estonia's companies in which they are working is characterized by a high level of individual role and individual responsibility in the performance of work. There is a practice of 'probation period' in Estonian companies where SIEs work, where employees are clarified by accepted labour standards, of any complexities in their implementation. In large companies, a mentor is assigned to a newcomer who helps with relocation and initial settlement issues. After an introductory period of up to four months, the beginner is expected to complete the tasks on his own. What, when and how to do, the employee decides for himself and only he or she is responsible for the task.

According to the researchers (Laroche, Tomiuk, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2009), an important moment for a manager and a foreign employee is the need to understand and accept the existing differences reflected in the organizational structure, management nature, decision-making process, and relationships in the companies to which they work. Perhaps it is accurate that we hardly recognize the presence of a significant obstacle until we are immersed in another social structure. The essence of distinctive characteristics influences an individual's flexibility to cope with a work environment in principle (Laroche, Tomiuk, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2009). Several organization factors of work-life experiences are listed below:

Introductory training

Orientation and training program for employees that focuses on role detail and the acquisition of new professional skills can be seen as a more pragmatic move. These training sessions aim to educate participants about various aspects of interpersonal relationships with peers and stakeholders, as well as possible national characteristics, housing assistance, and tax advice. In certain organizations, these measures are carried out by designated persons, and in others, they are typically carried out by the human resources department that is tasked with organizing socializing and orientation events; this is an additional opportunity to interact with colleagues from various divisions of the

organization. These policies paint a favourable picture of global employers. However, it should be noted that not all businesses implement these policies. Professional training and language learning services are only used in IT companies where SIEs work, according to this study. My respondents, who serve in other companies, are micro organizations. As a result, the SIE who obtains employment in such an organization, which employs a large number of foreigners, is better placed to draw on their abilities and expertise while settling and resettling in a new company.

Initial preparation is critical before beginning work in an organization. However, for respondents who operate in an IT business, this becomes quite straightforward since they already have sufficient information about the company and related jobs. In the other side, as an administrator, the respondent had to put in a lot of effort in terms of preparation, as her primary responsibility is to engage with the customer. Additionally, she would learn how to use reservation software. As a result, she was under a burden as said by respondent. Additionally, another participant who works in catering expressed that although he was familiar with Asian cuisine, he was required to undergo preparation to learn Estonian style cooking due to the cuisine's distinct flavor.

> "I can confidently say that I was never personally concerned with this part of my company's practices or reputation. Though they gave me a quick summaries of the team members still did not reveal much about the job training because I was proficient at the task, as I anticipated" (Interview no 4).

> "It was difficult to begin with, made all the more difficult by the fact that I had just recently started learning about the different types of computers at the time. Given that we were required to develop a working knowledge of the A1.1 and A2 languages as well as how to run advanced applications on behalf of the organization, it complicated matters because I had arrived and the language was extremely difficult for me to master. Nonetheless, they compensated me for my efforts to enhance my career skills, enabling me to do my job more thoroughly. My boss covered the cost of coaching me to do an excellent work" (Interview no 2).

> "Here, the scenario was very different, and I spent the bulk of my time preparing for cooking, whilst my senior colleagues maintained touch and held an eye on my results. Although my senior colleagues ensured their duties were covered, they also

checked the standards. Additionally, they tested my cooking's accuracy and serviceability" (Interview no 8).

Working environment

The working culture is markedly different in Estonia than in the narrator's home-country. According to one participant, the working environment in Estonia is very silent and welcoming. In another scenario, another respondent believes that while the coworkers are and no one is pressed for time and everybody completes their tasks on time. Moreover, for respondent it's initially challenging to adapt because people here multitask, which is not the case at her previous job. Additionally, the other participant who works in catering said that the work environment is pleasant, but it's challenging to grasp the context of the language, and multitasking is difficult here, despite the fact that he's had a lot of experience as an employee.

> "The way we behave and relate to others are different; and the organization's whole system (its procedures and structures) are at odds with that. Further explanation: In a typical top-to-bottom organizational style, my country's corporation is divided into divisions, then into divisions inside divisions, and so on and down. It is almost often difficult for employees to talk to upper management about their feelings and thoughts. However, in this scenario, the case, the issue is totally different" (Interview no 8).

> "Managing the kitchen was difficult since restaurants are always full and stay busy for the majority of the time, making it difficult for me to manage; additionally, there were little opportunities for me to develop. Nonetheless, my senior colleague was extremely helpful, and he helped me become accustomed to the technique by increasing the frequency at which I practiced" (Interview no 7).

