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Understanding The Factors Affecing Expatriate Teacher Retention In a Cross-Cultural Setting: A Case Study of an American International Sschool In Panama

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UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS AFFECTING EXPATRIATE TEACHER RETENTION IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING: A CASE STUDY OF AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN PANAMA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that affect expatriate teacher retention. The research aimed to identify the factors that contribute to expatriate teacher adaptation and retention in cross-cultural settings. As the demand for expatriate teachers has increased with the growth of international schools, retaining them has become a persistent challenge. The scarcity of literature on expatriate teacher retention, combined with high turnover rates and an expanding demand for such teachers, highlights the need for further research in this area. Therefore, this study aimed to fill this gap by exploring the factors that impact expatriate teacher retention and ultimately provide valuable insights to improve support for expatriate teachers in cross-cultural settings.

The study investigated the factors that influence expatriate teachers' decisions to renew their contracts at the end of their term. The research findings revealed that expatriate teachers with higher levels of intercultural competence were more likely to adapt to new environments and foster positive relationships with students, colleagues, and the local community. These positive experiences increased their motivation to stay at their current school and renew their contracts. Moreover, the study identified the importance of organizational conditions and leadership factors in shaping expatriate teachers' retention decisions. Therefore, the research emphasizes the significance of intercultural competence, organizational support, and leadership in promoting expatriate teacher retention in cross-cultural settings.

The researcher utilized both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods to comprehensively investigate the phenomenon in the context of teacher retention in cross-cultural settings. In addition to this, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences and perceptions. The findings of this study indicate that intercultural competence plays a pivotal role in retaining teachers in cross-cultural settings. Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of organizational conditions and leadership factors in shaping expatriates' decisions to remain at a school. To enhance support for expatriate teachers in adapting to cross-cultural environments and improving retention rates, further research in these areas is crucial. However, it is essential to exercise caution when extrapolating the results of this study to other expatriates in cross-cultural settings, as wider generalizations necessitate additional research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother who always believed and supported me in rough times when I had lost hope in myself. Her character, determination, and love have always been a source of inspiration in my life and have increased my personal drive to push harder. To my father, who has also been a rock and inspiration in my life, thank you for your unconditional love, support, and wisdom in every time of need. To my loved wife Corina, thank you for your understandings, love, and inspiring me to believe in myself and be a better person each day. Your company, loving character, and support have been essential for me. To my daughters who had to put up with my distance and struggles, you are and have been a fuel to my heart and mind. I am so proud of you, loving you has always made me push harder. To my sister and my brothers who have always been there to support me in one-way or another, thank you. To all the stakeholders of the school I serve, it is for all of you that we do our best every day.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Given the importance of the role of teachers in the educational process, much research has been conducted on factors impacting teacher retention and the role it plays in educational quality. Yet, most studies focus on U.S. schools with fewer being conducted on teacher retention in other countries and even fewer on expatriate teachers in overseas assignments (Bunnell, 2017; Odland & Ruzika, 2009). Despite the growing numbers of expatriate teachers around the world, relatively little research has focused on them (Koh & Sin, 2020). Retention studies on expatriates are more frequently found in the international human resource management literature where many researchers have centered on measuring expatriate turnover predictors (Caligiuri et al., 2009). However, recent international human resource studies have highlighted the need for new theoretical approaches to study self-initiated expatriates (Ceric & Crawford, 2016). This dissertation addresses the limitation of the research and proposes to explore the factors that impact the retention of expatriate teachers in cross-cultural settings. This study will incorporate recent research findings on the distinctive traits of self-initiated expatriates to develop new theoretical approaches for understanding the retention of this group.

Background of the Study

Most international schools function as individual private institutions outside national systems of education and are funded by student tuition (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). In addition to their limited number, the lack of literature may be related to a higher

priority being given to topics that are more important to larger sectors (Cooper &

Alvarado, 2006). For example, worldwide research driven entities like the International

Academy of Education (IAE) and the International Institute for Educational Planning by

the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

primarily respond to ministries of education, worldwide planners, or policy makers

(Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). However, in recent years the increase in the number of

international schools coupled with the rise in political-related matters such as inclusive

education and curriculum (Amadio et al., 2013), social inequalities, and equity gaps

(García-Huidobro & Corvalán, 2009; Halinen & Savolainen, 2009; Rosanvallon, 2013)

emphasize the need for attention. Furthermore, international education has been found to

have an increasing impact on national development. For instance, Hayden and Thompson

(2008) highlighted that no country can ignore the ideological philosophy in which

international school students are being educated, especially their resulting international

mindset because of its consequences on world peace or the breaking down of barriers

concerning prejudice and ignorance.

According to the worldwide fact sheet from the U.S. State Department (2014), a

quarter million students in 135 nations attended American overseas schools (AOS) that

ranged from "small schools, such as the Banjul American Embassy School in Banjul, The

Gambia, with 74 students, to large overseas schools, such as the Singapore American

School with 3,936 students" (p. 1). While AOS schools do not operate under the control

of the U.S., they follow the United States core curriculum and instructional programs,

and prepare students to enter American schools, colleges, and universities (U.S.

Department of State, 2014). Other characteristics of AOS schools include the use of English as the language of instruction (English-medium) and an extensive academic curriculum (U.S. Department of State, 2014). Of more significance to this study is the fact that "most of the administrators and nearly half of the teachers in these schools are Americans or educated in U.S. colleges and universities" (U.S. Department of State, 2014 p.1). Given the English-medium focus of AOS schools and other international schools, first language English speaking teachers have been predominantly hired; while these teachers have generally been British and American, around 2008 they began to be joined by Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Furthermore, nationally trained teachers' migration towards international schools will continue because of the increasing attractiveness of developing an international career (Hatch, 2021).

There are many international schools across the world and the number is increasing rapidly. According to ISC global research (ISC Research, 2018), the growth rate in the number of international schools for the last five years was estimated to be around 5.3% and with a reported increase of 7.3% for student enrollment. ISC (2019) also reported that since 2000, the number of K -12 English medium schools has more than tripled globally. On their 2020 market data ISC indicated there were over 550 staff members serving 5.9 million students through 11,572 international schools (www.iscresearch.com).

The primary reason for the current growth of international schools has been

credited to a globalized world (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). More specifically, the main

drivers behind this expansion are the increase in communication, the dominance of the

use of English in the labor markets, and the demands of "families who wish to offer their

children a different type of education from that delivered by national systems while at the

same time giving them opportunities to enlarge their social network" (Hayden &

Thompson, 2008, p.10).

Statement of the Problem

While the demand for expatriate teachers is strong, teacher retention is

emphasized in educational literature as a longstanding international problem (Perryman

& Calvert, 2020). Studies dating back over four decades are testaments to the retention

struggles faced by the educational sector (Lortie, 1975; Tyack, 1974), and the reported

teacher shortages and turnover rates only increase the concern for international school

administrators who wish to hire native English-speaking teachers (Mancuso et al., 2010;

Odland, 2007).

While there is much research on teacher retention, expatriate teacher retention

literature is limited (Mancuso et al., 2010) as most studies are bound to teachers in the

profession in their home country (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). However, teaching outside a

teacher's home country poses different challenges. Scholars have noted that expatriate

jobs, unlike domestic ones, need to be understood through a broader range of variables

that play a central role in the retention of expatriates (Shaffer et al., 2006). Because

expatriates work outside their home country, they are faced with cultural differences and

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social forces creating a more complex environment (Mendenhall et al., 2017). Learning to manage these differences may be crucial for expatriates, and researchers have found cultural adjustment as a determinant of expatriate success or failure (Setti et al., 2020). The limited literature on expatriate teacher retention coupled with the high turnover rates and the growth in the demand for expatriate teachers emphasize the need for further study (Odland, 2007)**.**

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that impact the retention of expatriate teachers in cross-cultural settings, particularly among self-initiated expatriates. The study aims to fill the gap in research by investigating the unique characteristics and experiences of expatriate teachers and developing new theoretical approaches for understanding their retention. Ultimately, the study intends to contribute to the development of policies and practices that support the successful retention of expatriate teachers in diverse cultural contexts.

Research Question

The following research question will guide this study: What factors contribute to expatriate teacher retention in cross-cultural settings, and how can organizations and schools support their adaptation and retention?

Assumptions and Limitations

Scholars have attempted to characterize ideal expatriate traits when exploring predictors of selection; however, the specific attributes remain undefined (Shaffer et al., 2006). This outcome may be attributed to the two approaches commonly used to characterize ideal expatriate traits. One approach attempts to understand the qualities that determine an expatriate's suitability based on unchanging personal traits; the other approach attempts to understand the qualities that determine an expatriate's suitability based on dynamic behavioral competencies (Jordan & Cartwright, 1998). In essence, while the focus of many studies has been on the personal predictors of an expatriate that may affect their retention, perhaps a broader understanding could be reached if the focus was on the dynamic behavioral competence in relation to the supporting context.

Given the research question in this study, and to better understand the phenomena at this initial stage, this research will involve a single exploratory case study. Because the amount of data collected in the study will be limited, the findings will be triangulated through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. In addition, the findings will be analyzed in light of related research to give the study more credibility. This study will be based on a limited context, expatriated teachers in Panama; thus, the results should be generalized with caution to other expatriates in cross-cultural settings as they may not be applicable to all expatriated teachers in international schools. Further studies may be needed before wider generalizations can be made.

Odland and Ruzicka (2009) stressed the importance of identifying the factors that influence expatriate teacher turnover in international school settings. To address this issue

effectively, it is crucial to examine the cultural context that affects expatriate teachers'

decisions to extend or terminate their employment. While some studies have identified

factors that impact expatriate teacher retention, there is a lack of research that explores

the role of intercultural competence in this context.

Intercultural competence is a crucial skill that enables individuals to function

effectively across cultures. It refers to a person's ability to shift perspectives and adapt

their behavior to bridge cultural differences. Hammer and Bennett (2009) defined

intercultural competence as a person's capacity, skill, or capability to navigate cultural

differences effectively. Identifying what factors influence expatriate teacher turnover in

international school settings is crucial and examining the role of intercultural competence

in this context is essential to develop a better understanding of the underlying reasons that

cause teachers to leave these schools.

In summary, the assumptions of this study are that intercultural competence is a

significant factor that can influence expatriated teachers' decisions to stay or leave at the

end of their school contract. The study assumes that expatriate teachers may face

challenges unique to their position as self-initiated English-speaking teachers working in

international schools, and that the findings of this study may contribute to a broader

understanding of expatriate teacher retention.

The limitations of this study are that it is based on a single exploratory case study,

which may limit the amount of data that can be collected and analyzed. The study is also

limited to the context of expatriated teachers in Panama, and the findings may not be

applicable to all expatriated teachers in international schools. Finally, the study's findings may be limited by the research methodology used, which involves triangulating data from surveys, interviews, and document analysis. Despite its limitations, the findings from this study will provide insight into expatriate teacher retention and the effect of intercultural competence on a teacher's decision to stay or leave at the end of their contract.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will inform school administrators, policy makers, and recruiting staff on possible intercultural factors that affect the retention of expatriated teachers. This study will also help future expatriate teachers better understand potential challenges when they engage in an overseas assignment. If intercultural competence is found to be an underlying factor to the retention of expatriate teachers; capacity building models should be developed and implemented to support, and train expatriated teachers and administrators of international schools.

Furthermore, teacher retention in relation to educational quality has been emphasized in education literature (Connors- Kerkorian, 2005). Researchers suggest that increasing the retention of qualified teachers is significant because it impacts student achievements, affects the continuation of academic programs, and the professional development efforts of a school (Darling & Hammond, 2012). If a school is not able to retain its teachers, its teacher quality is affected and teacher quality has been identified as the most direct factor that affects student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Leithwood, 2010). Thus, teacher stability is an important and necessary component for the

effectiveness of schools (Odland, 2007) and scholars have traditionally found that this effectiveness is disrupted when key individuals depart from organizations (Flamholtz & Lacey, 1981).

Teacher turnover and the loss of qualified teachers has resulted in preparation insufficiencies, the loss of commitment, and the loss of the opportunity cost of the funds (Milanowski & Oden, 2007; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Scholars have also noted that the lack of teacher retention affects school cohesion, the school community, the school climate, and the school culture, while draining institutional memory (Bryk et al., 1990; Grant, 1988; Johnson, 2006; Ingersoll, 1993; Walberg & Walberg, 1994).

In summary, this study is significant because it will provide valuable insights into how intercultural competence impacts the retention of expatriate teachers in international schools. The findings will inform policy makers, school administrators, and recruiting staff about factors that contribute to the retention of expatriate teachers. By improving teacher retention, this study will contribute to the stability and effectiveness of international schools, positively impacting student achievement, academic programs, and professional development efforts. Finally, the study will also contribute to the existing literature on intercultural competence and its impact on expatriate teachers, adding new knowledge to the field.

Chapter Summary

This dissertation includes five chapters. Chapter I provides the background, the

problem statement, the research purpose and questions, the assumptions and limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter II reviews the literature on expatriate teacher retention in addition to the literature related to the theoretical focus of this study, intercultural competence. Chapter III introduces the organization of the study and presents the methodology describing the site, the participants, the methods of data collection, and the data analysis procedures. Chapter IV presents the results found and Chapter V discusses the implications of this study's findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review summarizes the factors related to teacher retention in the US and other countries, moving from the broader to the more specific issues and concludes with new perspectives on teacher retention gained from prior research (Boote & Beile, 2005; Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). It begins by examining the historical context of the subject, followed by synthesizing the meta-analysis of Borman and Dowling (2008) and the narrative review of Guarino et al., (2006). Then, national studies on teacher retention around the world are examined, resulting in the identification of a gap in the literature. The review continues by examining expatriate teacher retention literature. Given the limited literature on expatriate teacher retention, international human resource management literature was included to extend the knowledge base. While primarily peer-reviewed journals were considered, other reports were also cited to cover the context of the work related to the field, with appropriate caution applied to the findings.

Historical Context

A review of the history of the public education system of the USA indicates that the growth of public schools began after the industrial revolution (Monroe, 1911). The context of the industrial era influenced the development of an industrial school, which, in recent years, scholars have referred to as *the factory model school* (Leland & Kasten, 2002). This model included among other characteristics, a top down, command and control philosophy, and a linear curriculum paradigm (Newkirk & McClure, 1996).

Teacher shortages were recorded for the first time in the 1950's (Broughman & Rollefson, 2000) with scholars suggesting that they were a consequence of the increased demands of the baby boomers that took the educational sector by surprise (Harris & Monk, 1992). By the 1960's, teacher shortages had stabilized and for two more decades the teacher market remained strong. Teacher shortages began to be noticeable again by the beginning of the 1980s. From the 1980s until the middle of the 1990s teacher shortages were largely seen as a supply and demand problem; consequently, policy response typically centered on teacher supply incentives like special programs to attract new teachers to the profession (Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b). Teach for America and Troop-to-Teachers are good examples of policy initiatives of this time (Feistritzer, 1997; Kopp 1992).

The report *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, 1983), suggested a failing school system and the need for schools to enhance their academic rigor (Westbury, 1984). This report influenced increased standardization and the use of benchmarks for the national school system (Brill, 2011). While attention was given to enhancing academic rigor, the volatility of the teaching profession prompted multiple systematic studies to better understand teacher retention factors, with many researchers exploring teacher turnover factors in relation to teacher characteristics (Murnane & Olsen 1990; Murnane et al., 1989; Rumberger, 1987; Weiss & Boyd, 1990; Willett & Singer, 1988), school characteristics (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Grant, 1988; Ingersoll, 2001a; Kirst, 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989) and organizational conditions (Grant, 1988; Ingersoll, 2001a; Metz, 1986; Newman, et al., 1989). Although these studies resulted in important findings,

teacher recruitment initiatives (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992; Haggstrom et al., 1988; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Murnane et al., 1988) continued to dominate school policy and the methods used to address school staffing issues (Feistritzer, 1997; Hirsch et al., 2001; Kopp, 1992).

In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) published a report titled *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future,* which focused on results over the past decade consistently relating student achievement to teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1999). This report emphasized the need for schools to improve teacher recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, and support, among other teacher retention and teacher quality related factors (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Ingersoll's (2001a) study using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) from the National Center for Education Statistics demonstrated that the problem was even more profound. Ingersoll (2001a) emphasized teacher retention was a national crisis, one that was disruptive to educational quality. Ingersoll (2001a) further implied that this high level of turnover indicated an underlying problem in the organization, indicating that efforts had been misplaced by trying to increase the supply of teachers when the real problem was the retention of them.

Similarly, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) emphasized the impact the lack of retention was having on the nation's children, the report stressing the importance of high-quality teachers. In the spirit of a mandate, the report underscored the

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need for administrators to hire and retain qualified teachers to reduce the gaps in student achievement (NCLB, 2001). Although this directive resulted in a controversy over testing, scholars such as Hunt (2003) argued that test scores had come to dominate the discourse of schools and questioned their consequences. In addition to the NCLB Act and the findings from Ingersoll, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003) acknowledged that the low levels of teacher retention generated a national crisis and contested the school system to improve retention to 50% by the year 2006 (Hunt & Carroll, 2003).

While increasing the number of effective teachers had been the goal, retaining effective teachers proved to be a challenge. Studies dating back more than four decades are proof of the retention struggle faced by the educational sector (Lortie 1975; Tyack 1974). Traditionally, new teachers have had a high level of turnover, which has affected academic efforts. Studies have revealed that approximately 50% of new teachers leave within the first five years (Grissmer & Kirby 1997; Ingersoll 2003). Scholars have also found that between 16% and 20% of all teachers choose to leave the school in which they are teaching (Hanushek, 2004; Luekens et al., 2004; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Furthermore, many new graduates choose not to go into teaching (Ingersoll, 2003).

Given these issues, a different remedy was proposed to deal with teacher shortages. Instead of concentrating efforts in recruiting, efforts were centered on keeping active teachers in the profession (Ingersoll, 2001a). Similarly, teachers who quit or never began teaching were enticed to return to or enter the profession (Ingersoll, 2007). As

Ingersoll indicated, it is better to patch the holes in the bucket before trying to fill it: "The image that comes to mind is of a bucket rapidly losing water because of holes in the bottom. Pouring more water into the bucket will not be the answer if the holes are not first patched" (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 6).

Synthesis of Teacher Retention - US Studies

The reviews of teacher retention studies from the US presented in this section synthesize the meta-analysis of Borman and Dowling (2008) and the narrative review of Guarino et al., (2006). The review highlights the following three category moderators: (a) teacher characteristics, (b) school characteristics, and (c) organizational conditions. While many of the retention studies were conducted taking into account different characteristics; all of these studies were limited to host country national teachers.

Teacher Characteristics

Substantial research has been conducted on the teacher characteristics related to teachers leaving the profession. To simplify and enhance the understanding of them, the studies were divided into two subcategories: *demographic characteristics* and *professional characteristics*. Demographic characteristics included variables related to age, gender, marital status, number of children, and race/ethnicity. Studies on professional characteristics have focused on ability, experience, specialty, and training.

Demographic Characteristics

Researchers have found that demographic factors can be important predictors of teacher turnover. The following factors were reviewed by Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman & Doling (2008):

(a) Age

(b) Gender

(c) Marital Status

(d) Number of Children

(e) Race/Ethnicity

Summary of Demographic Characteristics. The following patterns between teacher retention and demographic characteristics can be concluded based on the synthesis of the reviews conducted by both Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman and Dowling (2008):

- Turnover tends to be higher for younger teachers and tends to decline over time.

- Turnover rises as teachers reach retirement age, reflecting a U shape plot.

- Females tend to have higher attrition rates than males.

- Married teachers with children have higher attrition rates.

- The odds of attrition for married teachers are higher than for non-married ones.

- Each additional child is associated with a higher attrition probability.

- White teachers tend to have higher rates of attrition than minority teachers.

Professional Characteristics

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Researchers have also found factors related to professional characteristics as predictors of turnover. The following are the professional characteristics factors on the studies reviewed by Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman & Doling (2008):

(a) Ability

(b) Experience

(c) Specialty

(d) Training

Summary of Professional Characteristics. The following patterns were found in relation to turnover rates and professional characteristics from the synthesis of the reviews conducted by both Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman and Dowling (2008):

- Experienced teachers tend to exhibit higher attrition rates.
- Teachers with lower standardized test scores are associated with higher attrition probabilities.
- Attrition tends to be higher for teachers who exhibit higher measured ability.
- Teachers with advanced degrees tend to have higher attrition rates than teachers who enter with bachelor's degrees.
- Secondary teachers tend to have higher attrition rates than elementary teachers.
- Math and science teachers are more likely to leave compared to other specialties.

- There is not a sufficient number of rigorous studies to allow for generalization related to certification.

School Characteristics

Researchers have also investigated school characteristics in relation to turnover: The Following factors were reviewed in the studies of school characteristics that Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman & Doling (2008) synthesized:

(a) Location

(b) School Size

(c) School Sector

(d) Average Class Size

(e) Student-Teacher Ratio and Teacher Aid

(f) Student Achievement

Summary of School Characteristics

The following patterns concerning teacher retention in relation to school characteristics result from the synthesis conducted by Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman and Dowling (2008):

- Rural and suburban districts tend to have higher retention of teachers than urban ones.

- Schools with a higher proportion of low-income, low achieving, and high minority demographics have lower retention rates of teachers.

- Teacher retention is generally higher in public schools than in private ones.

- School size related to attrition resulted in contradictory findings.

Organizational Conditions

Significant research has been conducted on the school conditions related to teachers leaving the profession. The researchers found the following retention factors in the studies of organizational conditions reviewed by Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman & Doling (2008):

(a) Administrative Support

(b) Bureaucracy

(c) Teacher Network & Collaboration

(d) Instructional Spending

(e) Mentoring Program

(f) Opportunity for Advancement

(g) Salary

(h) Autonomy

Summary of Organizational Conditions

The following patterns concerning teacher retention in relation to organizational conditions can be seen in the synthesis conducted by Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman and Dowling (2008):

- Administrative support is related to increased retention.