> "I'm responsible for managing inbound and outbound calls, keeping communication, quickly reacting to customers, and usually meeting up on them on a daily basis, since we have approximately six different networks across Europe and one in the United Kingdom, and I'm responsible for following up on them on a daily basis. I am expected to share all information relating to the client's satisfaction and our company's mission. Likewise, I must better manage apartment

reservations and promotional offers to prevent consumer concerns. My main objective is to guarantee the customer's satisfaction. However, I can confess that multitasking was not easy for me, despite the fact that it took a long time to improve as a multitasker, which is one of the most important conditions for settling in Europe" (Interview no 3).

The activities of the SIEs that result in improved interactions with coworkers often involve the requirement to speak in the organization's language. It's worth remembering that they can face difficulties, for example, due to a lack of language instruction. Similarly, SIEs must be able to meet and engage with peers who represent the other nation in a team setting, build goodwill with colleagues, and participate in activities. The additional steps proposed by respondents include efforts aimed at improving cooperation, addressing the need for language instruction, and encouraging the establishment of a positive attitude toward speakers of other languages on the part of company workers and local personnel. The second, according to research participants, is an activity that leads to the development of a friendly work environment, an influential motivating leader, and an atmosphere of recognition, encouragement, and mutual assistance. Participants in this study highlighted the critical nature of these elements for the English-speaking worker.

Rules and regulations

Estonia is very careful with the laws and regulations that apply to their businesses, and it is their pathway that provides the details necessary to render these rules and regulations accessible to their workers. Thus, the participants received knowledge about laws and regulations, but some participants found it easily understood, whilst others had difficulty.

> "When I started here, there was already a one-month onboarding plan in place for me to have adequate detail, and it was written in both Estonian and English, making it simple to understand. It was not just about the organisation, but also about going through process with the people I met. Occasionally, I was required to operate in the engineering department but often required some kind of additional cooperation from a separate perspective. As a result, it was successful for me"(Interview no 5).

"I signed my contract with all the conditions and requirements in full disclosure. In addition, it was quite systematic, concerning my firm's borders and legal matters…I had to hand in this contract as well as all of the corresponding rules and obligations for it. It was much better than that, in that it was based on my objectives and requirements, and business rules; additionally, it was well-planned and on track." (Interview no 3).

"I received my work contract in both Estonian and English, but it included a slew of regulations about health and protection, cleanliness, the expiration date of food, how to use and store the stuff, and so forth. As a result, it took some time for me to adjust to them and to follow along. On the one side, it had some laws pertaining to health and sanitation, and on the other, a provision dictating how long food could be kept and used, as well as how well it should be treated. I initially found the acts and feelings perplexing, since it was difficult to discern what was being covered and what was important" (Interview no 7).

The fact that following orders is largely focused on strict adherence to workplace rules and regulations is a characteristic of Estonian companies, as expressed by respondents. Additionally, the study's participants listed some characteristics common to Estonian companies. Among the good things are the systematic attitude to work and the overall atmosphere of patience, which beginner employees readily accept. Weak characteristics include the need to change tactics when doing work; everyone is on their own; and dividing burdens evenly. The research participants identified these characteristics as impediments to their experience within the company. Research (Frolenoka & Dukule, 2017) stated that knowledge and sharing of organizational principles are directly related to the sense of belonging to the organization, employee satisfaction with his work, the intention to continue working in the organization. The results of my research serve as further confirmation of these provisions.

Leadership and Co-workers behaviour

The participant expressed that they receive cooperation and good behavior from their coworkers, despite the fact that in certain situations, contact with their coworkers was complicated due to their communication style. However, this is not universal.

"My coworkers are very helpful, and I enjoy meeting with them outside of work. Similarly, I believe in collaboration, and my coworkers are fantastic. And if there is a disparity between our viewpoints or opinions, we can resolve it very quickly by debating and agreeing on a solution. When we operate together as a squad, it's simple to overcome obstacles" (Interview no 3).

"At my place of employment, the manager acts more like a friend, and unlike in my homeland, I am not required to address her with additional titles such as madam to demonstrate respect; here, I can address her by her given name. Thus, these are transparent spaces for me to be more approachable and forthcoming with them. However, since I am needed to ensure effective contact, I have encountered communication difficulties due to the language barrier, although they are uncommon." (Interview no 2).

"While my colleagues and I are also eager to learn, we sometimes misinterpret one another due to our differing approaches and modes of communicating, since no two people are identical. As a result, I have little issues; they are an excellent guy" (Interview no 5).