- Higher levels of bureaucracy are related to higher attrition rates.

- Teacher networks and opportunities for collaboration are related to lower attrition.

- Supportive communication with administrators is related to higher retention.

- Higher instructional spending and per pupil spending are associated with higher retention.

- Mentoring increases retention among beginning teachers.

- Better opportunities for advancement are associated with higher retention.

- Teacher retention tends to be higher if salaries are higher.

- Autonomy is related with increased retention.

Summary of the Synthesis of Teacher Retention - US Studies

Teacher retention studies from the US presented in this section synthesized the meta-analysis of Borman and Dowling (2008) and the narrative review of Guarino, Santibanes, and Daley (2006). The review highlighted the following factors that have been studied in relation to retention; age, gender, marital status, number of children, race/ethnicity, ability, experience, specialty, training, location, school size, school sector, average class size, student-teacher ratio & teacher aid, student achievement,

administrative support, bureaucracy, teacher network & collaboration, instructional

spending, mentoring program, opportunity for advancement, salary, autonomy. While the

findings provide meaningful insight for understanding the different factors that may

affect a teacher's decision to stay or leave a school. The context of the studies relates to

teachers who are teaching within their home countries, a host country national teacher. A

teacher working outside their own host country may face different intercultural

challenges of adaptation beyond those typically found on the context of host country

national teachers' studies.

Synthesis of Teacher Retention – Non-US

Even though studies from non-US countries on teacher retention are less

numerous, analyzing them can broaden our understanding by helping strengthen

relationships and identifying inconsistencies, and contradictions (American Psychological

Association, 2010). It is apparent that teacher shortages throughout the world are caused

by different challenges and that the turnover rates vary by country. For example, while

developed countries like Germany or France exhibited a less than 5% teacher turnover

rate, the USA, UK, Australia, and Switzerland's turnover rates have ranged from 30% to

50% (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; Lindqvist et al., 2014). Furthermore, a worldwide

demand for the valuation of primary education indicated that between 1999 and 2009,

enrollment of primary age children grew by 56 million (UNESCO, 2011a). Given the

unprecedented demographic changes, half of the world's countries had to expand their

teaching forces to ensure every child had access to primary education (UNESCO, 2011a).

The review of teacher retention studies from different nations presented here highlights similarities and differences using the following the three category moderators: (a) teacher characteristics, (b) school characteristics, and (c) organizational conditions (Ingersoll 2001a). While all studies are different in their context, all these studies were conducted on host country national teachers.

A study in the United Kingdom conducted by Perryman and Calvert (2020) explored what originally motivated teachers to teach and the reasons why they left; or considered leaving the profession. The researchers collected data through surveys of alumni of UCL Institute of Education (IOE) in London, who had graduated in the last five years. In the 3500 alumni database the researchers found that the reality of teaching was worse than expected, and that the notion of accountability like performativity were crucial factors that influenced retention.

The Perryman and Calvert (2020) study also found a high turnover rate in teaching; and that teaching was not a life career. The researchers found that 40%–50% of the respondents were leaving or were considering leaving within 10 years of beginning teacher training. This study demonstrated that the teachers who left or were considering leaving the profession did so for the same reasons that have been found in the US, the attrition factors being strongly related to the organizational conditions found in the literature.

A study conducted by Lindqvist et al., (2014) indicated that in 2020 the Swedish educational system would see a deficit of 22,000 teachers, a 20% shortage of the work

force it needs. To explore factors that may be related to this shortage, researchers investigated the career trajectories of 87 Swedish teachers that had graduated in 1993 for 15 years using semi-structured questionnaires. The response rate of the participants averaged 95% throughout this period. This longitudinal study found that caution should be taken when generalizing results given that attrition tended to be a more complex, non-linear phenomenon than what has been typically proposed. The researchers found that career decisions could only be understood through the life histories of the teachers making them. This longitudinal study demonstrated that the teachers who left the profession did so for the same reasons that have been found in the US, the attrition factors being strongly related to the organizational and personal characteristics found in the literature.

Another sector of the world for which scholars, for example DeJaeghere et al., (2006), have highlighted a need for teachers is in the sub-Saharan African region. Given the shortage of qualified secondary school teachers, the researchers investigated perceived attrition factors in the region in an effort to create policies that would influence the retention and increase the supply of teachers, interviewing 114 secondary school teachers, head-teachers, and education officials across six countries: Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Guinea, Madagascar, and Uganda. Using both semi-structured and structured interviews, local teams interviewed participants in each country in the local language. The researchers found that in-service training, distance education, network opportunities, and new teacher mentorship were the most important retention factors perceived throughout the nations. These factors are also strongly related to the organizational

condition factors found in the US literature.

A study focused on the United Kingdom conducted by Rhodes et al. (2004) used surveys to explore the connection between teacher retention and teacher satisfaction and the professional experience factors that influenced the satisfaction levels of 118 schoolteachers from the West Midlands. The researchers found higher pay and feeling valued increased satisfaction. Similar to US studies, the researchers found that workload; administrative duties, pupil behavior, and overload were strongly related to dissatisfaction. These seven factors and the relationship among them are similar to those found in studies conducted in the US.

In New Zealand, Ritchie (2004) conducted a study investigating how market-oriented reforms promoting consumer choice in public education impacted the mobility of teachers. Given a high rate of teacher mobility, the researcher studied the flow of teachers between schools of different socio-economic characteristics based on salary structure, and teacher age. The results found that New Zealand school demographics indicated older teachers had lower salary levels and taught in lower socio-economic schools. In addition, the researchers found that teacher mobility tended to have an upward movement from low socio-economic schools to higher ones. Primary teacher migration was higher compared to other school sectors. Younger teachers exhibited the highest mobility rate, and older teachers in lower socio-economic schools had the lowest average. The lowest socio-economic schools had the greatest turnover of teachers. In addition to pay, Ritchie (2004) noted that this pattern of movement could also be explained by the

geographic locality of the middle-class schools as well as teacher residences, which were closer to middle-class schools.

A final finding suggested that working conditions and social problems had traditionally been found to be more complex in the lower socio-economic schools. These findings are related to research conducted in the US, which has found that teacher retention tends to be higher with higher salaries and lower in low-income, low achieving, and high minority schools (Stinebrickner 1998, 1999; Shin, 1995). This study may also provide insight in comparing private vs. public sector challenges (Elmore, 2007).

Another study exhibiting a strong relationship to the US literature is one conducted by Webb et al., (2004), which involved follow-up interviews of a sample of teachers from England and Finland. The researchers, who had interviewed the participants six years earlier, wanted to understand the perceptions of teachers over time concerning changes in practice, pay, and working conditions. The researchers found that work intensification, low pay, the decline in public respect, and deteriorating pupil behavior were important factors that discouraged teachers from remaining in the profession. Positive influences were commitment to children, professional freedom, and supportive colleagues. While studies relating public respect factors to attrition are rare, researchers have found that when teachers have stated personal reasons, they have been less frequently related to dissatisfaction with their job and were more frequently related to family and personal reasons (Wayne, 2000).

In Australia, Plunkett and Dyson (2011) conducted a three-year study via surveys

that captured the reflections of 102 new teachers who had recently graduated from a major Australian university. The researchers wanted to determine short-term and long-term goals such as the aspirations of teachers new to the profession. These researchers found that Australian patterns of attrition were similar to the ones published by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007), which reported that up to 50% of teachers who entered the profession left within the first three-to-five years (Plunkett and Dyson, 2011). One reason they found for this attrition was that the contractual system was counterproductive in influencing the retention of teachers because it did not induce a sense of permanence.

Although this type of study is less common, perceptions of contractual obligations could be associated with organizational condition factors more common in US studies (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Although caution should be used when generalizing from only one study, Clotfelter et al., (2004) found that statewide accountability policies were associated with attrition in low-performing schools. Similarly, a study conducted by Rees (1991) on the effect of unionism on teacher retention found teacher "turnover was significantly lower in New York districts that had grievance procedures involving binding arbitration for contract disputes and either binding or advisory arbitration for noncontract disputes than in districts without those particular procedures" (Guarino et al., 2006, p.199).

Two studies on retention in Norway were conducted in 2005. Due to the rigid pay structure in this country's educational system, Falch and Strøm (2005) investigated the

impact of variables other than pay on teacher turnover by analyzing the teacher data from the Norwegian primary and lower secondary (middle school) school system. Strongly related to the findings in US literature, these researchers found school size and teacher composition influenced teacher attrition. Furthermore, schools with higher proportions of minority and special needs children exhibited higher attrition rates. Although these findings may be related to the literature found in the US, in contrast, the Norwegian study revealed that females had lower attrition rates than males. Given the Norwegian legal system, the researchers suggested that this phenomenon could be related to laws tailored to maternity leave, subsidized childcare, and flexible work hours for expectant mothers. This study underscores Ingersoll's (2001a) organizational condition studies that have helped establish strong links between organizational conditions and employee motivation, commitment, and turnover.

A second Norwegian study conducted by Falch and Ronning (2007) explored attrition factors related to teacher turnover, with the Norway Ministry of Education providing the data. The researchers investigated variables other than salaries that influenced attrition. The factors of inter-district mobility, intra-district mobility, and teacher attrition were analyzed, with the researchers noting that temporary, short term, and teachers over 60 were not included in the analysis. The researchers found that higher attrition propensity was seen in young teachers, teachers who had more advanced education, and teachers who worked in schools with non-certified faculty, a high number of minority and special needs students, and male teachers. All the findings can be strongly related to what has been found in the US literature with the exception of male

teachers. However, as noted in the previous study, legal benefits in Norway for female teachers could help explain the difference in gender turnover.

The findings most different from the research already reviewed are found in a teacher retention study conducted in Gansu, China. The researchers described Gansu's school as poor, rural, and in a province with few resources. Using a case study methodology, Sargent and Hannum, (2005) examined the association among job satisfaction, community characteristics, school environment, and teacher characteristics. The school environment factors were defined as "salary, school economic resources and working conditions, workload, opportunities for personal and professional advancement, collaboration with and support from other teachers, and quality of supervision" (p.180). Teacher characteristics were defined as 52% female and 60% under the age of 40; 26% of the teachers had college degrees and 69% only a high school diploma. The participants included 100 village leaders, 128 principals, and 1003 teachers. The community factors suggested that teachers in more economically developed communities were less satisfied. In addition, the researchers found that females were more satisfied than males and a negative relationship between teacher satisfaction and salaries. Although these gender findings may be related to Norway's, they are dissimilar to US studies. It is relevant to note that Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) found that the self-reported commitment among US working teachers was higher for women than men although their attrition rates were higher.

Similar to the researchers in the US, the Chinese researchers found that better

educated and younger teachers were less satisfied and that teachers in schools with more resources, more administrative communication, and more support and collaboration were more satisfied. The researchers also found that teachers with ties to the local community were more satisfied. Although this study presents interesting findings, perhaps ties to the community played an important role in the results. Cohesion has been the subject of several studies, with researchers suggesting that turnover affects diverse organizational conditions that are important for effective schooling including instructional cohesion and staff trust (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2009).

Limitations in Teacher Retention Studies

The review of the literature on teacher retention up to this point in the chapter has been limited to studies of host country national teachers. However, teaching outside a teacher's home country may pose different challenges. To better understand the different factors that may influence the retention of expatriate teachers, phenomena must be observed in its own empirical dimensions (Green et al., 2012). Scholars have highlighted that expatriate jobs, unlike domestic ones, need to be understood through a broader range of variables that play a central role in the retention of expatriates (Shaffer et al., 2006). Although the next section of this review focuses on the research on the retention of expatriate teachers, it is important to note that the literature on host country national teachers has provided a broad understanding of the retention phenomenon in relation to expatriates.

Expatriate Teacher Retention

Around five of every six studies have explored factors related to the retention of expatriate teachers using Ingersoll's (2001b) conceptual framework. Although findings are not exact, they are consistent with the research conducted in the United States and other countries. Given the limited number of studies, this literature review included recent dissertations to support the knowledge base.

Hardman's (2001) descriptive study explored the factors influencing an expatriate teacher's decision to work at international schools and then those that impacted the decision to remain beyond the initial contract. Two hundred and eighty-one international teachers in Indonesia, Tanzania, Egypt, and Argentina were assessed via a quantitative questionnaire followed by personal interviews to enhance the understanding of the survey findings. Interviews were conducted at five international schools in Buenos Aires, with the researcher finding that professional advancement was the highest-ranking incentive. Other important incentives included financial incentives, a congenial working environment, and a strong sense of challenge. The researcher noted that although financial incentives proved important, the majority of teachers indicated that they would be unwilling to stay if they were unhappy. A congenial working environment was described as one engendering a feeling of appreciation and respect by colleagues and administration, a sense of security, a well communicated sense of purpose, shared aims, a strong relationship with colleagues and students, the opportunity to exert an influence, and positive encouragement from the head of the school. In addition, the researcher indicated that an orientation program and mentoring played a crucial role in the integration of new expatriate teachers and their families. These factors influencing

expatriate teacher retention are strongly related to factors found in the organizational

condition studies in the US literature. Table 2.1 summarizes Hardman's (2001) findings:

Table 2.1

Incentives and Conditions Motivating Teachers to Join/or Remain in an International

School

Factors influencing motivation to join, and remain in an international school	*% of samp*
Professional advancement in school	88.5
Financial incentives	84.6
Happy working climate of school	84.6
Strong sense of job challenge	84.6
Strong staff development program	76.9
High quality of staff, student and parent	73.1
High expectations of staff	69.2
High ideals and values of staff	65.4
School strongly centered on student learning	61.5
Staff empowerment through collaborative decision making	57.7
Strong personal/family induction and integration program	57.7
Positive staff appraisal program	53.8
Strong staff involvement in students' personal and social development	50.0
String staff induction program	46.2
High prestige of the school	38.5
Strong staff involvement in extracurricular activities	23.1
Other: sane administration and Board of Governors	3.85
Other: sense of staff community	3.85
Other: sense of adventure and need for change	3.85
Other: good relationship between administration and staff	3.85

(*Source:* Hardman, 2001, p.127)

Similar to retention studies conducted in the US and other countries, Hardman

(2001) found organizational conditions influenced the retention of expatriate teachers.

For example, differences in contractual offerings, typically in pay scales and benefit

packages that generated friction between the local and expatriate teachers influenced

attrition. Also, the researcher found that the level of contractual appointment influenced

retention. Additionally, Hardman (2001) identified teacher characteristic patterns and

created profiles for expatriate teachers who applied to international schools. The

researcher found six categories, summarized in Table 2.2, illustrating motivators in

relation to teacher category.

Table 2.2

Categories of Overseas Teachers Applying for Posts at International Schools

Category of teacher	Motivators	Advantage to School	Potential Disadvantage
Childless career professional	Happy working climate Feeling valued New teaching Exciting activities Involvement with students	Dedication Experience May extend contract Welcomes change No expenses of children	Few – ideal teachers! May eventually turn into a Penelope?
Maverick	Change of country Global travel New school location Possible escape from own national system	Enthusiasm and creativity Embraces change and responsibility No expense of children Easy rapport with students Cheap	Unlikely to extend contract May break off contract unexpectedly if personal circumstances are unsatisfactory Superficial commitment to

		Easy to acquire	school development plan (seen as 'educational tourist')
Career professional with family	Prestigious school (rather than location) Whole financial package (insurance accommodation, pension, education for their own children) Commitment of school to innovation and improvement Happy working climate	Stability – less likely to leave on whim Can create conditions for innovation in school May bring two staff (with spouse) Likely to extend contract, if conditions suitable for family Regards this post as stepping stone for the next, so gives much to school	Expensive: huge investment with whole family Disaffected spouse or children may influence teacher's own decision to stay
Senior teacher (older, children left home): Senior Penelope	Social integration into community more important than job challenge	Stability in School Plenty of experience	Change may be threatening and can become 'resisters' May not move when outlived their value
Senior career professional	Job challenge and stimulation Life-long learning	Experienced in innovation No ties Maturity in dealing with staff	

Senior maverick	Freedom from family life Urge to travel again	Experience Curiosity	Working towards retirement plans Desire 'to see it all before I retire'

<div align="right">(Source: Hardman, 2001, p.133)</div>

As Mancuso and White (2010) pointed out, the Hardman (2001) study did not provide correlations and, therefore, did not explore the differences in the perceptions of teachers staying and those leaving. To address this issue, they investigated if the reasons reported for staying or leaving were correlated with teacher behavior by exploring expatriate teacher turnover factors at American international schools in the Near East South Asia (NESA) region, which includes 87 international schools in 24 countries. Participants in the study were assessed via a survey Mancuso et al. (2010) called the International Teacher Mobility Survey (ITMS), a modified version of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS).

Similar to the Ingersoll (2001a) study, the researchers wanted to explore teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions, defining the first as age, sex, marital status, number of children, degree obtained, spouse as teacher, years at current school, and years of teaching experience. School characteristics were defined as student population of the school for-profit or nonprofit, and organizational conditions as physical working conditions, salary and benefits, class size, support and supervision, recognition of effort, intrusions or interference with teaching time, student discipline

problems, faculty influence over decision-making, self- efficacy, relationships with colleagues, professional competence of colleagues, prestige or esteem of the profession, student motivation, level of autonomy or responsibility afforded teachers, opportunities for professional or personal growth, and job satisfaction.

The researchers found the most important correlate of turnover was the perception of a supportive head of school (leadership) and the amount of input in decision making. The researchers also found other important correlates were satisfaction with salary and age, with the results indicating that middle-aged teachers were the most likely to quit, a contrast to the U-shape pattern found in US studies. Mancuso et al. (2010) also found that the head of teachers, not the principal, was the administrator who influenced the teachers. The scholars reported that transformational and distributed leadership styles influenced retention. It is important to note that findings support teacher retention studies from the US and other countries. While small differences may be found in regard to teacher and school characteristics, the organizational factors found are the same to US and non-US countries studies of teacher retention.

The study conducted by Roberts et al. (2010) based on Ingersoll's (2001a) conceptual framework investigated factors influencing the retention of expatriate teachers in East Asia Overseas schools, with a goal of decreasing the attrition rate. Seven hundred and forty-four expatriate teachers were randomly selected from a population 2,143 who taught in 32 schools in nine countries in the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS). The researchers measured teacher perceptions of organizational

conditions and school characteristics, defined as the number of students and teacher demographics. The researchers found that young teachers were more likely to leave than older ones, a result inconsistent with the findings of Mancuso and Yoshida (2010) for the NESA region findings, but similar to results from the US and other nations. Satisfaction with the salary, administrative support and perceived inclusion into decision-making were important predictors of retention, again findings consistent with those found in the US literature.

A study conducted by Odland and Ruzicka (2009) explored variables influencing expatriate teacher attrition in international school settings. In contrast to Hardman (2001), who explored retention factors, Odland and Ruzicka explored reasons why teachers left an international school at the end of their first contract. The population included the entire placement database of teachers in the Counsel of International Schools (CIS); 281 of the approximately 3,000 participated. The researchers used a mixed methods experimental design, which included open-ended questions that allowed for the exploration of organizational characteristics such as perceived academic strength and ownership structure. The teacher characteristics of gender, age, marital status, number of children, experience, subject area, and level of education were investigated.

The quantitative data revealed that the three most frequent reasons for leaving were poor school leadership, dissatisfaction with salary, and personal circumstances. Although Odland and Ruzicka (2009) did not specify nor define the characteristics of the home country, their study illustrated that it ranked fourth amongst the highly identified

factors. These findings are significant given the focus of my study to explore the effects of intercultural competence in the retention of expatriate teachers.

These findings are related to retention studies in US and other countries that highlight school characteristics and/or organizational conditions such as salary and school leadership. In addition, qualitative data revealed that teachers were negatively influenced by perceptions that the school administration was driven by profit incentives. However, these conclusions need further empirical base or explanation and should be viewed with caution.

A similar study of the variables impacting the turnover rate of expatriate teachers was conducted by Desroches (2013) in an American-style overseas school in the Association of American Schools in the South America (AASSA) region. Based on the framework developed by Ingersoll (2001a) and Mancuso (2010), it explored how teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions were related to retention. In addition, Desroches' framework included the characteristics of the country measuring how they influenced turnover or retention. Using a qualitative methodology and regression analysis, the resulting correlations suggested that AASSA schools had a turnover rate of 28% annually, a higher rate than seen in the US. The researcher also found that a competitive salary, benefits, and leadership played an important role in the retention of expatriates. In relation to host country characteristics, the results indicated that transportation, health services, living conditions, and public services were highly valued by the personnel and the lack of them led to turnover.

Joslin (2002) conducted a study assessing the transitional challenges of teachers moving to an international school, reflecting on the context of such schools, and exploring the associated and different cultural dimensions experienced by teachers who work outside their home countries. Using her own experience, Joslin (2002) suggested that many complex and interrelated factors affect the success of teachers in an international school environment, identifying the seven cultural dimensions of (a) one's own cultural heritage, (b) one's previous work culture/home country/professional culture, (c) the school's organizational culture, (d) the international school's mission, (e) the culture of the local community culture (e.g. expatriate community), (f) the regional culture, and (g) the host nation's culture/subcultures. While Joslin (2002) did not study the intercultural competence of teachers she documented transitional challenges that affect the success of a teacher moving to an international school. One of her primary arguments about the importance of culture in the international school context was based on Walton's (1994) assertion that "building relationships is a key to success in a culturally diverse workplace" (p.58). This researcher, therefore, emphasized that expatriates who have difficulty adjusting to another culture would be expected to have more complications, contribute less and be less advantageous to the organization. This finding is significant given the focus of my study.