Employees with an individualistic society take a high degree of accountability over their own decisions and areas of responsibility, reducing the team's contact with task details. In collectivist societies, which involve the respondents' home countries, since the degree of obligation shared can be quite ambiguous, it takes a long time to address the specifics, responsibilities, and duties assigned to each of them. Several features reported by my respondents include a commitment to collaboration, which includes an agreed tradition of dialogue and sharing of opinions within the team before task completion, responsiveness to the ideas of ordinary workers, and an expectation of action on their part; and direct critique of substandard work results, which includes the practice of input.

Incentive/Salary

Almost all acknowledges that their pay is higher than in their home country. Although the reward is performance-based, some employees believe it is not increasing as quickly as they might want. Thus, it is contingent upon the nature of the job and organization, as well as on what they have said.

"I am happy with my pay, even after deducting taxes. While I was paying tax in my home country, I was not receiving a tax return despite my payment. However, here I am reclaiming my money after deducting taxes" (Interview no 4).

"In comparison to my home nation, I am happy with my pay, but expenditures are still higher here. I believe that if I am able to communicate in the language, my job success will improve and the opportunity will also increase" (Interview no 6).

"I work in an Estonian restaurant, and although the pay is better than in my home country, I want more in this regard because I have to give the money back to my family and there is a tax scheme in place" (Interview no 8).

Equity and fairness

They came to Estonia as a foreigner, but the participants did not experience specific prejudice due to their various ethnic origins, as they expressed. However, in this segment, various participants expressed their differing perspectives.

"After my arrival, I've had the impression that everybody is handled fairly here. It has the sound of a home, rather than a foreign employee. Additionally, the company believes that I am eligible to function for a promotion within my current career. Thus, I believe they demonstrate no difference between me and their native populations" (Interview no 2).

"I've been working with this organization for almost three years and am diligent, but still I feel that it takes longer to advance here, and I believe language is the primary explanation for this, which I take as a positive" (Interview no 3).

"I've never encountered any unusual behavior from them; instead, I've encountered a reluctance to speak with them at random when it comes to the language." (Interview no 5).

The team format is critical for creating an impactful environment inside the organization. The multi-cultural team structure has a direct impact on all employees and their behavioural practices around the organization. This is due to familiarity with the Estonian language, beliefs, customs, and practices. When employed with a team of diverse

nationalities, there is a strong risk of establishing a so-called subculture within the company, where employees' sphere of contact is confined to a small group of peers, employees talk only in their native language, and work is often conducted in their native country's style. By and large, these workers lack a sense of the organization as a whole, have little knowledge of the Estonian language, and have hazy ideas regarding workplace processes beyond their unit as said by respondents. Employees in certain units may have a poor opinion of their employers, given the lack of networking opportunities in Estonian. Additionally, communication with the ordinary Estonian team, where the workers would be Estonian, will be challenging after operating under certain circumstances.

Appreciation

According to respondents, respect for one's job facilitates career advancement; and without encouragement or motivation, it's very challenging to maintain career concentration. Participants receive management support and often receive feedback, which provides them with additional strength and enables them to be more effective.

> "Generally, I get both praise and favorable feedback for my work. I'm doing well at my job. It's not only about recognition; it's also about improving the consistency of my job. My senior and management level supervisors, as well as my peers, provide input to help me improve upon my existing performance and also to help me learn further. In my office, we have a concept named survey that occurs twice a year and allows me to identify areas where I can develop. As a result, this is very helpful to my future. They create a data model from there and develop an action plan for enhancing our work atmosphere, effectiveness of the control, and employee relationship with them in order to do better in the future. As such, this is a standard procedure at our company" (Interview no 5).

> "My employer showed me a lot of respect. I received an acknowledgment from my owner last year, and it said that they value my effort, which is why they expressed such gratitude. And, on behalf of my company, they presented me with a gift, which was an incredible honor for me" (Interview no 3).

"As I am capable of completing tasks quickly, they admire this talent of mine and it makes me very happy to hear from them. It serves as a motivation for me to achieve more and do it well" (Interview no 1).

The coping with change is motivated by the internal incentive for organizational activity. IT engineers who relocate to Estonia and gain access to cutting-edge equipment and technologies, or scientists who equate the future of their science with the country of relocation, would be more inclined to participate in team and societal activities than SIEs who migrate for economic reasons.

Language learning facility

Although several participants are positive regarding their career development, they all have a common perspective on language learning. They assume that if they might enroll in any free learning courses offered here, it will be more beneficial to them. Qualitative results reveal another example: the team's effect on SIE's working life experience. According to one participant in the report, upon his arrival, the team decided to speak in English (which the employee spoke) before he understood the Estonian language. He was able to acquire the Estonian A2 level in less than three months with the encouragement of colleagues.

"To be really frank, I want to work my way up to management. I'm looking forward to implementing this strategy over the next few years. Thus, my attention is now on achieving my target, towards which I am working diligently, but I am still considering the possibility that if I obtain an educational degree including language course from here, it will be more beneficial for me" (Interview no 4).

Organizations with sufficient funding and resources enable their employees to participate in relocation programs. Different foreign worker settlement programs are also being implemented at the state level in Estonia in response to the influx of foreign employees. Authorities responsible for migration and a variety of non-profit organizations are actively working in this direction. For instance, Settle in Estonia, Integration Foundation, and International House are just a few of the programs that are actively involved in foreigner settlement. Language workshops are often provided by the employer or the government to acquire fundamental language skills or everyday speaking skills.

However, a foundational understanding of the language enables the usage of simple sentences such as 'How are you?' Such information is not ideal for full-fledged team contact. Financial assistance for language courses is available only to enterprises with a sizable resource base, but certain businesses are unwilling to offer language courses owing to a shortage of funding. This position is backed up by the respondents in this study, who believe that it is preferable to begin working in the sector in industries where a prospective hire would be placed in a similar international setting and would have the opportunity to master the critical language for their job.

> "I have a career goal of opening a food company here in this country, but I am aware that it would be a lengthy phase for me because I would need to learn the local language in order to interact with clients and also expand my networking with native population; otherwise, it would be difficult to develop the business" (Interview no 1).

Despite their disadvantages, all participants agree on the importance of beginning a career in Estonia to pursue a position in a foreign organization that will instil trust in their abilities and provide a solid foundation for further advancement.

In light of respondents' work-life experiences and the initiatives proposed by respondents, it is critical to conclude that in an individual sense, they travel for motives other than economic and personal gain, while in a collective sense, they enter a social space that needs reconciliation, unlearning old habits and learning new regulations. Moreover, the efforts to enhance multinational team spirit, promote an atmosphere of reciprocal understanding, cooperation and mutual assistance are little more than steps that contribute to the organization's growing pleasant environment. This inference, however, requires further research to examine objective variables. The objective variables affecting the working lives of SIEs may involve phenomena such as social distance. The concept "social distance" refers to the degree to which social groups and individuals are connected or alienated in social space, which is determined institutionally and experienced by the agents of social interactions themselves (Boguna, Pastor-Satorras, Díaz-Guilera, & Arenas, 2004). For SIEs adjusting to a foreign world, measures of social distance seem to be important for future research since they allow for the understanding of both horizontal distances between groups at the same level of social hierarchy and vertical distances between social groups (Boguna, Pastor-Satorras, Díaz-Guilera, & Arenas, 2004).

3. Conclusion

This research aimed to learn the work-life experiences of Bangladeshi self-initiated expatriates who are working in Estonia. This study is critical since it provides a juxtaposition to how those expatriates continue to work in Estonia and how they adhere to the organizational rules and practices that regulate their work lives. The empirical narratives were gathered from self-initiated expatriates interviewed during the fieldwork in Tartu and Tallinn between March and April 2021. The respondents expressed their emotions, thoughts, realities, and even their opinions which provided insight into actual working life for those who are excited about moving to another country for economic reasons and beyond. Such knowledge appears to benefit scholarly discourses on self-initiated-expatriates and hence seems to contribute to policies governing the management of international expatriates.

Through the lens of individual SIE's narrative, the empirical analysis shows the intent of their migration, which consists of economic inspiration, and more. When contemplating the social forces that influence an individual's choice to relocate, it's difficult to explain the norm and standard of life, as well as the probability of career fulfillment.

The study identified that the motives for relocating to a foreign country and the peculiarities associated with the decision to relocate are related to the SIE's demography. Apart from it, the findings revealed that relocation preferences are determined by some variables, including familiarity with the country, prospects for professional development, and a sense of acceptance within the company.

Empirical evidence indicates that existing contacts inside the organization play a significant role in the admission of a new organization. Language is critical in this situation. Expatriates interviewed believed that by learning the host country's language, their working lives would become more social and their network would expand. As a result, certain positive social agencies will aid them in learning this language. Furthermore, peers' assistance in incorporating SIEs into the organizational environment is much more important. Additionally, the findings revealed that organizational support for newly hired international workers is resource-dependent; thus, government innovation in the form of additional support services, especially language learning facilities, is

important. The organizational help offered in the form of initial preparation, language assistance, family migration assistance, and compensation development affects SIE's long-term work-life experience. Other social influences affecting their work-life experience were also assessed, including the involvement or absence of relatives, children, and networking opportunities.