In a meta-analysis of American International Schools, Gillies (2001) identified that frequent personnel turnover was a major problem in this academic environment and that administrators recruiting teachers needed to emphasize the ability to live abroad. Furthermore, the researcher highlighted the difficulty faced by administrators in

recruiting and retaining good teachers, noting that areas like South Asia had fewer international teachers than Central and South America. Based on Gillies (2001), Lockledge (1992) identified descriptors of overseas teachers, finding that those who were adaptable, flexible, and competent were successful, while the rigid and escapist were not.

While these studies summarize the expatriate teacher retention research that has been published in journals, dissertations were also found to offer important information. King (1968), who wrote one of the first dissertations on expatriate teachers, studied the selection, recruitment, and retention of teachers at American-sponsored schools throughout the world. In this examination of staff turnover, King surveyed 133 international school administrators, receiving 94 responses. Of the results, the five most relevant are (a) low pay is a deterrent and leads to higher turnover, (b) lack of retirement, medical, or health care leads to higher turnover, (c) lack of orientation to teachers leads to higher turnover, (d) lack of regional orientation leads to higher turnover, and (e) support for new teachers leads to higher retention. Interestingly, King's findings from five decades ago are strongly related to the organizational conditions found in the more contemporary literature of teacher retention.

While King (1968) researched expatriate teachers via school administrators, Koenig (1972) conducted his dissertation study by assessing teachers, examining the factors contributing to their turnover. Ninety-two interviews were conducted at 17 school locations in the Baden-Wuerttemberg School District of West Germany. While the researcher concluded that the most significant factors in the turnover of teachers were

personal ones and outside the control of school administrators, he also found that factors related to relationships, communication, and inadequate resources led to higher turnover. While the personal factors were not identified, perhaps they were related to the characteristics of the host country or intercultural competencies.

Sims's (2011) dissertation, which included a conceptual framework assessing cross-cultural competencies, investigated how cultural intelligence could serve as a predictor of job satisfaction among expatriate teachers in Latin America. Embeddedness (EMBED), Perceived Person-Job Fit (P-J Fit), Perceived Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit), and Perceived Person-Host Culture Fit (P-HC Fit) were examined using surveys of a representative population of expatriate teachers working in private American International schools from the tri-association of Latin America. The researcher found that cultural intelligence tended to increase job satisfaction and that Person-Job Fit and Person-Organization Fit were significantly related to retention as were Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) and Person-Host Culture Fit (P-HC Fit). This quantitative study's findings are significant given the focus of my study is to explore the effects of intercultural competence on the retention of expatriate teachers.

In another dissertation, Russell (2020) investigated the importance of retention factors on the decision of teachers to renew an initial contract at an international school in a country where they were living as an expatriate. The scholar used a quantitative survey and findings were based on the literature of teacher retention of both international schools and U.S. public schools and also from his own 13 years of experience as an international

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school leader. One hundred and fifty-six international school teachers' responses were reviewed utilizing frequency analyses and contingency table analyses based on key demographic characteristics. The researcher found that the most influential retention factors included job satisfaction, satisfaction with teaching assignments and associated duties, having a school administration that offered support/valued their work, and satisfaction with salary. The researcher also found that school leaders influenced contract renewal decisions.

Because of the large increase in the number of international schools and the high rates of teacher turnover, Rombaut (2020) used qualitative interviews to conduct a study with expatriate teachers and school heads in three international schools in São Paulo. The scholar investigated factors that potentially heighten a teacher's turnover and examined what school heads could do to improve teacher turnover by determining what impeded them from improving some of these factors. The findings suggest that employment laws and cultural differences between various stakeholders impeded school heads to address the factors. The scholar recommended school leaders needed to improve communication between leaders and teachers and create a tight-knit supportive community of stakeholders, acting as authentic leaders in cross-cultural contexts, and developing a common language within the school.

Limitations in Expatriate Teacher Literature

While there are numerous studies on teacher retention on host country national teachers; retention research in regard to expatriated teachers in cross cultural settings is

scarce and most educational researchers that have studied expatriate teachers have not pondered the intercultural challenges expatriate teachers face. Given this gap in the education literature, the following section reviews the international human resources management literature to strengthen the rationale that a more complex framework may be needed to understand the intercultural dimension and its effect on the retention of expatriated teachers.

Expatriate Retention – International Human Resource Management

While literature on expatriates in the educational field is limited, there is an abundance of research on corporate expatriates and their adjustment to foreign countries (Tseng et al., 2010). Given the abundance of the work and the lack of consistency in the terms used, Tseng et al. (2010) explored methodologies and expatriate studies in the 21st Century using the terms expatriate, international managers, international assignments, international leaders, international careers, global managers, global assignments, global leaders, and global careers to narrow their search. Subsequently, these researchers analyzed 20,670 citations from 460 expatriated articles published in social science journals between 2000 and 2008. Bibliometrics, social networks analysis, and citation analysis techniques were used to investigate the expatriate literature. The overarching theme found by the researchers was expatriate job performance, with most studies focusing on the pre-mature return of expatriates, the repatriation of expatriates, and the costs of premature return of expatriates. Table 2.3 illustrates the most frequently cited journals of expatriate studies found by Tseng et al. (2010).

Table 2.3

The Most Frequently Cited Expatriate Journals

Journals	Number of Citations
International Journal of Human Resource Management	977
Journal of International Business Studies	852
Academy of Management Review	478
Human Resource Management	475
Journal of Applied Psychology	419
International Journal of Intercultural Relations	385
Personnel Psychology	251
Journal of Management	229
Management International Review	205
Strategic Management Journal	197
Journal of Organizational Behavior	173
Human Relations	159
International Studies of Management	158
Human Resource Planning	133
Psychological Bulletin	124
Administrative Science Quarterly	114

(Source: Tseng et al., 2010, p.27)

The researchers also highlighted the most cited scholars of expatriate research at that time, finding that Black was the most influential researcher in the field. Black was the author of the top three cited studies in this body of literature:

1. Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of management review*, *16*(2), 291-317.

2. Black, J. S. (1988). Work role transitions: A study of American expatriate managers in Japan. *Journal of international business studies, 19*(2), 277-294.

3. Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1990). Cross-cultural training effectiveness: A review and a theoretical framework for future research. *Academy of management review, 15*(1), 113-136.

Of more importance to this dissertation are the Black and Mendenhall (1990) review and theoretical framework on cross-cultural effectiveness. In this work, these scholars highlighted the importance of a new theoretical framework based on social learning theory for guiding future research and noted that the context variables operated differently in international settings versus domestic ones. Social science research suggests that expatriates may often lack the tools essential for their success in overseas assignments and implies that the high turnover rates of expatriates are a result of cultural awareness factors and job performance measures (Early & Mosakowski, 2004; Zhang, et

al., 2020). Other researchers have found similar results, concluding that successful expatriates possess intercultural competence and embrace diversity (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009).

The effects of intercultural competence have been extensively studied in the field of international business and leadership demonstrating positive results (Wang et al., 2020). In a review of the literature discussing expatriate adjustment to other cultures, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) maintained that entering a new culture was stressful for expatriates, suggesting that those with the ability to manage such stress adapted better to their new environment and highlighting the importance for expatriates of being interculturally prepared. The Worldwide ERC Foundation for Workforce Mobility and Thunderbird School of Global Management developed a comprehensive analysis of the global mindset as an expatriate success strategy and these researchers found that while expatriates could be successful without formal training or education, developing a global mindset was important because it determined their success or failure in overseas environments (Lovvorn & Chen, 2011). Similarly, Ng et al., (2012) found that cultural intelligence contributes to the adjustment of individuals as they travel or work across borders, and Ang et al., (2007) found a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and work, interactional, and psychological adjustment in a study on the effects of cultural intelligence and expatriate adjustment to life in another culture.

While literature on teacher retention indicates a strong relationship between teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions, expatriate

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teachers may face additional challenges. Examples are factors such as unfamiliar environments or the cross-cultural adjustment challenges of repatriation that have been recurrently identified by international human resource scholars and other disciplines such as psychology and global leadership studies. Cross-cultural adaptation and adjustment, international job performance, intercultural effectiveness, cultural intelligence, global effectiveness, and other forms of intercultural contact studies that have identified intercultural competence are a key characteristic of expatriate success.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks on teacher retention such as Ingersoll's (2001b) have found three categories of moderators: (a) teacher characteristics, (b) school characteristics, and (c) organizational conditions. Using a similar approach, a narrative review conducted by Guarino et al. (2006) and a meta-analysis conducted by Borman and Dowling (2008) reviewed 63 teacher retention variables, classifying them in the same three categories of moderators. While Ingersoll's (2001b) framework provides a logical structure for the study of teacher retention, this dissertation proposes adding intercultural competence to the teacher characteristics moderator in the study of expatriate teacher retention.

According to Odland (2007) retention factors are complex, context-driven, and interrelated; and a teachers' decision to stay or leave has been demonstrated to be a function of the blend of complex variables. When it comes to expatriate teachers, an

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approach that takes into account both personal characteristics and cultural phenomena could increase our understanding of retention factors in cross-cultural assignments (Farber & Sutherland, 2006; Joselin, 2002). While traditional models that have been used to study intercultural competence have used personal characteristic variables that assess cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills (CAS); more recent studies use a developmental model that integrates personal characteristics and culture-specific patterns of difference (Hammer, 2015), in essence interrelating the organizational conditions and school characteristics with the environmental context (Hammer, 2015). In a review of the literature discussing expatriate adjustment to other cultures; Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) sustained that entering a new culture was stressful for expatriates and suggested that that those with abilities to manage such stress adapted better to their new environment, while they highlighted the importance for expatriates being interculturally prepared.

In summary, studies on cross-cultural adaptation and adjustment, international job performance, intercultural effectiveness, cultural intelligence, global effectiveness, and other forms of intercultural contact studies have identified intercultural competence as a critical characteristic for living or working effectively with people from different cultures (Cushner, & Brislin, 1996; Hammer & Bennett, 2009, Tapia 2009).

Although teacher retention literature indicates a strong relationship between teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions, expatriate teachers may face additional challenges. For example, international human resource scholars (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2004) and scholars in other disciplines, such as

psychology and global leadership studies (Cotter & Reichard, 2019), have identified factors such as unfamiliar environments and cross-cultural adjustment challenges of repatriation that may affect expatriate teachers' retention.

Therefore the theoretical framework of this dissertation proposes the addition of intercultural competence as a moderator of teacher characteristics in the study of expatriate teacher retention. It hypothesizes that expatriate teachers with higher levels of intercultural competence are more likely to remain in their international school assignments. This framework includes personal characteristic variables that assess cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, as well as culture-specific patterns of difference in relation to organizational conditions and school characteristics in a cross-cultural assignment. By emphasizing the importance of intercultural competence in expatriate teacher retention, this dissertation aims to contribute to the development of capacity-building models for supporting and training expatriated teachers and administrators of international schools.

Intercultural Competence

While studies on factors that affect expatriate teacher retention have been found to include teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions, intercultural competence has been identified as a critical attribute for living or working effectively abroad (Livermore, 2011). Although there are more than thirty conceptualizations of intercultural competence (Holt & Seki, 2012), there is consensus

among researchers and practitioners that intercultural competence is the ability to function successfully across cultures (Deardorff, 2006; Leung et al., 2014).

Prominent models of intercultural competence in the literature include the Global Leadership Competency, Global Mindset, Multicultural Personality, Intercultural Adjustment Potential Model, Cultural Intelligence, and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Each of these has a slightly different focus, one that may be appropriate for a specific context such as education or business.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) developed by Milton J. Bennett (1986, 1993) is an explanatory framework that explains the reactions of people to cultural difference. It is grounded in communication theory and exhibits a constructivist perception (Bennett, 2017) while it assumes "that the experience of reality is constructed through perception, and that more complex perceptual categories yield more complex (sophisticated) experience" (p.1).

The DMIS is the theoretical framework that underpins the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Bennett, 1986). The IDI is a validated and reliable self-assessment tool that measures an individual's intercultural competence based on the six stages of the DMIS (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). The IDI helps individuals identify their current level of intercultural sensitivity and provides feedback on how to develop their intercultural competence. While the IDI is not a direct measure of the DMIS, it is closely aligned with the theoretical framework of the DMIS and is designed

to measure an individual's progress along the stages of the DMIS (Hammer, 2011). The IDI is a validated and self-assessment tool that measures an individual's intercultural competence (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) providing a measures of the individuals' current level of intercultural sensitivity with a feedback report on how to further develop their intercultural competence (Bennett, 1986).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) posits six stages of intercultural sensitivity: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. In this model, individuals progress from ethnocentrism and a lack of awareness of cultural differences to a more complex understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. This progression is influenced by personal characteristics, such as cognitive complexity and empathy, as well as environmental factors such as exposure to diverse cultures and intercultural training (Bennett, 1993).

Research on the DMIS and other intercultural competence models has found that individuals with higher levels of intercultural competence are better able to navigate and function successfully in cross-cultural environments, exhibiting greater job satisfaction and performance, and higher levels of cross-cultural communication and collaboration (Deardorff, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2014; Martin & Harrell, 2004). Therefore, expatriate teachers who possess higher levels of intercultural competence may be better equipped to handle the challenges of cross-cultural communication, adapt to new cultural norms, and feel more integrated within the school and community, leading to a higher likelihood of retention.

The proposed conceptual framework in this study (see Figure 2.1) highlights the importance of intercultural competence in relation to expatriate teacher retention, and how it interacts with school characteristics and organizational conditions. Integrating intercultural competence into the study of expatriate teacher retention may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence teachers' decisions to stay or leave in a foreign environment. Figure 2.1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework to study if intercultural competence affects the retention of expatriate teachers. Figure 2.1 also suggests intercultural competence is interrelated with the school characteristics and organizational conditions.

Figure 2.1

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Teacher
Characteristics

Expatriate
Teacher
Retention

Organizational
Conditions

Intercultural
Competenc
e

School
Characteristics
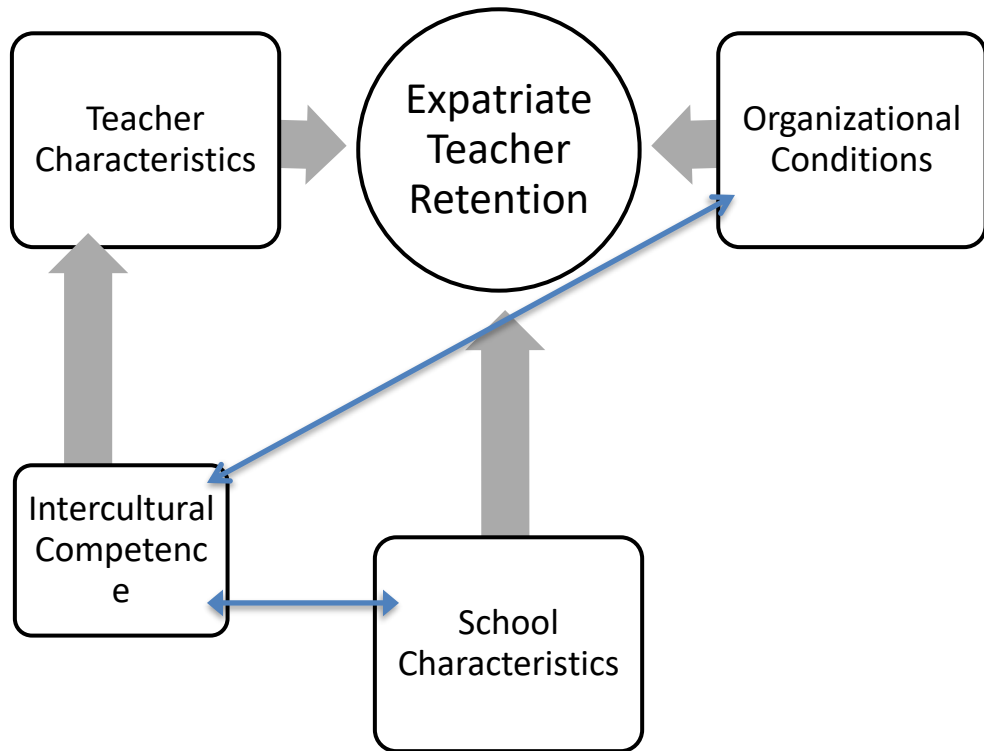
Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the relevant research on expatriate teacher retention, identifying gaps and showing the need of understanding intercultural competence to explore the retention of expatriate teachers in overseas assignments. First, it reviewed the literature relevant to teacher retention to understand the factors related to teacher retention around the world. Following this broader review, expatriate teacher retention literature was explored to understand the problem more specifically. Given the limited research and the use of only one conceptual framework in the studies of retention, international human resource management literature was reviewed as a platform for extending the knowledge base.

A new conceptual framework was introduced that expands Ingersoll's (2001a), who identified three main categories of moderators that influence teacher retention: (1) teacher characteristics, (2) school characteristics, and (3) organizational conditions. In the new framework intercultural competence was introduced as a theoretical lens to aid in the study of expatriate teacher retention. While the new framework highlights intercultural competence as a teacher characteristic; it also emphasizes it is interrelated with the school characteristics and organizational conditions. In essence, the new conceptual framework underlines an expatriate's suitability based on personal traits but takes into account the significance of the supporting context.

Overall, the chapter highlighted the complexity of expatriate teacher retention, stressing the importance of identifying and understanding the factors that contribute to

retention. The addition of intercultural competence to the conceptual framework provides

a new perspective for investigating the retention of expatriate teachers in overseas

assignments. The next chapter will outline the methodology used to investigate the

relationship between intercultural competence and expatriate teacher retention and

describe the research design and procedures used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and overview of expatriate teacher retention, while Chapter 2, the literature review, summarized the factors related to teacher retention in and outside the U.S. as well as the previous research on expatriate teachers. This literature review moved from the broader to the more specific issues, concluding with an identification of a gap in past research. To address this gap, intercultural competence was proposed as a theoretical lens to aid in the study of expatriate teacher retention.

The primary goal of this chapter is to detail the methodology for answering the research question investigated in this study: How does the intercultural competence of an expatriated teacher influence their decision to leave or stay at the end of their school contract? Attention was given to understand the effect intercultural competence has on expatriate teacher retention by exploring the phenomenon itself through the lived experiences of the expatriate teachers working in an international school in Panama City, Panama. A case study design informs how expatriated teachers' intercultural competence influences their decisions to stay or leave at the end of their contracts.

This chapter includes the research design beginning with the statement of the problem, followed by the purpose of the study, the research question, and the delimitations. It continues with an outline of the methodology followed by the research methods and limitations. The concluding section discusses my positionality and provides a summary.

Statement of the Problem

Given teachers' high turnover and attrition rates, much educational research has focused on factors affecting teacher retention, including its relationship with educational quality. While there has been extensive research on factors affecting the retention of host country national teachers, the retention of expatriated teachers in cross-cultural settings has received limited attention in the literature. This study addresses this limitation.

Given the high turnover and attrition rates among teachers, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the retention of teachers in cross-cultural settings, as this can have a significant impact on the quality of education provided to students. By addressing this research gap, this study aims to provide insights into the factors that influence the retention of expatriated teachers in cross-cultural settings, and to identify strategies that can be used to improve their retention rates.

Expatriate teachers face particular intercultural challenges, including unfamiliar environments and the cross-cultural adjustment involved in repatriation (Cotter & Reichard, 2019; Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2004,) both of which have been found to be key for living or working effectively with people from different cultures (Cushner, & Brislin, 1996; Hammer & Bennett, 2009; Tapia 2009). As a result, it is important to improve our understanding of how intercultural factors may affect expatriated teachers and specifically if the intercultural competence of expatriated teachers affects their decisions to stay or leave at the end of their school contracts.

Thus, this study aims to identify the factors that influence the retention of expatriated teachers in cross-cultural settings, with a focus on the role of intercultural competence and to provide insights into strategies that can improve their retention rates.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to identify factors that contribute to expatriate teacher retention in cross-cultural settings and to determine how organizations and schools can support their adaptation and retention.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study: What factors contribute to expatriate teacher retention in cross-cultural settings, and how can organizations and schools support their adaptation and retention?

Delimitations

A K-12 international school in Panama City, Panama, was the site for the study. While using only one school was a potential limitation, the single international school chosen offered a unique multicultural character, a factor essential for this study. The participants were purposefully chosen from among Western trained expatriate teachers at the BoInternational School in their first, second, or third contract terms.

An additional delimitation was the geographic region chosen for this study. Panama is an appropriate location for this study given that it is a country driven by

expatriates that possess a strong dollarized economy with fewer social issues. In addition, this geographic location has specific characteristics that differ from other countries in the Latin America region. For example, while global migration studies have generally focused on South – North movements, recent decades have shown increased North – South migration attributing the rise to retired Europeans and North Americans who want to reside in Latin American countries (Pallares & Rollins-Castillo, 2019).

While scholars have found many different factors that influence migration trends, receiving states have a critical role when it comes to labor migration (Hayes, 2015; Pallares & Rollins-Castillo, 2019). Panama decrees citizenship status less relevant and has different legal rights and economic incentives for select non-citizen residents. Also, Panama is known for designing welcoming policies like practices with a commercial nationalism focus, making it more attractive for tourism, investors, and international collaborations (Kaneva, 2016).

Similar to the scholarly findings, the media company *International Living* has been cited in many articles and reports giving it relevant credibility (Hayes, 2015; Pallares & Rollins-Castillo, 2019). International living ranks countries according to specific criteria and measurable quantitative data while it also conducts qualitative interviews to expatriates living in different countries. Interestingly, their latest review of the top ten countries in the retirement global index shows Panama in the top spots globally. The other nine countries were Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Portugal, Ecuador, Malaysia, France, Malta, and Vietnam.