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Appendix

Interview Questionnaire:

1. When have you come to Estonia?
2. What was the purpose of coming here?
3. How long have you been here?
4. Are you only working at the moment?
5. What kind of job are you doing?
6. How did you get this job? Did you face any challenges to make your journey till here?
7. What are your occupational responsibilities and duties at your workplace?
8. Tell me something about your working environment? Is it a multinational working environment?
9. How did you adjust yourself at your workplace? How would you like to compare between the two working environments here and in your home country?
10. Tell us something about your working environment? Compare both the working environment about here and your home country.
11. Did you get any initial training to adapt to the working environment?
12. Define your experience working with your colleagues/co-workers.
13. Do you meet your colleagues outside the working environment?
14. How confident do you feel at your workplace?
15. How satisfied are you with your payment system?
16. Are you getting more facilities here than in your country?
17. How did you adapt to Estonian culture? (i.e language, lifestyle, working procedure)
18. Does your organization treat you equally regardless of ethnicity or without considering ethnicity in mind?
19. Do you get appreciation from your workplace?
20. Are you clear about the organizational rules and regulations?
21. What is your further career plan?
22. To adopt the Estonian culture what else you think can be done?

Resümee

OMAALGATUSLIKULT KODUMAALT LAHKUNUTE TÖÖELU
KOGEMUSTE NARRATIIVIANALÜÜS

Asma Siddiqua Rita

Käesoleva uurimistöö eesmärgiks oli analüüsida Bangladeshist omaalgatuslikult Eestisse tulnud inimeste tööelu kogemusi. See uurimistöö on oluline, sest võimaldab mõista, kuidas uuritav sihtgrupp on kohanenud eluga Eestis ja oma organisatsioonide reeglite ja tööpraktikatega.

Uurimistöös kasutati kvalitatiivseid uurimismeetodeid. Märtsis ja aprillis 2021 viis autor Tallinnas ja Tartus läbi intervjuud omaalgatuslikult kodumaalt lahkunud töötajatega, et koguda nende narratiivid. Intervjueeritavad väljendasid oma emotsioone, mõtteid ja arvamusi, kuidas nad tajuvad ümbritsevat realsust. See võimaldas mõista nende inimeste tegelikku tööelu, kes on asunud teise riiki tööle, kas majanduslikel või muudel põhjustel. See teadmine panustab omaalgatuslikult kodumaalt lahkunute uurimisvaldkonda tervikuna, aitab kaasa poliitika kujundamisele ja nende inimeste juhtimisele organisatsioonides.

Empiiriline analüüs näitas, et välisriiki tööle asumise kavatsus oli vaid osaliselt majanduslik. Sotsiaalsed mõjud, mis mis suunavad inimeste ümber asumise otsust, on seotud ka elustandardite ja karjäärialase edukuse väljavaadetega.

Uurimistöö näitas, kuidas ümber asumise motiivid ja detailsemad otsused on seotud inimeste demograafiliste tunnustega. Täiendavalt, uurimistöö näitas, et täpsemad eelistused asukoha riigi valikul on seotud sellega, kui tuttav on see riik, millised on karjääri tegemise võimalused ja omaksvõetuse tunne konkreetses organisatsioonis.

Olemasolevad kontaktid konkreetses organisatsioonis mängivad töökoha valikul olulist rolli. Keeleoskus on kriitilise tähtsusega. Intervjueeritud inimesed leidsid, et asukohamaa keele õppimise kaudu nende töö sotsiaalne mõõde laieneb ning areneb ka nende tutvuste võrgustik. Sotsiaalsed institutsioonid, mis aitavad kaasa keeleõppele on

olulised. Samuti, kolleegide tugi uue inimese ühendamisel nende organisatsioonilise keskkonnaga on väga tähtis. Organisatsioonipoolne tugi uuele välismaalt tulnud töötajale on aga seotud olemasolevate ressurssidega. Seega, riigipoolne innovatsioon täiendavate tugiteenuste näol, eriti keeleõppe näol, on oluline. Organisatsiooni pakutud abi algse ettevalmistuse, keelega, perekonna kaasa toomisega ja tasustamise arenguga mõjutab pikaajalise töösuhte kujunemist. Täiendavad sotsiaalsed mõjud tööelu kogemusele olid sugulaste olemasolu, lapsed ja võrgustumise võimalused.

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