International Living (International Living, 2021) ranks countries according to the following ten categories:

- Housing

- Benefits & Discounts

- Visas & Residence

- Fitting In/Entertainment

- Development

- Climate

- Healthcare

- Governance

- Opportunity

- Cost of Living

In summary, the delimitations include the choice of the single international school in Panama City, Panama, the selection of Western trained expatriate teachers in their first, second, or third contract terms, and the geographic region of Panama. These choices were made to ensure the unique multicultural character of the school and the relevance of the study to the Latin American context, particularly in Panama. Additionally, the study focused on expatriate teachers and did not include local teachers or administrators in the analysis. The study also did not examine the experiences of expatriate teachers in other fields or industries, but instead focused on the context of international schools.

The use of International Living as a source of data was also a delimitation, as the rankings were based on specific criteria and quantitative data, as well as qualitative interviews with expatriates living in different countries. Other sources of data or rankings may have provided different results or perspectives. Finally, the study was limited by the researcher's own subjectivity and positionality. However, the researcher made efforts to mitigate this limitation through sound research methods and the triangulation of data.

Methodology

The overall design of the study was a single case study using a holistic design to observe how the intercultural competence of expatriated teachers influences their decisions to stay or leave at the end of their contracts. A case study design was used due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research question as well as the interrelation between the phenomena studied, intercultural competence, and the context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam & Tisdall, 2016; Yin, 2003). Moreover, Yin (2003, 2011) emphasized the usefulness of the case study approach when the research is descriptive or exploratory in nature using how and why questions as they allow researchers to make direct observations and obtain data in a natural setting (Yin, 2003). In addition, Yin (2011) indicated that good case studies should include multiple data sources to triangulate findings. According to Freebody (2003), triangulation reduces potential bias due to subjectivity or other factors; furthermore, triangulated data collection methods increase the validity and credibility of study findings, providing a broader and more

comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of intercultural competence in education.

Research Methods

To conduct the study, first the intercultural competences of teachers were assessed to better understand the degree of their individual intercultural competence. Then, through in-depth interviews participants described cross-cultural adaptability experiences and their perceptions. Findings that emerged from the analysis are based on the triangulation of data to construct and consolidate meaning

The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions and were audio-recorded to capture participants' responses verbatim. In addition to the interviews, the researcher observed teachers' behavior and interactions like their engagement with colleagues and school staff. Data from interviews and observations were transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To assess the intercultural competences of teachers, the researcher used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which is a validated assessment tool that measures individuals' intercultural competence (Hammer et al., 2003). The IDI assesses individuals' intercultural competence based on their level of orientation, knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards cultural differences. It provides a quantitative score indicating the individual's level of intercultural competence, which was then used to

compare with the interview findings.

The triangulation of data from multiple sources provided a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of intercultural competence and its effect on teacher retention in cross-cultural settings. This approach helped to increase the validity and reliability of the findings, as well as to ensure a completer and more accurate picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

The study was conducted by the researcher in a natural setting, serving as a participant-observer and maintaining the study's validity through the triangulation of the data. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling. This type of sampling involved applying selection criteria based on the essential attributes needed by participants to gain the most insight for addressing the purpose of the study. In addition, this method is recommended for qualitative case studies where the goal is to explore, discover, understand, and learn (Merriam, 1998). In the study the behavior of the participants was not manipulated since the phenomenon and context were interrelated.

Data Collection

The data collection process began with an invitation sent to a pool of 18 English-speaking expatriate teachers who were working at an international school in Panama City, Panama. The invitation explained the purpose of the study and invited the teachers to participate. Out of the 18 invitations sent, 14 teachers volunteered to participate in the study, which represented a 78% response rate.

After reviewing the volunteers' qualifications, nine participants were chosen purposefully for the study. The selection criteria included that the participants must be Western trained certified teachers, have more than two years of experience in the teaching profession, and be self-initiated expatriates. The nine participants chosen were all currently working as expatriate teachers at the international school in Panama City.

Data collection was done through in-depth interviews conducted in person by the researcher. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The questions were open-ended and designed to elicit detailed and descriptive responses from the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

In addition to the interviews, the researcher also collected documents and artifacts from the school, such as the school's mission and vision statements, and professional development materials. These documents and artifacts were used to triangulate the data and validate the findings. The data collection process was conducted over a two-week period, during which time the researcher conducted the interviews, collected the documents and artifacts, and analyzed the data.

Surveys

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) surveys were used to measure intercultural competence. IDI is a cross culturally valid and generalizable measure of intercultural competence that measures the intercultural sensitivity and adaptability of a person along an intercultural development continuum (Hammer, 2011). According to Hammer (2011), this tool "has been demonstrated through research to have high predictive validity to both bottom-line cross-cultural outcomes in organizations and

intercultural goal accomplishments in education" (p.3). The IDI assessment is grounded within the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett; 1986,1993).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) model is composed of six stages or orientations that people can progress through in their intercultural development. These stages range from denial or defense of one's own cultural identity to a global mindset that appreciates and incorporates multiple cultural perspectives. The IDI survey assesses an individual's intercultural competence by identifying which of the six DMIS orientations they fall into. The survey results provide a profile of an individual's intercultural competence that can be used to explore how their intercultural competence influences their experiences in cross-cultural contexts.

IDI surveys were emailed to the 14 participants with instructions detailing how to render them (see Appendix B). On average the questionnaire was completed in 15–20 minutes. Four days were given to receive feedback and after the four-day timeframe, three teachers out of the 14 (21%) were reminded via email to complete their survey. When all surveys were completed, scores were compiled and analyzed for each individual teacher profile.

The individual teacher profile included demographic information such as first name, last name, education level, country of citizenship (passport country) or the country the expatriate considered their primary country of citizenship, and the current position in their educational institution. The individual intercultural competence score of teachers allowed the researcher to divide them into 3 categories. These categories had the

following range. Category one intercultural competence score ranged from 55 to 84 (low score), category two ranged from 85 to 114 (medium score), and category three ranged from 115 to 145 (high score). Accordingly, the scores identified five orientations, the monocultural orientations of denial and polarization (low score), the transitional mindset of minimization (medium score), and a more global or intercultural mindsets of acceptance and adaptation (high score).

The intercultural competence assessment instrument informed the design of the study and provided structure. It was used directly for data collection purposes. The assessment provided valuable information about participants' current level of thinking around cultural differences. For this study, the IDI was used as a diagnostic instrument in the form of a pre-test process at the beginning of this study to gain insights for designing.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted on the background documents of the mission statement, vision statement, history, bylaws, and program descriptions of the international school selected as well as on the demographics of the students and staff members. These documents were collected based on their relevance to the research question and evaluated based on their history, accuracy, and authenticity. The documents were analyzed using the same coding process as the interview transcripts and observation notes. Such documents are an important data source because they offer information different from what may be obtained from observations and interviews (Merriam, 1998). To

progressively inform and focus the research in a qualitative case study it is recommended that data collection and analysis coincide (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

Following the survey results, the school head was contacted for additional documents needed such as teacher resumes and for help in establishing possible interview dates and schedules. After further review nine out of the 14 (64%) participants were selected for further study. Out of the nine participants chosen, three were selected that exhibited low intercultural competence scores, three for exhibiting medium intercultural competence scores, and three for exhibiting high intercultural competence scores. All participants were purposefully chosen. The nine teachers selected also exhibited a perceived orientation score greater than their developmental orientation score. These results indicated that the participants felt they were more interculturally adaptive than they actually were. Research indicates that human beings often feel they are more effective in a variety of pursuits than they actually are and that an overestimated intercultural competence is common (Hammer, 2015).

The following figure, figure 3.1 below provides a summary of the participant characteristics, including their pseudonym names and the IDI score of each participant. The IDI score was utilized to aid in the study's design and to gain a better understanding of each participant's adaptability and sensitivity towards diverse cultures.

The following Figure 3.1 illustrates each of the participants and their IDI scores.

Table 3.1

Overview of Participants IDI Score

Pseudonym	IDI Score	IDI Stage
Giselle	87.29	Minimization
Jennifer V	74.4	Polarization
Nancy C	125.68	Acceptance
Katherine	82.86	Polarization
Lara	104.5	Minimization
Sarah	129.05	Acceptance
Dan	88.2	Minimization
Safire	125.68	Acceptance
Karen	51.36	Denial

Semi-Structured Interviews

In the semi-structured interviews participants responded to open-ended questions in their own words. Data was collected using an interview guide and reproduced in transcript form for each participant. Permission was obtained to record the interviews digitally for the purpose of accuracy and to facilitate their transcription (Emerson et al., 2011). Data also consisted of field notes written by the researcher after each interview; these reports included impressions of the participants, observations of the setting, and any relevant information appropriate for the study (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Emerson et al., 2011).

Before the interviews, the participants were informed that they could decide not to participate or not to continue participating in this study at any time. An interview guide was used to ensure the uniform structure and consistency of the sessions. The guide initiated with demographic questions all to which the participant responded to verbally. Data included the participant's age, education, ethnicity, teaching position, and years of experience. Subsequently, the participants were asked to chronicle their teaching careers both domestically and abroad.

These initial demographic and professional questions were intended to establish rapport while also providing data that helped establish a framework conceptualizing the participant's teaching history. Once preliminary information was collected, the interview questions focused on the teacher's perceived experiences. The interview guide concluded with summative questions related to intercultural phenomena designed to correspond to the overarching question guiding this research. The guide can be found in Appendix A.

I merged the teachers' responses to each of the questions into a professional life history for each participant and follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant for clarification and validation purposes as needed. According to Hatch (2002), "when multiple interviews are scheduled for the same individuals, then analysis of early contacts will inform the later interviews and spontaneous conversation will develop out of researcher-informant rapport" (p. 102).

The Interviews. Nine participants were interviewed for this study. Interviews

were programed on two separate days to accommodate teachers' schedules and to allow

timely reflections, notes, and follow up interviews of the data collected (observations,

researcher reflections). Each teacher was interviewed for an average of 30 minutes. Thus,

interview data of the 9 teachers totaled 270 minutes or 4.5 hours. Interviews were

designed using three blocks of questions (see appendix A). The emphasis was to

understand factors that affected retention with a particular interest in understanding how

cultural factors affected teachers in out of country settings and feelings concerning this

topic. The exploration aimed to learn more about uncovering cultural related factors that

affected decisions of continuation or how the cultural context contributes to an

expatriated teacher's interests in extending or terminating their employment.

The interviews were conducted in May 2022 of the 2021-2022 academic year and

in the last week before the end of the school year. Each interview was semi-structured

and followed a set of protocol questions established prior to the onset of the study.

Responses to each of the questions were merged into the professional life history of each

participant and to prepare follow-up interviews in the spirit of clarification and validation

purposes as needed.

The first blocks of questions helped detail and triangulate the background of the

participants, establish rapport, and understand the participants better to uncover possible

phenomena. The questions inquired about how they grew up, their educational

background, why they were in their current school, how long they had been a teacher at

their current school, and how long they had been teachers. If they were experienced

teachers, they were asked what prior teaching experiences they had and if the current experiences were similar or different from other schools in which they had taught.

The second block of questions helped me understand how and to what extent intercultural competence was a factor that affected retention. Therefore, open-ended questions were asked about sources of satisfaction in their role but also about their sources of dissatisfaction, challenges lived, or tensions in the profession. These questions aimed to uncover sources and their reactions or consequences to them. To all these questions I asked follow-up questions, such as "Can you tell me more about that?" "Do you have any examples illustrating that?", or "Can you elaborate on that?"

In the third block of questions was open-ended questions which asked teachers about their future plans. These questions were followed with more questions, such as "Can you tell me more about that?" and "Can you elaborate on that?" All questions and conversations centered on understanding factors that could cause the teachers to remain or leave their current school.

Finally, I asked if there were any factors that would persuade them to stay or leave and to share anything they felt they wanted to share with me. A variety of cultural related factors, organizational conditions, and leadership related factors were found to be most pressing and affect expatriate teachers' decisions to stay or leave. These findings will be presented and analyzed in the following section drawing preliminary conclusions in anticipation of more developed discussions and interpretation of results in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

The data analysis approach used in this study was iterative analysis, which is a recommended best practice in qualitative research. Iterative analysis involves regularly reviewing data, considering potential themes, and revising data collection techniques as needed. Overall, this iterative approach helped improve the quality and rigor of the study.

The initial analysis was conducted based on my first impressions. The analyses started with the initial data collection and continued during and after all data had been collected. I conducted an initial review of the data while on-site, consisting of my impressions of the potential themes that emerged, and reflected on specific issues and any new insights. Additional analysis occurred between data collection activities, and once the data collection was complete.

After all the data had been collected, the raw data from the interviews were transcribed for analysis. I looked for relationships among the data (Brenner, 2006) and organized my findings thematically using a data matrix as my analytical tool. Throughout the study, I organized and managed the data via coding.

Codes were analyzed for consistent patterns of shared characteristics, and these patterns translated into core categories or subcategories as they emerged and became concrete (Saldana, 2009). The categories were then compared with one another to see how they could be interrelated and to determine the major themes or concepts they generated. Because I used different data sources, I analyzed how they related to each

other and how they informed the findings. As the themes emerged, I reflected on specific issues like new insights (Brenner, 2006).

After a two-week break from the data, I analyzed the interview transcripts using the computer software MAXQDA2022. I coded each interview again and compared it to the initial manual coding, using constant comparative analysis techniques. This process allowed for easy comparison, as I had both coded versions of the interviews. I organized the findings thematically by generating a data matrix using the software. My iterative and systematic analysis process ensured consistency in identifying key points during coding. Additionally, the data matrix helped me identify interrelated codes and determine major themes or concepts generated by the data.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Firstly, it follows a single-case design and participants were selected using purposive sampling rather than random sampling. In this case study, I selected expatriated teachers who fitted the profile of those I needed to research. While findings from purposive sampling may not always be statistically representative of the larger population, they can be qualitatively generalizable. Yin (2003) argued that although qualitative single case studies may not be generalizable to a population, they could be generalizable to theories and phenomena. Yin referred to this type of generalization as analytic generalization, emphasizing the detailed and thick descriptions from qualitative single case studies that can be used to infer logical

inferences for a theory, theoretical construct, phenomenon, or another context.

Secondly, this study was confined to a single school situated in a specific geographic location, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other cross-cultural contexts. While the study aimed to offer insights into the experiences of expatriated teachers in cross-cultural settings, it is crucial to acknowledge that experiences may vary across diverse geographic locations and cultures.

Thirdly, the study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may be vulnerable to social desirability bias and may not entirely capture the complexity and nuances of intercultural experiences. Nonetheless, I used multiple data sources, including observations and interviews, to mitigate this limitation.

Finally, the study had a relatively small sample size, which may curtail the statistical power and generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, I aimed to offer in-depth insights and a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the selected participants, and the use of qualitative data analysis methods helped to compensate for this limitation.

Overall, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including the use of purposive sampling, the limited geographic location, reliance on self-reported data, and a small sample size. These limitations may impact the generalizability and statistical power of the findings. However, the study aimed to contribute qualitatively generalizable knowledge to theory within an educational context and provide a comprehensive

understanding of the experiences of expatriated teachers in cross-cultural settings. Future research may consider using different sampling methods, expanding the study to other geographic locations, and using a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, future studies may consider using multiple methods to collect data to mitigate social desirability bias and capture the complexity and nuances of intercultural experiences.

Positionality

As a researcher, I am aware of the potential influence of my subjectivity and personal background on my findings (Peshkin, 1988). The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of expatriate teachers in international schools and the factors that contribute to their retention or departure. To minimize potential biases, I used a mixed-methods approach that included interviews, surveys, and focus groups, and I analyzed the data using a triangulation method (Bredo, 2006; Yin, 2003).

My personal background includes growing up in an international school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and observing the impact of expatriate teachers on my life. My mother's 45-year career as a school leader at various international schools also exposed me to many customs and traditions not traditional to my home country. As an international student myself, I have experienced firsthand the challenges of adjusting to a new environment. After working in the financial sector in Miami, Florida, I returned to the country I grew up to work at an international school with my mother. Over the past two decades, I have gained firsthand experience with the unique challenges that

international schools face, and teacher retention has always been of particular interest to me.

My personal background and experiences inform my perspective as a researcher, and I conducted this study with an open mind, a commitment to ethical practices, and sensitivity to the experiences of the expatriate teachers who participated in this research. By acknowledging my positionality and using rigorous research methods, I aim to produce findings that are reflective of the experiences of expatriate teachers in international schools.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the research design for my study. The case study methodology proposed was appropriate for examining descriptive questions such as the one in this study since I aspired to explore how intercultural competence affected the retention of expatriate teachers in an international school setting. In addition, the site selection was appropriate given that Panama is a country driven by expatriates and has a strong dollarized economy and fewer social issues. The study included the collection of data from multiple sources including surveys, interviews, and document analysis and an explanation of the iterative systematic approach used.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Chapter one provided an introduction and overview of expatriate teacher

retention, which is the central theme of the study. Chapter two; the literature review,

summarized factors related to teacher retention in and outside the U.S. along with

previous research moving from broader to the more specific issues, concluding with an

identification of a gap in past research and proposing intercultural competence as a

theoretical lens to aid in the study. Chapter three detailed the methodology for answering

the research question and concluded with a discussion of the researcher's positionality.

Overall, the first three chapters of the research provide a comprehensive introduction to

the study, a thorough review of the literature and a detailed explanation of the

methodology used in the research. These chapters establish the groundwork for the rest of

the study, which aims to investigate the factors that impact expatriate teacher retention.

In chapter four, my goal was to detail the findings that answer the research

question. I focused on exploring the effect of intercultural competence on expatriate

teacher retention by examining the phenomenon through the lived experiences of

expatriate teachers working in an international school in Panama City, Panama. As the

findings show, expatriate teachers with higher levels of intercultural competence are

better equipped to adapt to new environments and build positive relationships with

students, colleagues, and the community. This, in turn, increases their likelihood of

staying at their current school and renewing their contracts The study also suggests that

factors related to leadership and organizational conditions play an equally important role in influencing an expatriate's decision to remain in a school. By taking these factors into account, schools can actively create an environment that helps expatriate teachers thrive in their positions.

Chapter 4 begins by describing the characteristics and background context of the participants before presenting the generated themes. These findings are outlined as factors that have the potential to influence decisions to stay or leave in order from the most to least commonly discussed and are presented beginning with the most pressing factors to those that are less pressing. To protect participant anonymity, pseudonyms have been assigned to each of the participants. The chapter highlights preliminary conclusions drawn from the findings, which serve as a precursor to more in-depth discussions and interpretations of the results presented in chapter 5.

Participant Characteristics

In this section, I break down the characteristics of the teachers in the study to offer a clearer understanding of the participants and provide a tentative idea of how their characteristics might relate to their decisions to stay at or leave a school. The following table takes into account citizenship, participants years teaching at their current school, the participants years of teaching experience, the participants marital status, and the foreign countries they have lived including Panama. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the characteristics of the teacher participants.

Table 4.1

Overview of Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	Citizenship	Years Teaching at Current School	Years of Teaching Experience	Marital Status	Foreign Countries Lived Including Panama
Giselle	Hong Kong	3	7	Single	2
Jennifer V	Venezuela	1	10	Single	2
Nancy C	Canada	3	3	Single	4
Katherine	Venezuela	2	7	Married	2
Lara	USA	3	3	Single	3
Sarah	USA	3	6	Married	4
Dan	USA	3	13	Divorced	2
Safire	South Africa	2	10	Married	5
Karen	USA	8	14	Married	1

Participants' Contexts

To address teacher turnover in international schools, it's crucial to understand why teachers choose to work in such schools (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). The first set of questions in this study focused on the participants' background and reasons for joining their current school. This provided insight into their motivations for potentially moving to a different school, city, or country. Their responses also shed light on their level of satisfaction with their current position compared to their expectations. The second and third sets of questions aimed to gather information on their overall satisfaction and reasons for staying or leaving their current school.

In general, the questionnaire asked about participants' backgrounds, motivations

for coming to the school, satisfaction with their current position, and reasons for potentially leaving or staying at the school. The questionnaire responses helped to understand the participants' context and identify potential factors that may contribute to teacher turnover in international school settings. The summarized overview of the participants provides insight into the potential reasons for teacher turnover in this context.

Participant 1

IDI Score 87.29 (Medium-Minimization), Giselle was from Asia, Hong Kong. She had a bachelor's degree in sociology and counseling with a master's degree in play therapy. She had prior working experience as a trainee consultant and teacher. Giselle had a philanthropic drive, and she joined the education field and BoInternational (pseudonym) mainly because of "passion" as she described it. She expressed that her working experiences were constantly incentivized by personal growth. Giselle was on her third academic year at BoInternatioanl. Two had been remote and this was her fist academic year on campus. She felt she was still having a very hard time adjusting culturally. She mentioned experiencing "culture shock" stating that the culture was "totally different from where she grew up." She was used to a more "formal" way of behavior from the students and a more "academic" culture. Giselle also stated she felt lack of support "even from some parents." "Don't expect my child to behave like an Asian" was one of the chronicles that she exerted. Giselle mentioned several intercultural related experiences and organizational characteristics such as salary and workload. Giselle was not continuing the next academic year and mentioned abandoning the

79

profession.

Participant 2

IDI Score 74.4 (Low-Polarization), Jennifer was from Venezuela, had a bachelor's degree in sociology and another one in education psychology. She had prior teaching experiences in another international school in Panama and had been in education for a total of 10 years; but was on her first academic year at BoInternational School. Jennifer got into education because of a friend and was content in her current position mentioning that the BoInternational School had been her "dream school" and was glad for the opportunity to teach there. In the past, Jennifer had lived in Italy for four years where she enjoyed her experience. Although now Jennifer was an expatriate in Panama she was the only participant that did not reflect intercultural related phenomena in her interview answers and stated that she felt like "a local" in Panama. Her reflections constantly centered on how to connect with her different students and on teaching challenges and her reflections did not comprise intercultural related phenomena when she talked about job related challenges. All of the factors that she described affecting her were in general related to organizational conditions such as teacher network & collaboration and bureaucracy, organizational factors common to retention studies. She also highlighted ability and training centering much of her discourse on "unlearning and adapting to a new generation."

Participant 3

IDI Score 125.68 (High-Acceptance), Nancy was Canadian and considered herself, international. She is a daughter of expatriates who were born in Chile and she lived a good part of her upbringing in Quebec, Canada. Nancy also lived on and off in Colombia, in the cities of Cali, Bogota, and Medellin. She was on her first teaching position in Panama and was on her third academic year at BoInternational. It is important to note that two of the last three years Nancy had been a remote teacher. Nancy said she was not continuing in BoInternational and that she had signed a new contract with a different international school where she was moving later in the summer.

Nancy mentioned several challenges adapting to the school culture this year. Nancy also highlighted the importance in the sense of belonging and "building those strong student relationships." Nancy underlined organizational conditions such as salary and growth opportunity as important factors, mentioning she was career focused and her desire to grow professionally. Nancy valued the international exposure of her current school and expressed her love for travel.

Participant 4

IDI Score 82.86 (Low-Polarization), Katherine is a Venezuelan expatriate that moved to Panama because of her husbands' job seven years ago. Her husband is Italian, and they got married in Venezuela before moving to Panama. This academic year was her seventh year as a teacher but her second year at BoInternational. Katherine had a master's degree in education and her undergraduate degree was in clinical psychology. She saw

BoInternational as an upgrade from her last school. In the interviews Katherine

mentioned several intercultural factors that were challenging but at the same time

mentioned she saw this difficulties as learning and adjusting opportunities to grow from

them. Katherine's interview responses reflected her philanthropic heart and the high

value she gave to the international climate and context at BoInternational. Katherine had

a son enrolled at BoInternational and was content about it. She was also expecting a baby

girl by the end of this year and was staying for the next academic term.

Participant 5

IDI Score 104.5 (Medium-Minimization), Lara was from the USA and was the

daughter of expatriates. Most of her up bring was in Honduras, where she graduated from

high school. For college she studied in the US from where she got her bachelor's degree

in international studies and communications. Shortly after her receiving her bachelor's

degree she moved to Spain to get her master's degree in clinical research. Three years

ago, Lara moved to Panama where she started working as a second-grade teacher.

Working in a school made her realize she liked the educational sector and last year she

enrolled in her second master degree, this time in international education.

Lara mentioned a variety of intercultural factors related to "being outside one's

home country and adapting to change." Lara also expressed several organizational

characteristics, which included the opportunity for advancement, bureaucracy, and salary

as pressing factors that affect her continuation with the school. Although Lara had

advance contract negotiations with the school, she was undefined of her role next year. In Lara's interview responses, cultural related phenomena seemed interrelated with organizational conditions affecting her.

Participant 6

IDI Score 129.05 (High-Acceptance), Sarah was from the USA and had an international upbringing. She mentioned it was difficult to say where she was from. Sarah lived in a more rural sector in El Salvador and Honduras when she was a teenager and moved to Costa Rica in the last years of high school. She obtained her Bachelor in Arts in Anthropology, Sociology, and History in Idaho and lived in Missouri for a while with family but moved to Brazil shortly after to get her master's degree in humanities. Sarah has been in education for the past six years and working at BoInternational the last three.

Sarah was married and her husband was Panamanian. They did not have children at the time, and she mentioned they wanted stability for a while. Currently, Sarah is in the process of being certified as a principal and open to new opportunities. Amongst her assertions she expressed she "loved the experience of traveling" and was open to opportunities "outside." Sarah had not yet signed a new contract and seemed undefined. Sarah mentioned liking the community of BoInternational but was very oriented to growth opportunities and what the world had to offer.

Participant 7

IDI Score 88.2 (Medium-Minimization), Dan was from the United States of America, from the city of Los Angeles and had a military background. Dan started in the educational field as a preschool teacher, where he worked when he was off duty. Dan mentioned getting hurt after the war and joining the elementary education field shortly after that. He became a principal in the public sector in the US but retired when he was around 38. Because of his early retirement, Dan decided to come back into education, he joined a school outside of Panama City around six academic years ago but transferred to BoInternational three academic years ago. Dan enjoyed having a community of parents and students from "around the world" however Dan was "tired" and felt "burn out."

Dan expressed he had lost his joy. Dan had also lost his joy before when he lived in Europe where expressed he had a hard time with what he called "cultural bias" or "cultural taboos." Dan was also having a hard time adjusting to Panama and mentioned many intercultural factors that were really pressing on him and he mentioned he "tried hard to find a balance." Dan also mentioned a few of organizational conditions that were not of his liking and mentioned he felt he only had "maybe another year or two in him." In Dan's discourse he mentioned and gave examples of organizational cultural differences and believed these different ways were contradictory to the objective of preparing students for "real life" amongst other things.

Participant 8

IDI Score 125.68 (High-Acceptance), Safire had an international childhood and

upbringing. She is South African and lived in Botswana when she was very young. She also lived in Zimbabwe where she went to boarding school. Safire later traveled back to South Africa and lived with relatives to finish high school and attended the University of Buckingham. Given she had "never traveled outside of Africa" and felt the need to "travel and explore." She chose Asia as a destiny. In Asia, she worked at an international school for five years where she traveled around the continent, grew professionally, and made it to head of department until for "no motive" she decided it was time to move into something new and "explore a new continent."

Safire moved to South America around six years ago and lived in Chile. She first went to an international school outside of Santiago where she met her husband and a few years later switched to an international school in Santiago for "love" she stated. Then she moved to Panama. She felt moving to Panama came at a great time since the pandemic had really taken a toll on her and she was ready for change. Safire was married and expecting her first child. Her spouse was Chilean and an expatriate himself who worked for a multinational shipping company with offices in Panama. After only one year at BoInternational Safire she had been offered a head of department position and was looking forward to the new challenge.

Safire had a wanderlust spirit that was well defined throughout the interview. Her desire to discover, learn a new language, and the need for change were common themes throughout her interview. Her adaptability to cultural differences, her flexibility, and her energy were readily apparent. An interesting note about Safire was that she described

working with different cultures within a "confined stressful setting" much "like a marriage." She stated it was not always easy to adapt and she felt she had been lucky, because many of her expatriate colleagues had left the job after different experiences of culture shock. Safire provided several examples and contemplated that maybe being from South Africa made her tolerate changing conditions better. Safire exhibited the highest intercultural measure of the participants.

Participant 9

IDI Score 51.36 (Low-Denial), Karen was from the United States and was in Maryland for most of her upbringing. She also lived in Boston but mentioned she moved to a lot of rural communities as her father was a policeman. Karen's decision to become a teacher was influenced by a former teacher who had impacted her life and who became her mentor early on in her career. Karen greatly enjoyed the international exposure she received working at BoInternational and mentioned her desire to travel. She was also a head of department who had a character that exhibited a strong personality. Karen had been offered a new head role and was looking forward to changes she wanted to implement the next academic year. Karen valued the professional and personal growth opportunities she was offered. While she seemed stable, Karen mentioned several intercultural adaptability pressures and the need for a sense of belonging amongst other organizational condition factors mentioned. Karen exhibited the lowest intercultural measure of the participants but was married to a local resident and had two sons.

Participants' Characteristics and Context Summary

Out of the nine participants, four had a spouse that worked and lived in Panama. Two of the spouses were foreign and expatriate themselves and two were local. Four of the nine (66%) participants had lived in more than three foreign countries. Four of the nine (22%) had lived in two foreign countries, and for only one participant was Panama the first living abroad experience as an expatriate teacher. Out of the nine participants five (55%) were from North America, two (22%) were from South America, one was from Africa (11%), and one (11%) was from Asia. Of the five North Americans, three had some form of upbringing abroad, and out of the nine four did not have an international upbringing.

The minimum teaching experience was three years but only two teachers had three years of teaching experience; the rest of the group had more than six academic years in the educational field. Most teachers were relatively new at BoInternational, eight of the nine had less than three years at their current school however two of the three years had been remote due to the pandemic. One participant was on her eighth academic year with BoInternational. Three participants had graduate degrees and six of them had master degrees.

Out of the nine expatriate interviews participants 1 and 3, Giselle and Nancy, were certain they would not continue at BoInternational or sign on for another contract. Lara and Safire, correspondingly participant 5 and 8, had been offered a Head of

Department position. While offering this position was important for Lara to continue at her current school, Safire did not mention the growth opportunity as a condition to remain. One participant, participant 6 Sarah, remained undecided. The rest of the expatriate teacher participants were certain that they would remain at the school for at least one more contract. Therefore, out of the nine participants six of them expressed their continuation of one more academic year, one mentioned a change of school, one expressed abandoning the profession, and one expressed conditioning the school into an administrative role for continuation. Participant 9, Karen, was already a head of department but had been offered an additional head of department role in the next academic year.

Finally, it was important to note that the majority of the participants have had prior experience living and working in foreign countries and advanced degrees, which may suggest that they are more adaptable and capable of handling the challenges of working in an international school setting. It is also interesting to note that some participants expressed interest in advancing their careers within their current school, while others expressed a desire to leave or pursue different opportunities.

The interviews with the teachers at BoInternational School revealed a few common themes. The first theme, intercultural adaptation challenges, was constituted by most of the participants' experiences of some level of disorientation or unfamiliarity when adapting to the new cultural norms. The second theme, affecting their job satisfaction and retention, included organizational conditions such as salary, growth

opportunities, bureaucracy, and workload. The third theme, related to a key motivator for their work in education, highlighted leadership factors.

Themes Found

The following paragraphs present the themes generated from the interviews in a narrative format, featuring vivid quotes from the participants and interpretive analysis by the researcher. The focus of this section is on understanding the effect of intercultural competence on expatriate teacher retention. Through the use of compelling interview quotes and the researcher's analysis, the themes are presented in a vivid and engaging manner.

Reasons For Teaching Outside Home Country

Initially, the study investigated the motivations behind expatriate teachers' decisions to teach at their current school, as these reasons may also be a factor in their potential departure. Although the participants had varying motivations for teaching abroad, the research aimed to understand commonalities in their reasons. The following themes were identified:

Wanderlust

Each of the nine participants had their own individual reasons for teaching abroad. Although their stories were unique, five of them expressed a strong desire to explore different cultures and countries, even if they were already satisfied with their

current assignment. One participant, Safire, provided an overview of her international

upbringing and background as an example. Safire said,

> I had never traveled outside of Africa when I was studying, so I decided to go to
> Thailand. For about five years I was working in a Thai school, international
> school, as a first grade teacher for my first three years. I got promoted to
> academic manager coordinator at the school…I was there for a while. I enjoyed
> it… I had no reason to leave, really, to be honest. Except I was kind of curious
> how education looked at the rest of the world, so I was very interested of being on
> the road again… so I left Thailand and moved to Chile in South America. I had
> never been to South America before and I wanted to kind of discover a new
> continent.

Another good example of a teacher's desire to wander is Sara's statement of her

love to travel and explore. She stated her desire to travel around the world but that she

had settled down on recent years because of family and the pandemic:

> My husband is Panamanian and his family is here. We both have had international
> experience, so I think we both wanted a little of stability for a while. But recently
> we have been thinking of moving, maybe going to Spain. We feel the world has
> so many opportunities...If Panama gives that opportunity, we are here but if the
> world gives us another [opportunity], we are open to that, because we do love to
> travel; experiencing other cultures is learning.

It was interesting to note a sense of pride in the international exposure of the participants. There was an intrinsic value hidden as they talked to me about their backgrounds in the educational field and the international exposure they had received. Also, it is important to note that a teacher's lust to wander can be something outside a leader's control. While Safire may have had no reason to leave a former school, she did because she was curious and wanted to explore another part of the world.

Experiencing a Different Culture

While all participants demonstrated diverse reasons to teach outside their home countries, four participants also expressed the importance of experiencing native culture. Working and living in a new place allows teachers to better understand different peoples and become integrated into a new society. Teaching abroad lets teachers better understand locales and become more fully immersed in the native cultures. For example, Sara stated,

> For me being an international teacher is rewarding and satisfying. I see it as an exchange… you know… a learning exchange. A lot of times we learn a lot from our students in the process. I think language is important, I think communication is very important and I love observing and learning how parents and students express themselves in kind of learning a separate language underneath that.

Similarly, Katherine considered that she "loved" being a teacher and specially working with international students, stating she was passionate "about different cultures"

and that experiencing different cultures was an important factor that made her want to work in an international school.

Broadening Horizons and Growing as a Person

Besides discovering other lands and cultures, the exposure of teaching abroad allows teachers to reflect on their own culture in relation to the context of a foreign one. This reflection permits growth on a personal level besides the professional experience they are acquiring. Four participants considered the growth and professional opportunity important and valued the international exposure and the opportunity to grow.

Karen noted that one of her main attractions of working in an international school was to learn about different cultures. She stated that what she liked most about being an international school teacher was the exposure of meeting different people and their traditions and cultures that were different to her own. Karen placed a high value on this exposure believing she could learn about them and that it would prepare her better for her future travels. Karen stated her plans were to travel a lot to different places.

Karen also emphasized that she "just got promoted to be the literacy coach for elementary. I am excited about that. My plan if I stay here longer will not be as a coach, but a vice principal or principal." It was interesting to note Karen's statements expressing the importance of international exposure and/or the international school context and how this factor added to her future plans to travel but also were mixed with the growth opportunity that needed to exist for her to remain in her current school.

In a similar fashion Sara stated that her salary, professional growth, and personal growth were important factors to consider when choosing to leave or remain in an international school. While Sara did not consider salary to be everything, she stated,

Panama wage and living situation depends; we do think that as we grow our skills may be better compensated somewhere else, so I think we don't want to say it is everything but it is important, so when you look for opportunities in one place and you don't have them, you start looking outside. If there are other opportunities outside that would keep me learning; that would be another factor."

Career growth and professional growth were factors that seemed interrelated with the cultural experiences desired by the teachers. It is important to note that career growth and professional growth are organizational conditions found in teacher retention studies. Teachers value the opportunity to grow and learn, as well as advance their careers, and consider these factors when choosing or remaining in an international school.

Attractive School

Five participants expressed that they wanted to work in a school such as BoInternational that had global citizen formation through the International Bachelorette program or the Leader in Me school program. They also valued the international exposure of the school. These participants saw the school's current educational practices as forward thinking and on top of other schools in the area. For them, the curricular program was important and different from other schools. For example, Jennifer said,

"Not every system or school works like that ... before this school I was in this very small school and things were different." Jennifer also exclaimed "being in an international school gives you the opportunity to reinvent yourself and do things differently." For Jennifer, the curricular and instructional flexibility were very important aspects. She exclaimed that this is how she liked to work saying "I don't like the traditional teaching system...Even though it worked for me I had to adapt to the system ... not the other way around."

Other participants, like Dan, mentioned that BoInternational was "nice because you get a nice mix of students from around the world." Similarly Karen stated that what she liked about international schools was that she got to meet a lot of people with "very different cultural backgrounds." Katherine also talked about her like of diverse international cultures, the connections made, and the friendships made in these environments, as something positive.

Relationships

Four participants moved to Panama due to family or spousal reasons. For instance, Karen moved to Panama originally because her mother was there and she wanted to be close to her. She later married to a local resident and expressed wanting to raise her child close to family. Safire moved to Panama when her husband was offered the opportunity to be transferred to Panama. She believed it was a good opportunity for him and expressed that she was ready for a change of air after the pandemic burden. Sarah also moved to Panama because of her husband and mentioned wanting to settle

down for some time although now she seemed ready for new opportunities. Katherine moved from Venezuela to accompany her husband on his work assignments. These cases illustrate the impact of personal relationships on migration choices, underscoring the role of family and spousal connections in expatriate decisions.

Attractive Location

Two participants mentioned choosing Panama because it was an attractive location in Latin America. They appreciated the plurality of culture, the hub Panama offered for future travels, and the security of Panama in comparison to other Latin American countries that were less secure. Lara, for example, mentioned that what she liked about Panama was "the peace and the quality of life" besides also mentioning she had a competitive salary in the region.

Language Learning

For some participants, the opportunity to learn a new language was a significant factor in their decision to relocate. Dan, for instance, aimed to improve his Spanish skills and wished for his daughter to learn the language as well, recognizing the advantages of immersion in a Spanish-speaking culture. Similarly, Safire valued the Spanish language and appreciated the chance to practice it in Panama, as she remarked, "I can still work on my Spanish here while going back to being at a smaller school. So it's a big change from what I had tasted in Chile. I was very excited about that." The importance of language acquisition, particularly Spanish, emerged as a motivating factor for a few respondents in

relocating to Panama, highlighting the potential benefits of linguistic immersion in a new cultural environment.

Teaching abroad can be a transformative experience, offering numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth. However, it is worth noting that each teacher may have their own unique motivations for pursuing a teaching position in a foreign country. Based on the responses from the participants in this study, the reasons for teaching abroad included seeking adventure, working in a more dynamic and challenging environment, experiencing a different curriculum or educational system, and improving language skills. Other factors that influenced their decision to teach outside their home country included access to schools with a global citizen formation and international exposure, as well as greater curricular and instructional flexibility.

Moreover, many of the teachers also emphasized the significance of personal relationships and family ties in their decision to relocate to Panama. For some, the appeal of Panama as a location in Latin America was linked to its diverse culture, potential for future travel, and sense of security. Lastly, some participants viewed language learning as a key aspect of their experience in Panama, both personally and professionally.

Themes Found For Staying Or Leaving Current School

In the second and third block of questions, participants were asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of their job satisfaction; sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and challenges and strains in the profession, including their sources and

reactions to them and or consequences experienced. Several factors were identified as influential in expatriate teachers' decisions to remain or depart. The study focused on examining the role of intercultural competence in expatriate teacher retention, aiming to shed light on this aspect. Three general themes were constructed: intercultural related factors, organizational related factors, and leadership related factors.

Theme 1: Intercultural Related Factors

Working across cultures can be naturally challenging (Molinsky, 2013). When living in a culture that is different from one's own it is common for a foreigner to go through a period of cultural adjustment. Misunderstanding and communication difficulties may arise when there are differences in perspectives, values, or beliefs, amongst people with different ethnic backgrounds. In international school settings not only are the expatriate teachers from different cultural backgrounds to the host country but the students and families may also come from diverse ethnic backgrounds adding to the variety of culture and difficulties.

The following themes were identified and constructed in this study where the objective was to understand how the intercultural competence of expatriated teachers influenced their decisions to leave or stay at the end of their school contracts. Eight out of nine participants revealed intercultural related factors that affected them. While all expatriated teachers had diverse reasons that influenced their decisions to stay or to go, the following themes were identified:

Culture Shock

Four participants reported experiencing feelings of confusion, frustration, stress, or disorientation when confronted with an unfamiliar culture, making the process of cultural adjustment challenging. Although not all expatriates may have the same reaction to navigating cultural differences, culture shock can affect foreigners to varying degrees and at different stages (Searle & Ward, 1990). In more complex situations, expatriates may not only have to adapt to the host country's culture, but also to the internal school or organizational culture, further complicating the process of adjustment.

Participants reported challenges in adapting to the cultural norms and values of the host country. They highlighted differences in communication styles, attitudes towards authority, and work-life balance as significant challenges. Giselle for example said, "The cultural shock to me is one of the biggest challenges. The workload and stress becomes a challenge and the expectation from the parents." Being in a culture that is very different to one's own, in time, can take a toll. Giselle considered that the expectation and cultural difference were "not easy to manage."

In a similar way, Safire expressed that sometimes at international schools problems arise given the differences in culture; she rationalized "our backgrounds were very different, our religions were different and we had completely different histories… and sometimes there were a little of a cultural clash with some people." Amongst the complications Safire mentioned was that sometimes in international schools it was "quite difficult" to work with homeroom teachers from a foreign culture. She stated:

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Because really if you have a co-teacher it becomes like a marriage. You see them

often for more hours in a small, confined room and stressful environment with all

the kids, and you see them more than you would even see your family at home.

And if you are from a very different culture, it can be difficult.

Cultural Differences

Seven participants identified cultural differences as a significant factor affecting

their experience as expatriate teachers. Cultural differences can significantly impact an

expatriate overall well-being and happiness (Searle & Ward, 1990). Although a single

cultural difference may not be enough to trigger an expatriate teacher's decision to leave

their assignment, multiple differences can accumulate and create a more challenging and

stressful experience. Additionally, when coupled with unfavorable organizational

conditions, or leadership factors, cultural differences can compound and further

exacerbate an expatriate teacher's challenges.

For example, a teacher who moves to a country where the language is

significantly different from their native language may initially find it difficult to

communicate with their students and colleagues. Additionally, cultural differences in the

way people interact, the norms around punctuality, and expectations around teaching

styles can also be challenging to navigate. Over time, these cultural differences can add

up and create feelings of isolation, frustration, and homesickness, making it difficult for

the expatriate teacher to feel happy and fulfilled in their role. Therefore, it is essential for

expatriate teachers to have a support system in place to help them navigate these cultural differences and adjust to their new environment.

As the following example illustrates, various cultural differences can accumulate and compound, ultimately affecting the overall well-being of an expatriate teacher. In the interview process, I asked Dan about his job satisfaction. I wanted to understand the different sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and/or challenges and strains he had experienced as an expatriate teacher. In one of his considerations, Dan reflected and said that he didn't like the grading system in the school. For him it was not real, and he considered it was a lie "it does not prepare kids for real life it does not prepare kids for when they go to school outside of Panama." He continued saying "A lot of the kids in this school go to college in Canada, the United States; when they get over there, they are going to realize that their A's are really going to be B's, their B's would be C's and so on." Further, Dan mentioned that his biggest complaint was what he called "parent pleasing" and described it as trying to always make the parent happy. He considered parents did not get as involved and that they only got involved when their student was in trouble or failing. He reflected that it was not until "that point they are the concerned parent, the rest of the time you don't hear from them."

While every school has policies and rules, the internal culture of a school may be more lenient or less lenient in enforcing policies. Having worked at an international school for many years and coping with differences in culture I have seen how for a Western-trained teacher giving one academic point is not negotiable. At the same time, a

Latino teacher may give an extra assignment or some type of work to compensate the student for that point needed. While giving that academic point is correct or incorrect is not important for this study, understanding how these cultural differences affect the expatriate is. Dan continued "You know what, your kids messed up. I don't care how much you cry, scream, whatever, there are policies there are rules. So, in some places there are parent pleasers and some there are not."

Towards the end of our interview Dan affirmed that he believed that he had another year or two in him and then he would leave education. This was because at this point in his career it was "more stress than enjoyment." Dan claimed he used to love teaching class, for him it was a lot of fun; but he said that recently at the end of day he was "tired." Dan believed it was not because of the energy he put into teaching but rather it was the energy he used for "putting out fires left and right and I am just tired" he exerted.

Putting out fires for Dan was dealing with social or policy issues more than he was teaching. Dan provided examples: "We need to stay disciplined to the discipline program… if you have a program in place, then actually go through with it… not say 'OK we are going to do this with him but this with her.' Students need to know there are consequences. If they are caught cheating, there is a consequence for all of them." Similarly, Dan stated that he has certain expectations in his classroom, including that students address him as "Mr. Dan" or "Sir." He clarified that he doesn't impose these standards on other teachers and doesn't expect them to adopt the same approach. Dan

believed schools should have some standards across the board. For example, assignments had to be turned in on time, not calling a teacher by the first name, and in general holding the students accountable to a standard. Dan said, "I think it's important. Some teachers like to do that. Some don't. When I feel like I am trying to put out fires more than teaching; that is not for me."

In essence, in Dan's interview he expressed that he intended to retire from teaching in the next couple of years due to feeling more stressed than fulfilled in his current position. While he used to enjoy teaching and found it to be fun, he now feels drained at the end of the day. In Dan's example we can see how the cultural differences influenced his frustration and ultimately leading him toward abandoning the profession.

While cultural differences may be difficult to cope with, Katherine saw these difficulties as learning opportunities. She did not consider the cultural differences heavy, and they did not seem to be emotionally draining her. She decided to see these differences as growth opportunities. Katherine provided examples of cultural differences she experienced recently with students. Katherine stated:

Sometimes the cultural interactions can be tricky. Sometimes that's a challenge. Something I feel is OK, another may feel is not OK. For example, I had a kid in first grade and I say *ok mi amor muy bien*, and he said, please don't call me *mi amor*, I have a name. Please call me William. Or, for example, sometimes I touch the shoulder of a kid and I say 'good job' or 'come,' and they say 'please don't touch my shoulder'. Or, for example, we had a student from Dubai, and, here in

Panama, in the Panamanian culture is really important to celebrate a national

celebration and is a big deal in the school and we all dance, but they didn't want.

They were not feeling comfortable dancing with women and girls and that is very

Latino. And we say 'It's your right. That's all right.' But it can be a trigger if you

don't have the mind open and understand where they are [coming from]. So those

differences can become challenging. Sometimes I look for the easy way out so I

[do not] escalate it.

The example of Dan illustrates how cultural differences contributed to his

frustration and ultimately led him to consider leaving the teaching profession. However,

Katherine had a different approach to cultural differences. She saw them as learning

opportunities and did not find them emotionally draining. She even embraced them as

opportunities for growth. Katherine cited examples of cultural differences she

experienced with her students, such as how certain terms of endearment may be

perceived differently in different cultures, or how physical touch may not be appropriate

in some cultures. She also mentioned how some students from different cultures may not

feel comfortable participating in certain activities. Despite the challenges, Katherine kept

an open mind and sought to understand where her students were coming from. She

acknowledged that these differences could be challenging but chose to handle them with

sensitivity and an open mindset.

Intercultural Communication

Seven out of nine participants identified communication as a significant factor. The participants experienced various communication difficulties, each with different implications. Three participants reported that communication problems led to misunderstandings, indicating a need for intercultural adaptability and sensitivity to other cultures. Meanwhile, four participants, namely Dan, Nancy, Jennifer, and Giselle, pointed out that the lack of transparency and inadequate channels or systems for communication hindered effective communication among team members. This highlights a leadership issue in which ineffective communication between leadership and teachers affects the team's overall communication.

In the intercultural connotation, Sara expressed that the language used and the communication intended was very important given the differences and misunderstandings they could generate. Similarly, Lara believed that there are "a lot of cultural issues that come up when you are outside your country" and alleged these issues were enlarged because of the communication problems that arose when "you come to a school were you have the head-head above the head of the school" and where "everyone else in leadership is from everywhere" she presumed. Lara provided an example saying,

> When you are having so many people with so many different backgrounds coming together and work, it's beautiful but when issues happen it tends to be a communication problem. How do you communicate in your own culture and how do you translate that into a new context…and I would say some issues that I had, or some challenges that I have encountered working in the school… have been

with people that were raised differently than how I was raised, or that I grew up differently or communicate differently and sometimes feelings get hurt, or, you know, situations arise that you would solve one way or you don't feel seen or heard because other people solve it in another way."

Emotional Drain

Two participants expressed experiencing emotional drain from dealing with different cultures mixed with undesired organizational conditions. Emotional drain can lead to burnout. Lara, for example, very much enjoyed teaching, however, she felt teaching was a hard job. For her, the teaching profession was not compensated accordingly and she believed that all the administrative work and paper work was a burden. Lara stated that the "emotional toll, mental toll, and physical toll" added up to her being "emotionally drained" and considered working within an international school context had "its great parts and bad parts." Lara considered it was beautiful to work with so many different nationalities and cultures but felt that when issues happened, they were in general related communication and navigating through the communication dilemmas of translating the meaning intended into a new context.

Theme2: Organizational Related Factors

As evidenced in the literature review, organizational conditions have been significantly studied and related to teachers leaving the profession. Researchers have found the following factors in the studies of organizational conditions: administrative

support, bureaucracy, teacher network & collaboration, instructional spending, mentoring program, opportunity for advancement, salary, and autonomy (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006). Out of the eight factors, six were found affecting the expatriates' stay or leave decisions. These factors were salary, opportunity for advancement, teacher network & collaboration, bureaucracy, admin support, and autonomy.

In this study, the objective was to understand how the intercultural competence of expatriated teachers influenced their decisions to leave or stay at the end of their school contracts. While intercultural factors were found to influence expatriates' stay or leave decisions, organizational factors were also found to be pressing and interrelated with the intercultural factors. These factors together influence the overall context of an expatriate teacher. In this study, all of nine participants revealed different types of organizational conditions that affected them. Although all expatriated teachers had varying reasons for their experiences, the following themes of organizational conditions were identified as common among them:

Salary

We live in a capitalist economy where goods and services come at a cost, and just compensation for our labor remains a crucial factor for job satisfaction. While a teacher's salary may not be the sole determining factor for job satisfaction, five out of the nine participants in our study considered it a significant aspect. For instance, Dan emphasized, "Money is also a factor... It depends on whether I get an increase. I have been on the

same salary since I got here, and I actually moved closer to the school, which cost me more money too." Similarly, Sara and Lara acknowledged the importance of fair compensation in their interviews.

Giselle also highlighted the importance of recognition, stating that tangible recognition became significant for her due to her heavy workload, and she needed compensation to match. She felt exploited when there was no tangible compensation and mentioned feeling uncomfortable "to see a colleague counting their toes" while she was "working like crazy." Without fair recognition, Giselle felt undervalued and could be driven away from the school.

Opportunity for Advancement

Four participants highlighted opportunities for advancement as important factors to remain. The opportunity to grow was valued as important and necessary to consider staying. Lara mentioned that for her not having the opportunity to grow in an organization would drive her to look into "new opportunities." She believed that if she felt stuck and if there were a lack of opportunity for growth she would consider an "opportunity somewhere else." Sara reflected, "I don't want to be teaching when I am 40. Either I am in a leadership position or I am somewhere else."

Similarly, Karen was on her second promotion. She had been given a literacy coach position in the elementary grades. She reported, "I am excited about that. My plan if I stay here longer will not be as a coach, but as a vice principal or principal." For Karen

experiences and opportunities for advancement were factors that were interrelated for her to stay longer in a school.

In a similar manner Sara stated that for her salary, professional growth, and personal growth, were important factors to consider when choosing or remaining in an international school, and it was interesting to note the growth opportunity that needed to exist for her to remain in her current school. While Sara did not consider salary to be everything, she said,

> Panama wage and living situation depends; we do think that as we grow our skills may be better compensated somewhere else. So, I think we don't want to say it is everything but it is important...So when you look for opportunities in one place and you don't have them, you start looking outside. If there are other opportunities outside that keep me learning; that would be another factor.

Opportunities for advancement were identified as a significant factor in retaining teachers, as noted by four participants in the study. The prospect of professional growth and development was considered necessary to maintain interest and motivation within the school. Lara, for example, emphasized the importance of opportunities to grow and develop within the organization, stating that a lack of such opportunities would prompt her to seek alternative positions. Similarly, Karen expressed excitement about her recent promotion to a literacy coach position, and her goal to eventually become a vice principal or principal. For Sara, salary, professional growth, and personal development were important considerations in choosing and remaining with an international school.

Although salary was not everything, the absence of opportunities for growth and

development within the current school may lead to exploration of other options. As such,

opportunities for learning and advancement emerged as crucial factors in promoting

teacher retention.

Teacher Network and Collaboration

Three participants considered that having a sense of community would be very

beneficial especially for expatiates who were in general alone on a foreign nation. While

Jennifer was the only expatriate who proclaimed feeling like a local she believed that

having a sense of belonging was very important and would help feeling supported.

Jennifer said,

I think it would benefit to have a community sense, something that makes us outside

the work hours. That can bind us together…we can work things together. I can give

you a silly example. Here in Panama, I don't know other countries, but here we have

employees of banks for example and they have baseball league barbecues…and those

types of activities outside the school. We have that. It's not we don't have that, but

it's once a year! If we can have something that makes us a community outside of that

time…but outside of our duties as a teacher…because when you are on your work

time... you are going to talk about your students…even if we just want to talk about

the weather, we won't. We always go back to the job. But if we had a community

outside of regular working time it would be beneficial not only as a person, as an

individual, but also as a professional in your regular life. Happy persons, unstressed.

But also, I think it would impact how you teach; the network that you have, the

connections that you make. That can also help…that could be a good thing...it would give us a sense of belonging.

In a similar sense Safire also compared her school community to her husband's community as an expatriate at a multinational company. She expressed she had been thinking for a while about what factors were important for her to remain at her school and she said,

One of the factors I think is important is a sense of belonging and actually making friends with your colleagues. As a foreigner arriving in Panama, I didn't know a soul nor did my husband and he works for a company that they get together a lot after work. They go for happy hours and things like that once or twice each week. And they spend a lot of time together bonding after work. I did arrive at BoInternational at the middle of the year and there haven't been many opportunities for things like that… and during the pandemic we were hybrid for the first month or so that I was teaching here. So, we haven't had that many chances to interact and sort of bond with our coworkers but I think that is really important that you feel a sense of belonging and that you are not just co-workers but that you trust each other. And you know…knowing each other better; more personal…you can be more open with each other. So, I am looking forward for that, for those changes for the next year. And I know for the next week or so the school has planned a trip to the beach where we can just be ourselves and have a little of more informal interactions with our co-workers. And I think that kind of plan is really important for me to stay; to feel your co-workers are family because as foreigners you don't have family here…and if I have a child I would like him to know people.

Bureaucracy

Lara and Jennifer both identified bureaucracy as a significant factor that they disliked about their school organization. According to Lara, the bureaucratic structure resulted in inefficient communication efforts by the school leadership. Jennifer, on the other hand, used a Greek mythology reference, calling the school board and leadership the "Olympus," emphasizing how their position seemed unattainable and out of reach. "It's funny," she noted, "but when you think about it, the Olympus is something you cannot reach." According to Greek mythology, Olympus is the sacred dwelling place of the gods and goddesses. The gods and goddesses are believed to reside there and hold court, making decisions and interacting with mortals when necessary. Jennifer said,

> If you get the Olympus to come out and tell you why they invest in the school and why this school and not somewhere else. Maybe you find something in common. It's a challenge for admin and, if we can interact, have a coffee together, talk about anything…what you do where you studied and do you have kids… oh she loves animals.. You know we connect with people…we are social beings, and we connect…The screen is so good but not real. So, when you get together and interact, you know with people… You feel like you can connect with people…and this is what we do with students so we should do it ourselves with each other.

While Jennifer was on her first academic year and still excited about joining her dream school, she perceived that the bureaucratic culture of the school organization did

not allow the school community to work more efficiently and in a more collaborative manner.

Admin Support

Three participants expressed the importance admin support played on their continuation. Dan, for example, expressed that admin support was important for him and talked about what he expected for the administration stating "When I was an admin, I made it my goal to be there for my teachers. I was never in the office. I was in my office if I had to see a student who was in trouble. I was always walking around. I would pop in every classroom at least three times a day." Similarly, Katherine thought admin support was important for her and believed that the level of the admin support she got would be a factor that would persuade her to stay within an organization. Katherine said "if I see that I have a group that are understanding where I can share my problems and challenges; it would be very important for me."

Autonomy

Dan was the only participant to mention autonomy. For him it was important to have liberty and not so many managers. He stated that to have managers he would rather be in a retail store; leadership is what he preferred. Dan said "In the US, I had a lot more lee way with my curriculum. They said these are the things you have to use. Use them. I got to develop my curriculum, my pacing, my timing and I was always done with everything way before the year was up." He believed that at BoInternational he had to spend so

much time writing up lesson plans and those lesson plans took hours and weeks of his time. He didn't appreciate the top-down ways of the organizational culture and compared his current administrative ways to when he was in the USA: "When I started education, lessons were simplified. If someone came to my class, they knew what we were doing. It didn't have all the standards, and everything listed… all the standards don't help me at all" he affirmed.

Theme 3: Leadership Related Factors

Various factors pertaining to school leadership and the working environment established by the leaders were identified as influential for the retention of expatriate teachers. These factors were categorized as leadership-related and found to impact the overall well-being and contentment of the expatriates. The following themes were constructed from the analysis:

Feeling Overworked

Feeling physically or emotionally drained detracts from the overall well-being of an expatriate. For example, Giselle was abandoning the profession. Giselle believed that the expectations and cultural differences were not easy to manage and expressed that her biggest challenge was the culture but also communicated feeling "overworked" and the "stress" of the workload as a challenge. Giselle felt that she had too much responsibility and it made her feel uncomfortable when she saw other colleagues who looked as if there were not as busy. Her overworked condition also made her question the wage system and disputed the lack of transparency.

Nancy Also expressed that feeling overworked caused her to consider abandoning her current school. Nancy was moving to a new school in the summer. While she had mentioned salary and growth opportunity as important factors, she was career focused with a strong desire to grow professionally. Yet, Nancy alleged that feeling overworked would influence her to leave her current school or not re-sign for another term. She stated, "If there is too much workload I would reconsider; I don't mind taking from my time to prepare for classes but if it is taking too much of my time, I would reconsider looking for a different place; if it is like a constant I won't feel comfortable…"

In contrast to Giselle and Nancy, Safire was looking forward to the new academic year. She would have a new role as head of department and had plans for changes she wanted to implement the next year. However, like Giselle, Safire considered feeling overworked a factor that would influence her to leave her current school and not re-sign for another term. Experiencing physical or emotional exhaustion can significantly diminish the overall well-being of an expatriate.

Feeling Expendable

One participant, Safire thought that it was important as an expatriate to feel appreciated. She considered that it didn't help an expatriate to feel expendable, ignored, or someone who was replaceable. Giselle presumed that that having a "boss or superior that doesn't really see you or doesn't listen to your needs" would push her away from a school. She indicated it was important for her to remain in a school to feel appreciated saying,

To feel ignored, I think. Just feel like a machine. Just a teacher, something that is

replaceable if it breaks. To feel appreciated; if I wasn't feeling appreciated

anymore, overworked, expendable. That would be the kind of thing for me; it

wouldn't be the money so much."

Humanizing Arrivals

Feeling welcomed in an organization is important and the stress of arriving in a

new country can be improved with small details of attention. Safire believed that

someone at airport with a board was essential. She compared her arrival in Panama to the

ones she had experienced before in Thailand and Chile saying,

Nothing like that was really arranged for me, I think that would be something

kind of important when people arrive that you feel people are waiting for you and

that they want you there, you don't really have to pay for the accommodations but

it's the small details. To start out on the right foot, build a good relationship, that

they know you are there for them and to receive them in a country. Cause you are

foreign at the end of the day, and it can be quite difficult.

Feeling Secure

Feeling insecure or fearful in a city can significantly impact the overall well-

being and comfort of a foreigner. One participant, Nancy, believed that an important

factor for staying in a school was feeling secure. For her, the safety of city she lived in

was important. She expressed she had lived in Cali, Bogota, and Medellin, Colombia

where she felt it was not a very trusting atmosphere and felt insecure. She expressed that

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she felt safe in Panama and that it made her be in peace. She considered that she could take a walk on the streets without fear, which was a important factor for her. In a reflection Nancy expressed, "I think if the city is too unsafe, I will be very stressed and I would project to my students." Nancy concluding feeling unsafe would drive her away or lead her to consider moving somewhere else.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined key findings from the study of expatriate teachers working at an international school in Panama City, Panama. The goal was to detail the findings answering the research question investigated in the study by exploring the phenomenon itself as lived experiences of the expatriate teachers. I focused on comprehending the effect intercultural competence had on expatriate teacher retention.

The findings of the study capture the views of the expatriate teachers and their thoughts on what basis they might decide to stay or leave after their current contracts. First the participants' context and background were described to identify reasons they had come to their current school. Then, the reasons expatriates could have for leaving or staying was studied. Three general themes were constructed, and several sub-themes were identified in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

Introduction

In chapter one, the research question of this study was introduced, which is, "What factors contribute to expatriate teacher retention in cross-cultural settings, and how can organizations and schools support their adaptation and retention?" Chapter two provided an overview of the factors associated with teacher retention, moving from general to more specific issues. The chapter concluded by identifying a gap in previous research and proposing intercultural competence as a theoretical framework to address this gap. Chapter three detailed the methodology used to answer the research question, including a discussion of the researcher's positionality. Chapter four presented the findings that addressed the research question. These findings were highlighted in preparation for more in-depth discussions and interpretation of results presented in this chapter, chapter five.

In Chapter five, I connect the results of my research to existing literature and discuss findings in relation to past research. Connections to the research are presented in the discussions. The findings examine three main category moderators. The individual findings of each category moderator are highlighted and discussed. The discussions section concludes with reflections that include limitations of the study. In Chapter five I also highlight ideas of how the findings impact the work of school leaders as they engage with expatriate teachers and how this research sets the stage for further research and/or policy implications important for governing bodies of international schools.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the themes found that influenced expatriate teachers to teach an International School. The figure graphically represents a summary of the findings.

Figure 5.1

Themes Found Influencing Expatriate Teachers to Teach at an International School.

Themes	Giselle	Jennifer	Nancy	Katherine	Lara	Sarah	Dan	Safire	Karen
Wanderlust	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Experiencing a Different Culture				x		x		x	x
Broadening Horizons and Growing as a Person						x			x
Attractive School		x		x	x		x		x
Relationships				x		x		x	x
Attractive Location			x		x				
Language Learning							x	x	

Figure 5.2 provides a visual representation of the themes that affect the retention of expatriate teachers. The findings suggest that intercultural factors, such as differences in language, customs, and social norms, play a significant role in determining whether expatriate teachers are able to adapt and feel comfortable in a new environment. In addition to intercultural factors, organizational factors also play a critical role in expatriate teacher retention. A supportive and well-structured work environment can go a long way in helping expatriate teachers feel welcome and valued. Finally, leadership factors also influence expatriate teacher retention. The attitudes and behaviors of school

leaders and colleagues can have a significant impact on an expatriate teacher's job

satisfaction and sense of belonging.

Figure 5.2

Themes Found Influencing Teacher Expatriate Retention

Themes	Giselle	Jennifer	Nancy	Katherine	Lara	Sarah	Dan	Safire	Karen
Culture Shock	x	x					x	x	
Cultural Differences	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Intercultural Communication	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Emotional Drain				x	x				
Salary			x		x	x	x		
Opportunity for Advancement			x		x	x			x
Teacher Network & Collaboration		x			x			x	
Bureaucracy		x		x				x	
Admin Support		x		x			x		
Autonomy							x		
Feeling Overworked	x		x					x	
Feeling expandable								x	
Humanizing arrivals\								x	
Feeling secure			x						

Discussion and Connections to the Literature

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In this retention study I identified three category moderators that affect expatriates' stay or leave decisions. The three category moderators that affect expatriates' stay or leave decisions, as highlighted in Chapter 4 of the retention study, are:

(a) Intercultural related factors

(b) Organizational related factors

(c) Leadership related factors

As a researcher, I conducted a thorough review of past studies and literature on expatriates and expatriate teacher retention. Through this review, I identified three categories of moderators for my own study: organizational factors, leadership factors, and intercultural related factors, which have been under explored in the context of expatriate teachers. While researchers such as Gillies (2001), Joslin (2002), and Sims (2011) previously considered intercultural related phenomena among expatriate teachers, this study builds on their findings and provides new insights to the field. By exploring intercultural competence as a theoretical lens, this study sheds light on aspects that were not emphasized in previous studies, and underscores the importance of leaders' roles and organizational context for expatriate teachers. The study's findings provide actionable steps for school leaders and governing boards to improve policies and practices for the success of expatriate teachers in their schools. Addressing the gaps in knowledge highlighted by this study could potentially benefit expatriate teachers, schools, and students alike.

Figure 5.2 illustrates a Venn diagram that highlights the three category

moderators emphasized in my study to be important for the retention of expatriate

teachers. These category moderators are further discussed in the following paragraphs.

While each of the category moderators has significant elements that affect stay or leave

decisions, they also have interconnected and overlapping relationships between them.

Figure 5.2

Categories Impacting Retention of Expatriate Teachers
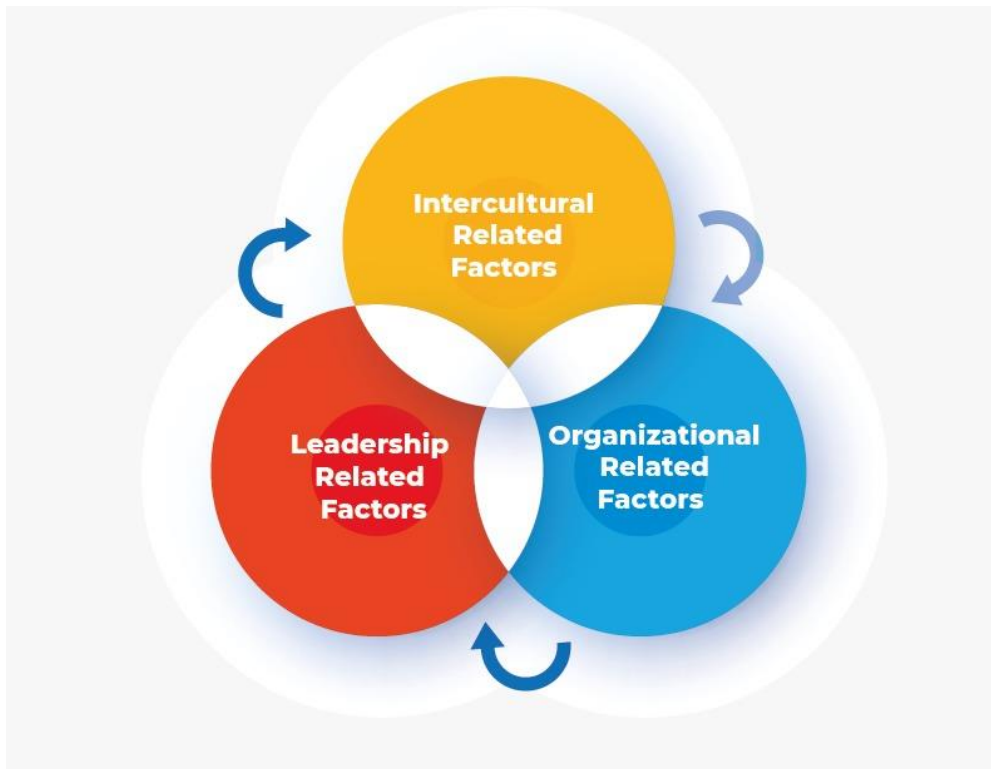
In order to visually represent the logical relationship between the category

moderators, a Venn diagram was chosen. As shown in Figure 5.2, the circles overlap in

certain areas while not overlapping in others. This design effectively highlights the

commonalities and differences among the category moderators. The overlapping areas indicate shared commonalities between otherwise unrelated concepts, while also illustrating the interconnectedness of intercultural, organizational, and leadership factors. It is in these areas of overlap where the influence on retention becomes particularly strong.

In my study, the factors related to organizational and leadership issues are consistent with those found in previous research on expatriate teachers. This complements the work of scholars such as King (1968), Koenig (1972), Hardman (2001), Odland and Ruzicka (2009), Mancuso et al. (2010), Roberts et al. (2010), Sims (2011), Desroches (2013), Russell (2020), and Rombaut (2020) who have investigated expatriate teacher turnover in various parts of the world.

Theme 1: Intercultural Related Factors

The following intercultural related themes of sensitivity or adaptability to other cultures were constructed after eight out of nine participant's revealed intercultural related factors that affected them. While all expatriates had diverse reasons that were pressing, they revealed similar intercultural related phenomena of adjustment. In general, these themes are not found in other expatriate teacher studies. The only similar finding is with Joslin (2002) and Sims (2011).

For example, Joslin (2002) reflected on the different cultural dimensions experienced by teachers who work outside their home countries. While Joslin's (2002)

findings studied how expatriates navigated through change, her focus remained on identifying these dimensions to better support expatriate teachers. In a similar fashion, Gillies (2001) reported that frequent personnel turnover was a major problem in this academic environment and that administrators recruiting teachers needed to emphasize the ability to live abroad. Lockledge (1992) identified descriptors of overseas teachers, finding that those who were adaptable, flexible, and competent were successful, while the rigid and escapist were not. Likewise, Sims's (2011) dissertation included a conceptual framework assessing cross-cultural competencies, which investigated how cultural intelligence could serve as a predictor of job satisfaction among expatriate teachers in Latin America. Sims found that cultural intelligence tended to increase job satisfaction and that Person-Job Fit and Person-Organization Fit were significantly related to retention as were Person-Organization Fit and Person-Host Culture Fit.

While there is a scarcity of intercultural research that is exclusively focused on expatriate teachers, the field of international human resource management offers a broader range of intercultural studies that are related to expatriates and intercultural competence. Scholars' have emphasized that over 42% of expatiates finish as failures (Wu et al. 2019) and that more studies are needed to better understand them.

Amongst the intercultural themes constructed in my study the following themes were created, *culture shock, cultural differences, intercultural communication,* and *emotional drain.*

Culture Shock

Not everyone has the sensitivity or the adaptability necessary to successfully adjust and navigate through cultural change. According to Black and Gregersen (1991), culture shock is a common experience for people who move to a new country or culture, which is often characterized by feelings of disorientation, confusion, and anxiety. Culture shock can arise from a variety of factors, including differences in language, customs, social norms, and expectations (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Furthermore, it has been noted that culture shock can impact teacher retention, even for those working in their home countries (Giacometti, 2005). Giacometti's (2005) research revealed that culture shock could have an effect on job satisfaction, which in turn affects the likelihood of new teachers staying in their positions.

Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) also argued that entering a new culture was stressful for expatriates and suggested that that those with abilities to manage such stress adapted better to their new environment, while they highlighted the importance for expatriates being interculturally prepared they also emphasized the importance of expatriate selection and training procedures. Therefore, being a foreigner to a different culture may cause a person to have difficulties and capacities that vary in degrees and times.

In my study, all participants were affected by intercultural related factors and four participants out of the nine (44%) expressed feelings of culture shock described by confusion, frustration, stress, or disorientation. Dealing with differences in culture may become overwhelming and not everyone may have the cultural adjustment skills needed to navigate through change. While there is not much literature on the culture shock

experienced by expatriate teachers, Joslin (2002) highlighted the importance of culture in the context of international schools, exploring the associated and different cultural dimensions experienced by teachers who work outside their home countries. Joslin (2002) identified seven cultural dimensions. These dimensions were (a) one's own cultural heritage, (b) one's previous work culture/home country/professional culture, (c) the school's organizational culture, (d) the international school's mission, (e) the culture of the local community culture (e.g. expatriate community), (f) the regional culture, and (g) the host nation's culture/subcultures. While Joslin (2012) did not mention the importance of the intercultural competence skills of expatriate teachers, the study dwelled in the cultural difficulties of adaptability and the sensitivity needed by expatriate teachers to face and navigate through the differences.

Through my work with expatriate teachers, I have observed that effective leadership can mitigate the effects of culture shock by providing opportunities for teachers to prepare themselves before moving to a new culture. Encouraging expatriates to learn as much as possible about the language, customs, and norms of the new place can help them feel more confident and prepared upon arrival. Moreover, maintaining connections with their home culture through activities, food, and social media can help expatriates feel less isolated in their new environment. In the context of my study on the impact of intercultural competence on the success rate of expatriate teachers, these insights suggest cultural preparation can be critical in supporting expatriate teachers' adjustment and success in new cultural environments.

According to international human resource scholars such as Toh and DeNisi (2005), expatriates can benefit from building a support network by making friends with locals and other expatriates, which can aid in their adjustment to a new environment and create a sense of belonging. In addition, engaging in enjoyable activities such as sports, hobbies, or volunteering can help expatriates feel more connected to their new community, thereby improving their overall wellbeing. If an expatriate is experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed or having difficulty adapting, seeking support from a counselor or therapist can provide valuable assistance in navigating the challenges of culture shock (Abarbanel, 2009).

The findings from this study, combined with previous research, highlight that not everyone has the necessary sensitivity or adaptability to navigate cultural change successfully. Culture shock can impact job satisfaction and teacher retention, and effective leadership conducing to cultural preparation can be critical in supporting expatriate teachers' adjustment and success in new cultural environments.

Cultural Differences

Diverse international human resource scholars have pointed out that Cultural differences play a crucial role in the success of an expatriate's assignment, their ability to adapt, and ultimately their retention in their new location. When expatriates face challenges in adapting to the cultural norms of their host country, they may struggle with issues such as homesickness, cultural shock, language barriers, and a sense of isolation, which can lead to a higher rate of turnover (Hack-Polay, 2020).

Cultural differences can significantly impact the success of an expatriate teacher's assignment and their ability to adapt to a new environment (Van Vianen et al., 2004). When cultural differences become too challenging for an expatriate to handle, it can lead to job dissatisfaction and ultimately, an early departure from the assignment. The extent to which cultural differences affect an expatriate's job satisfaction depends on their individual level of cultural sensitivity and adaptability (Paige et al., 2003). While different expatriates may have varying levels of tolerance for cultural differences, organizations must provide support and resources to help them navigate these challenges effectively.

In my study I found that seven out of nine participants experienced cultural differences that led them to question their stay. This finding aligns with other research on intercultural competence, which suggests that the sensitivity and ability to other cultures is a trainable and improvable skill (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). In the context of international business, intercultural competence has been identified as a critical factor in the success of international managers (Flynn, 1995). To possess cross-cultural competence, individuals must have knowledge or "cultural literacy" skills, such as foreign language proficiency, stress management, and attitudes that include personal traits such as curiosity and tolerance for ambiguity (Johnson et al., 2006). Scholars have defined intercultural competence as a skill that allows individuals to step outside their cultural boundaries, make the unfamiliar familiar, and act on this change in perspective (Johnson et al., 2006; p. 529).

Overall, these findings suggest that developing intercultural competence is crucial for expatriate teachers in diverse and global settings. By improving their intercultural competence, teachers can navigate cultural differences effectively and increase their chances of success in schools. Therefore, having cross-cultural competence is critical for the success of expatriate teachers.

The findings from my study and previous research highlight the importance of cultural differences and their impact on the success of an expatriate's assignment, their ability to adapt, and ultimately their retention in a new location. Cultural differences can cause challenges such as homesickness, cultural shock, language barriers, and a sense of isolation, leading to a higher rate of turnover.

Intercultural Communication

The findings of this study suggest that cultural differences can significantly impact work-related interactions and communication. In my study, seven out of nine participants cited communication difficulties as a factor that affected them, with the nature of these difficulties varying. Some participants highlighted misunderstandings, while others identified a lack of transparency and proper communication channels as the primary problem. Clear and accessible communication channels are particularly important in intercultural settings; leaders should ensure that all parties have access to the information they need and that communication channels are transparent and effective (Men, 2015).

The study's findings also reinforce the importance of effective communication as a factor that can lead to frustration, misunderstandings, and decreased morale (Macgregor and Folinazzo, 2018). Language barriers and differences in communication intentions can lead to misunderstandings like difficulties in perception (Tenzer et al., 2014). The lack of intercultural adaptability and sensitivity towards different viewpoints and communication styles can make cross-cultural communication challenging (Williams, 2005)

Furthermore, this study suggests that to ensure effective communication in intercultural contexts, individuals and organizations must prioritize developing intercultural communication skills. These findings are not a new issue, as scholars have identified intercultural communication difficulties for over five decades. For example, in 1973, a professor published an intercultural communication course aimed at enabling students to handle cultural differences in communication and management practices, particularly when dealing with international clients, multicultural staff, and people from other cultures (Aims, 1973). The course emphasized verbal and non-verbal communication, interpersonal skills, and effective management strategies such as business etiquette. It aimed to develop critical awareness, a predisposition to question one's ideas and those of others, and other skill sets necessary to navigate other cultures and customs.

Emotional Drain

Teaching is a profession that has been characterized by high levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion (Hakanen et al. 2006; Maslach et al. 2001); feeling overwhelmed

and or burnout is common when examining the emotional work of teachers (Chang, 2009). Scholars have claimed teachers in K-12 schools have a narrow-minded focus considered to be a result of day-to-day events such as those that separate teachers from other adults and/or from the limited opportunities for reflection (Fullan, 2001). This isolated culture of teachers drives them to become frustrated, bored, and/or emotionally depleted, as they privately struggle with their anxieties (Fullan, 2001).

Research has shown that teachers often experience intellectual and emotional fatigue as a result of dealing with student misbehaviors (Chang & Davis, 2009). However, little is known about the specific emotional strain that cross-cultural differences can add for expatriate teachers and their ability to cope with these differences. This lack of understanding is particularly relevant when considering how these differences may influence or affect expatriate teachers' job satisfaction as they navigate through these changes.

It's crucial to understand how cross-cultural differences can impact the emotional and intellectual well being of expatriate teachers to support their successful integration into new cultural environments. Identifying the specific stressors that expatriate teachers face can help educators and administrators provide targeted support to help them cope with these challenges and maintain their job satisfaction.

Expatriate teachers may face unique challenges when it comes to cross-cultural differences. For instance, as per my study, they may experience a greater sense of isolation and struggle to connect with their students and colleagues. Additionally,

expatriate teachers may face language barriers, unfamiliar teaching methods, and different cultural expectations, making it more challenging to adapt and succeed in their new roles.

By recognizing the specific challenges that expatriate teachers face due to cross-cultural differences, educators and administrators can provide tailored support to help them overcome these obstacles. This approach can benefit both the expatriate teachers and the students they teach, by creating a more positive and supportive educational environment that promotes well being and success.

In my study, two teachers identified emotional exhaustion as a significant factor influencing their decision to remain in the school. Lara, for instance, reported feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically drained. She mentioned several intercultural factors related to "being outside one's home country and adapting to change," but also expressed other pressing concerns affecting her decision to continue with the school. Although it was unclear to what extent Lara's threshold had been reached, her interview clearly revealed the significant impact of emotional exhaustion on her well being. It can be assumed that Lara's discomfort has diminished her job satisfaction and may have contributed to her decision to consider leaving the school.

Understanding the impact of emotional exhaustion on expatriate teachers is essential to supporting their well being and helping them thrive in their roles. By addressing the sources of emotional strain, educators and administrators can create a

more positive and supportive environment for expatriate teachers, which can benefit both the teachers and the students they teach.

International human resource management studies show that diverse intercultural related factors play a significant role in the retention of expatriates, as they can either facilitate or hinder the adjustment and integration process (Lin et al, 2012). Therefore, it is important for school leaders to address some intercultural related factors that have been found to affect expatriate retention.

The findings of this study, combined with previous research, suggest that teaching is a profession characterized by high levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion. Teachers often feel overwhelmed and burnt out due to the emotional work required of them, which could be exacerbated by added stressors such as dealing with student misbehaviors. Cross-cultural differences can also contribute to emotional drain and impact job satisfaction, which in turn affects teacher retention. The study highlights the need for school leaders to address intercultural factors that may affect expatriate retention, as diverse intercultural factors have been found to play a significant role in expatriate adjustment and integration processes.

Theme 2: Organizational Related Factors

Besides identifying intercultural competence factors affecting expatriates, organizational conditions were also found. Organizational conditions have been significantly studied and have been related to teachers leaving the profession in the US

and non-US literature. In a meta analysis Borman & Dowling (2008), similar to Guarino et al. (2006), found eight factors that affected teacher retention. It is interesting to note that six out of the eight factors identified on organizational elements were found in my study, namely salary, opportunity for advancement, teacher network & collaboration, bureaucracy, admin support, and autonomy. This suggests that these factors are important for expatriate teachers' retention, not just in the US but also in other contexts. It is also helpful to know that my study provides additional insights into intercultural competence factors that affect expatriate teachers' retention, which is an underexplored area in the literature. By considering both intercultural competence and organizational factors, my study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors that affect expatriate teacher retention.

The only two organizational related factors not found in my study were instructional spending and having a mentoring program. Although these factors were not found, it is interesting to note that BoInternational, being a private institution, had evident investment in infrastructure and academic resources. This could potentially explain why instructional spending was not identified as a significant factor. It is also helpful to know that none of the participants in my study were beginning teachers, and that the minimum experience of the participants was three academic years. This suggests that the need for a mentoring program may be less significant for more experienced teachers, who may already have developed their teaching skills and confidence. Overall, these contextual factors provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that affect expatriate teacher retention in specific contexts.

The following diverse organizational conditions were found in my study to be pressing factors affecting expatriates:

Salary

In my study five out of nine participants mentioned salary as a retention factor that influenced their stay or leave decisions. King (1968), Hardman (2001), Odland (2007), Odland and Ruzicka (2009), Mancuso et al. (2010), and Roberts et al. (2010), found compensation and benefits to be fundamental for retaining international teachers. It has been shown that teachers are more likely to stay in their positions when they feel fairly compensated for their work and therefore it is important for organizations to provide competitive salaries, benefits packages, like possible opportunities for professional development to retain teachers.

While five of the participants expressed that salary was important, four of the participants' feelings aligned with Desroches' (2013) study that found that international teachers are generally satisfied with the salary and benefits offered to them by their schools. Therefore, it is important to note that although my finding appears divided it suggests that there may be a range of perceptions among expatriate teachers regarding salary and benefits, and that it is important for school leaders and governing bodies to pay attention to these factors as part of their retention strategies.

Compensation is a necessary element in capitalistic economies where compensation is a necessary component of the labor market. While salary and benefits are important factors for teacher retention, it is not just the numerical value of compensation that

matters. School leaders should also pay attention to smaller details such as providing assistance upon arrival, offering support, and understanding the personal needs of their staff. By doing so, they can improve the overall job satisfaction of expatriate teachers and increase the likelihood of retaining them in their school.

In international human resource studies job satisfaction, job security, and fair compensation, play a significant role in expatriate retention and are considered to be important factors that contribute to their retention. When expatriates are satisfied with their job and feel secure in their position, they are more likely to stay with their organization for an extended period (Suutari et al., 2018). On the other hand, if they feel that their compensation is not fair or that their job is not secure, they are more likely to look for other opportunities (Toh & DeNisi, 2005).

The findings from this study, combined with previous research, suggest that while salary and benefits are important factors for teacher retention, there may be a range of perceptions among expatriate teachers regarding their compensation. Some teachers may be more focused on salary and benefits, while others may be more concerned with other factors such as job satisfaction, job security, and a supportive work environment. Therefore, it is important for school leaders and governing bodies to pay attention to all of these factors as part of their retention strategies.

As noted in previous research, compensation and benefits have been found to be fundamental for retaining international teachers (King, 1968; Hardman, 2001; Odland, 2007; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009; Mancuso et al., 2010; Roberts et al., 2010). However, it

has also been shown that expatriate teachers may be generally satisfied with their salary and benefits (Desroches, 2013). Therefore, school leaders should pay attention to smaller details such as offering support and understanding the personal needs of their staff to improve job satisfaction.

Furthermore, research suggests that job satisfaction, job security, and fair compensation play a significant role in expatriate retention (Cao et al., 2012). When expatriates feel satisfied with their job and feel secure in their position, they are more likely to stay with their organization for an extended period. On the other hand, if they feel that their compensation is not fair or that their job is not secure, they are more likely to look for other opportunities (Toh & DeNisi, 2005).

Generally, these findings suggest that compensation is an important factor in teacher retention, but it is not the only factor. School leaders and governing bodies should pay attention to all factors that contribute to job satisfaction and retention, including job security, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for professional development.

Opportunity for Advancement

The opportunity for advancement was an important and a necessary component considered by four participants in my study who contemplated it as an important factor to remain. In a similar finding Hardman (2001) found professional advancement as the highest-ranking incentive in his descriptive study where the scholar explored factors influencing an expatriate teacher's decision to work at international schools and the factors important for decisions to remain beyond the initial contract. While Hardman

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(2001) found professional advancement important the scholar also noted financial

incentives, happy working climate, and strong sense of job challenge amongst the top

four highest-ranking factors influencing motivation to join and remain in an international

school.

Similarly, international human resource studies show that the opportunity for

advancement is indeed a critical factor in retaining employees and keeping them

motivated and engaged in their work (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Hence, employees who

feel that they have opportunities for growth and advancement within their organization

are more likely to stay with the company and be committed to their work. Therefore,

offering career development opportunities such as training programs, mentorship

opportunities, and clear career paths can help employees feel that they are making

progress in their careers and have a sense of purpose and direction. This can increase job

satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve employee engagement.

Offering opportunities for advancement can also help attract top talent to the

organization. Potential employees are often attracted to organizations that offer clear

paths for career growth and opportunities for advancement, as this provides a sense of

stability and security in their careers (Valcour, 2015). Organizations that provide

opportunities for advancement also tend to have a more positive organizational culture, as

employees feel that they are valued and their contributions are recognized (Sunarsi,

2019). This can create a virtuous cycle, where employees are motivated to work harder

and be more productive, which in turn leads to more opportunities for advancement and

further employee engagement (Hooi, 2021). In short, offering opportunities for advancement is not only a key factor in retaining employees, but it also helps to attract top talent, improve employee engagement, and create a more positive organizational culture.

The findings in this study, combined with previous research, highlight the importance of offering opportunities for advancement in retaining employees and keeping them motivated and engaged in their work. Specifically, the study found that the opportunity for advancement was an important factor for expatriate teachers to remain in their jobs. This is consistent with previous research that has identified professional advancement, financial incentives, a happy working climate, and a strong sense of job challenge as critical factors in motivating and retaining employees. Overall, the findings from this study and previous research suggest that school organizations should prioritize offering opportunities for advancement in order to retain their teachers and create a positive work environment.

Teacher Network and Collaboration

Research has shown that teachers are more likely to stay in their positions when they feel valued and supported by their colleagues and superiors. However, for expatriate teachers, who may be isolated in a foreign country, a sense of community and social support could even be more critical. This study highlights the importance of social support and a sense of community for expatriates. Findings from this study, combined

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with previous research, suggest that the opportunity for advancement and a sense of community are important factors for expatriate teachers to stay in their positions.

While research on network and collaboration among expatriate teachers is limited, international human resource literature has highlighted the importance of social support and collaborative mechanisms for the success of expatriates. Bayraktar (2019) identified social support as one of the most critical predictors of cross-cultural adjustment for expatriates, while Mancuso and White (2010) found that the perception of a supportive head of school, including the amount of input in decision-making given to expatriate teachers, was the most significant correlate of turnover. Similarly, Mancuso et al. (2010) found that factors such as salary, administrative support, and perceived inclusion in decision-making were crucial predictors of retention.

Therefore, these studies underscore the importance of social support and supportive leadership for expatriate success. Expatriate teachers face uncertainty and stress due to the significant change in their cultural environment. Changing home is considered an important stressor in life and lacking the social support necessary becomes crucial predictors of expatriate adjustment (Shen and Kram, 2011). In essence, not having these support mechanisms makes it harder for expatriates to adjust cross-culturally and/or feel comfortable in the host culture (Bayraktar, 2019). Seeking support from their social networks helps reduce the uncertainty to deal and cope with this stressful situation (Liu and Shaffer, 2005).

The findings from this study also suggest that creating a sense of community and social support among expatriate teachers requires a proactive and intentional effort by school leaders. By fostering collaboration, recognizing and rewarding good work, addressing conflicts, and involving expatriate teachers in decision-making, school leaders can help create a supportive and inclusive school environment that encourages teacher retention and success.

Bureaucracy

Two participants mentioned disliking bureaucracy in their school organization. They believed that having a bureaucratic organization affected the school leadership like the overall communication given that the bureaucratic culture of the school organization did not allow the school community to work more efficiently and in a more collaborative manner (Somech, 2010).

In educational leadership, the concept of having followers and not subordinates, leadership and management can be often misunderstood and therefore affect institutional functioning (Taylor and Machado, 2006). Bureaucratic approaches have also been known to hinder the decision-making process, leading to a lack of flexibility and innovation, slowing down the communication process, and stifling creativity and innovation (Zhu, 2013).

Bureaucratic organizational structures can have a significant impact on school leadership and overall communication within the school community. In a bureaucratic school organization, the decision-making process may be slow and hindered by layers of

bureaucracy, which can make it difficult for the school community to work efficiently and collaborate effectively leading to a lack of open communication and a lack of trust between different levels of the organization, as well as a lack of buy-in and ownership among staff members (Somech, 2010).

Human resource scholars have also found similar findings concluding that performance management and control presents specific challenges (Fenwick et al., 1999). The findings from this study, combined with previous research, suggest that a bureaucratic organizational culture can have a significant impact on school leadership and overall communication within the school community. This can have a negative impact on the effectiveness and morale of the school community, leading to a lack of trust, ownership, and buy-in among staff members. Therefore, it is important for school leaders to find a balance between accountability and flexibility to foster a supportive and collaborative school culture that encourages job satisfaction and retention. Therefore, educational leaders must be mindful of these challenges and strive to create a culture of followership rather than subordination to ensure that their school community is working efficiently and collaboratively towards their shared goals

Admin Support

Three participants expressed the importance of admin support for their continuation. In US and non-US teachers' studies, one of the frequently cited causes of attrition has been found to be the lack of administrative support. In the lack of support scholars have found administrators to rely on the expertise of their teachers, do not provide them with

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feedback, and/or believed to have other priorities (Cancio et al, 2013). While there are fewer expatriate teacher studies most studies have found organizational conditions and leadership factors to be crucial for retention.

It is important for school leaders and administrators to recognize the importance of providing support to their teachers especially expatriate teachers who may be adjusting to a new culture and environment. Leaders may need to take a more active role in supporting their staff and work to create a culture of collaboration and open communication. Providing feedback, guidance, and resources can help to improve job satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of expatriate teachers leaving.

Diverse scholars have highlighted the importance of the support needed for expatriate teachers. King's (1968) study highlighted that the support for expatriate teachers led to higher retention. Mancuso and White (2010) relatedly found the most important correlate of turnover was the perception of a supportive head of school. Rombaut (2020) suggested school leaders needed to improve communication between leaders and teachers to create a tight-knit supportive community of stakeholders, acting as authentic leaders in cross-cultural contexts, like develop a common language within the school to better support expatriate teachers.

This study underscores the critical role of administrative support in teacher retention, particularly for expatriate teachers who may face additional challenges when adjusting to a new culture and environment. School leaders and administrators must recognize the importance of providing feedback, guidance, and resources to their teachers to improve

job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Collaborative and open communication is key to creating a culture of support and community among stakeholders. Scholars have emphasized the need for school leaders to act as authentic leaders in cross-cultural contexts, such as developing a common language within the school to better support expatriate teachers. King (1968), Mancuso and White (2010), and Rombaut (2020) have all found that supportive organizational conditions and leadership factors are crucial for teacher retention. Therefore, it is imperative that school leaders prioritize administrative support and communication to retain teachers, especially those in expatriate positions.

Autonomy

During the study, one expatriate teacher mentioned the philosophical idea of being self-governing, stating that too many managers created a burden in their work environment. However, numerous US and non-US studies have researched the importance of autonomy in teacher retention, with a strong correlation found between autonomy and job satisfaction. Scholars recommend that school leaders and governing bodies adapt policies and practices to incentivize teacher involvement in decision-making and professional development goal-setting, thereby improving job satisfaction and retention rates (Worth & Brande, 2020).

Organizational factors also play a significant role in teacher retention, as highlighted by this study. Addressing factors such as workload, stress, salary and benefits, working conditions, professional development opportunities, leadership, collaboration, and support can create a positive and supportive work environment. This,

in turn, helps retain high-quality teachers and promotes the success of their students. In conclusion, organizations that prioritize their teachers' needs and create a supportive work environment are more likely to retain their staff and promote success. Addressing intercultural, organizational, and leadership factors is crucial to fostering a positive and productive culture that helps retain high-quality teachers. By doing so, organizations can ensure the long-term success of their students and positively impact the education sector.

Theme 3: Leadership Related Factors

Leadership and teacher retention are two interrelated factors that play a significant role in the success of a school or educational institution. Good leadership fosters a supportive and positive work environment that encourages teachers to stay in their positions, while poor leadership can lead to high teacher turnover and low morale. Studies have shown that leadership factors such as principal support and good leadership are positively correlated with teacher retention, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Thomas, 2014). On the other hand, negative leadership behaviors such as micromanagement, lack of support, and poor communication lead to high teacher turnover and job dissatisfaction (Hallam et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important for school leaders to focus on developing effective leadership skills that promote a positive and supportive work environment for their teachers.

Effective international school leaders understand the importance of teacher retention and that diverse leadership factors affect the overall job satisfaction of expatriates. By focusing on these factors, school leaders can create a culture that values and supports which is essential for the success of a school. Mancuso et al. (2010) found

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that transformational and distributed leadership styles influenced retention. Where Odland and Ruzicka (2009) found that poor school leadership affected expatriate retention. In the following themes that were constructed, I discuss and interpret the significance of the findings. I address the impact of leadership on expatriate teacher retention and how the themes developed shed light on this important issue.

Feeling Overworked

Feeling overworked is a common experience among teachers, as the profession often involves a large workload and long hours (Easthope & Easthope, 2000). While more is known about US and non-US Teachers, burnout and high turnover rates can be a result of feeling overworked, and can have a negative impact on the quality of education and the morale of those working in the field. Addressing the issue of overworked teachers and high teacher turnover rates requires a multi-faceted approach that includes support, resources, and opportunities for growth and development (Zepeda, 2006). By taking steps to create a positive and supportive work environment, school leaders and policymakers can help improve teacher retention and the quality of education for students.

While feeling overworked may be common feeling there are a few ways that school leaders and policymakers can help address the issue of teacher retention and reduce feelings of overwork among educators. They may do so by providing teachers with support staff and adequate resources, including technology, and supplies to do their jobs effectively. Providing these resources can help reduce feelings of being overwhelmed and increase job satisfaction. Providing opportunities for teachers to continue learning and growing professionally can help reduce feelings of boredom and increase job satisfaction.

Similarly, school leaders may encourage work-life balance by providing flexible scheduling and opportunities for professional development to help teachers maintain a healthy work-life balance (Miryala and Chiluka, 2012). Although fostering a positive work environment may be a challenge, a supportive and collaborative work environment can make a big difference in reducing stress and burnout while encouraging open communication like providing opportunities for teachers to provide feedback can help create a positive workplace culture.

Feeling expandable

Feeling unappreciated, expendable, ignored, or replaceable can cause teachers to have low morale and ultimately increase their likelihood of them leaving the job, leading to higher teacher turnover rates. While there is no research on the specific effects of feeling expendable among expatriate teachers, studies have shown that this phenomenon can have negative impacts on the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of teachers working in their home countries (Humphries, 2020). It is possible that these effects could also apply to expatriate teachers.

The issue of feeling expendable is a relevant topic in the field of international human resource management, particularly in the context of multinational organizations and their expatriate employees. Research in this area has explored the factors that contribute to expatriate employees feeling expendable or devalued, such as job insecurity, limited opportunities for career development, and cultural and language barriers (Stahl et al., 2007). This research has highlighted the importance of providing support and resources

to expatriate employees to help them feel valued and engaged in their work, which can ultimately improve retention and performance.

Humanizing arrivals

"Humanizing arrivals" can mean different things depending on the context. In general, it refers to making the experience of arriving somewhere more welcoming, comfortable, and personal. Overall, humanizing arrivals is about creating a positive and welcoming experience for individuals, whether they are traveling to a new place or starting a new job. It is about recognizing the human element of these experiences and striving to make them as comfortable, personal, and memorable as possible.

Feeling welcomed and valued in an organization can be crucial for building a positive work culture and employee engagement. The same goes for arriving in a new country, as small details of attention can make a huge difference in reducing the stress and anxiety that comes with such a significant change. While there are no studies on expatriate teachers that highlight humanizing arrivals. There are many ways organizations can humanize arrivals for new employees or people arriving in a new country. This could include providing a welcoming package with information about the organization or local community, offering language classes or cultural sensitivity training, providing mentorship programs, or organizing social events to help new arrivals meet other people and build a sense of community.

Ultimately, humanizing arrivals is about creating an environment that values people as individuals and recognizes the unique challenges and experiences they may

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face. By doing so, organizations and communities can build a culture of inclusivity, respect, and support, which benefits everyone involved.

Feeling secure

 Feeling insecure, or having fear of personal security, affects the overall comfort of a foreigner. In my study, one expatriate believed that an important factor for staying in a school was feeling secure. When someone feels unsafe or at risk, it can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety, which can in turn affect their physical and mental health, as well as their ability to integrate into a new community (Faeth and Kittler, 2017).

This factor can be especially important for an expatriate teacher who values security as a key factor in their decision to continue attending that school or not. Though there are no studies on expatriate teachers that illustrate this phenomena, school leaders can take steps to improve personal security and make expatriate teachers feel safer and more comfortable. This could include diverse measures such as installing security cameras, providing security personnel or escorts, and implementing clear policies and procedures for handling security concerns.

It is important to note that although the aforementioned measures may be helpful, it remains crucial to address the underlying issues that may be contributing to feelings of insecurity or fear. In international human resource management literature, addressing issues of discrimination or harassment have been found to help create a more inclusive and welcoming environment (McNulty et al., 2019). Therefore, by taking a more comprehensive approach addressing personal security, schools can help ensure that all

expatriate teachers feel safe and supported, which can ultimately improve their success and overall well-being.

Implications for Future Research

Intercultural competence is a key factor in the success of expatriate teachers in international assignments. Expatriate teachers who possess intercultural competence are better able to adapt to and effectively navigate cross-cultural situations, which can improve their job performance, satisfaction, and overall success in their assignments. There are a number of factors that contribute to intercultural competence, including language proficiency, cultural knowledge and awareness, empathy and respect for other cultures, and communication skills. These factors can be developed through training and development programs, cross-cultural experiences, and exposure to diverse cultures.

In terms of implications for future research, there is a need for more in-depth studies on the development of intercultural competence and its impact on expatriate success. This could include examining the effectiveness of different training and development programs, as well as identifying the specific competencies that are most critical for expatriate success in different cultural contexts. Another area of research could be the impact of cultural intelligence on expatriate success. Cultural intelligence refers to the ability to adapt to new cultural situations and to effectively navigate cross-cultural interactions. Studies have shown that cultural intelligence is a key predictor of expatriate success, and further research could help to better understand the specific competencies and behaviors that contribute to cultural intelligence.

Overall, there is a need for continued research on intercultural competence and its impact on expatriate success, in order to develop effective training and development programs, and to better support expatriates in their international assignments. Additionally, future research could also explore the role of leadership in fostering intercultural competence among expatriate teachers. This could include examining the leadership behaviors and practices that are most effective in promoting intercultural competence, as well as the impact of leadership on the development of cultural knowledge and awareness, empathy, and communication skills. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and intercultural competence among expatriate teachers. Organizational culture can play a critical role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of employees, and it is important to understand how organizational culture can either support or hinder the development of intercultural competence among expatriate teachers.

Overall, there are a multitude of factors that can impact the development of intercultural competence and its impact on expatriate success. Further research in this area can provide valuable insights into the most effective ways to support and develop expatriate teachers in their international assignments. In addition to the above-mentioned research directions, another important area of investigation could be the role of intercultural competence in mitigating culture shock among expatriate teachers. Culture shock is a common experience among individuals who are in a new and unfamiliar cultural environment, and it can lead to feelings of disorientation, frustration, and even depression. Intercultural competence can help individuals to better understand and

navigate the cultural differences they encounter, which can reduce the negative effects of culture shock and improve their overall well-being and job performance.

In summary, research on intercultural competence and its impact on expatriate success is a multifaceted and important area of inquiry. Continued investigation into the factors that contribute to intercultural competence, its impact on expatriate success, and the role of leadership and the school's organizational culture in its development can provide valuable insights for school organizations seeking to support and develop their expatriate teachers.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Intercultural competence is crucial for the success of expatriated teachers in international schools. Teachers who possess this skill are better equipped to adapt to new cultural contexts, navigate cross-cultural situations effectively, and improve their teaching performance, job satisfaction, and overall success in their assignments. To improve the success of expatriated teachers in international schools, policies and practices should support the development of intercultural competence. This includes providing training and development programs that equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate cross-cultural situations, as well as opportunities for cross-cultural experiences and exposure to diverse cultural contexts.

School leaders can address these issues by providing cross-cultural training to equip expatriates with the necessary skills to navigate cultural differences. Additionally,

building a support network of friends, family, and colleagues can help expatriates feel more connected and settled in their new environment, reducing their likelihood of repatriation. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and avoiding burnout are also essential for expatriate adjustment. By taking these proactive steps, school leaders can create an environment that promotes the success and retention of expatriates.

External factors such as the host country's attitude towards foreigners must also be considered. Providing resources such as counseling services, cultural mentorship programs, and social events can help expatriates connect with others and build a sense of community in their new location. Organizations can promote cultural awareness and understanding by providing cultural awareness training, language training, and cross-cultural communication skills workshops to their employees. This fosters a positive and inclusive work environment that supports the success of their diverse workforce.

Policies and practices that support the development of intercultural competence should be integrated into teacher recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes. Ongoing professional development programs for expatriated teachers should provide regular opportunities for cross-cultural learning and development, as well as support for teachers to integrate new cultural knowledge and skills into their teaching practices.

In conclusion, intercultural competence is essential for the success and retention of expatriated teachers in international schools. Policies and practices that promote intercultural competence, such as training and development programs, support networks, and resources, can help expatriates navigate cross-cultural situations, reduce the

likelihood of repatriation, and improve job satisfaction and overall success. Organizations must take a comprehensive approach to support their expatriates and their families, considering external factors such as host country attitudes and unique circumstances. Integrating intercultural competence into recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and ongoing professional development programs can contribute to the success and retention of expatriated teachers in international schools, leading to improved student outcomes and overall success of the school.

Conclusion

In this section I connected the results of my research to existing literature and discussed findings in relations to past research. Connections to the research were presented in the discussions. The findings examined three main category moderators and each category moderator was discussed in detail. In the discussion, I highlighted ideas on how the findings should impact the work of school leaders or possible policy implications as they engage with expatriate teachers.

In the study the three category moderators that affected expatriates stay or leave decisions were:

(a)   Intercultural related factors

(b)   Organizational related factors

(c)   Leadership related factors

While intercultural related factors have not been widely studied, organizational and leadership factors have been explored in the context of expatriated teachers. Thus,

this study sheds light on aspects that were not emphasized on previous studies and extends the research while it provides steps that the school heads and governance could take to improve policy and practice for the success of expatriate teachers in their schools. Also, these findings help address the gaps in knowledge and potentially benefit expatriate teachers, schools, and students.

Given the logical relationship between the three category moderators, I developed a Venn style diagram to show how the overlap of the category moderators illustrates commonalities and differences amongst them. The diagram illustrates the areas where intercultural, organizational, and leadership factors overlap and interact to have a significant impact on teacher retention. By showing the shared commonalities between otherwise unrelated concepts, the diagram helps emphasize the importance of considering all three factors when looking at teacher retention. Likewise, it helps identify areas of overlap and interaction, where the influence on retention becomes stronger.

For example, if the diagram shows a significant overlap between intercultural and organizational factors, this could indicate that addressing cultural differences and creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment are key to improving teacher retention. If the diagram shows a significant overlap between leadership and organizational factors, this could indicate that effective leadership is crucial for creating a positive and collaborative work environment, which in turn can improve teacher retention.

Overall, the diagram is a useful tool for understanding the complex relationships between intercultural, organizational, and leadership factors, and their impact on teacher retention. By identifying the areas of overlap and interaction, organizations can focus

their efforts on the most important factors, and work to create a supportive and engaging work environment that fosters teacher retention and help organizations develop a holistic approach to teacher retention, taking into account the interplay of various factors.

By understanding the different factors involved, school leaders can create strategies to address each of these factors and create a positive work environment for teachers. Some examples offered in the previous discussion include offering intercultural training for teachers to help them better adjust to the host country's culture, providing leadership development programs to support the growth and development of leaders, and offering competitive compensation and benefits packages to attract and retain top talent. By taking a comprehensive approach, organizations can create a work environment that supports and retains teachers, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students.

APPENDICES

<u>Appendix A</u>

<u>Interview Protocol: Teachers</u>

Introductory Protocol

I would like to audiotape our conversation today. All information will be kept confidential, and your participation is voluntary; you may stop at any time you feel uncomfortable. Thank you for your agreeing to participate in my study.

Introduction

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone with much to share about your experience as an expatriate teacher in an international school. My research project focuses on understanding the factors that may affect the retention of expatriate teachers in K-12 education. I have a particular interest in understanding teachers' preparedness for teaching in diverse settings and their feelings concerning this topic. My goal is to share what I learn in this study with other educational institutions with the hope of making a positive impact on the retention of expatriate teachers in K-12 education. My analysis does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Instead, I am trying to learn more about factors that affect your decisions, and hopefully, what I learn will help improve effectiveness in the support of expatriate teachers' needs.

A. Participant Background

Where did you grow up? (Describe your background.)

How long have you been at your current school?

What is your educational background? How many years have you been teaching?

What are your prior teaching experiences (school/state/country)?

Is Boston International School similar to or different from other schools in which you have taught?

B. Job Satisfaction

While a number of teacher characteristics, school characteristics and organizational conditions have been related to teachers' job satisfaction, we don't know how or to what extent intercultural competence is a factor that affects retention of expatriated teachers. After the initial set of questions, I will ask open-ended questions about job satisfaction, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and challenges and strains in the profession, including their sources and your reactions to them and any consequences you have experienced. To all these, I will ask follow-up questions such as "Can you tell me more about that?" (I.e., the topics of the respondents' responses), "Do you have any examples illustrating that?" and "Can you elaborate on that?

What are your immediate thoughts about being a teacher?

What job-related challenges or strains have you experienced? (What consequences of work-related stress did the teachers report?)

How would you describe your job satisfaction? (What are the sources of job satisfaction?*)*

What are your perceptions of the teaching and learning environments at your current school? (Ask them to elaborate as needed)

C. Retention

For this last section of the interview, I will ask open-ended questions about your future plans. After your responses, I will ask follow-up questions such as "Can you tell me more about that?" (I.e., the topics of the respondents' responses), "Do you have any examples illustrating that?" and "Can you elaborate on that?

What are your plans when your contract ends?

What factors may cause you to remain at your current school for at least one more contract? (Provide examples if necessary)

What will influence your decision?

What factors, if any, may convince you to leave your current school or not re-sign for another contract? (Provide examples if necessary)

If the school wants to keep you longer, could you be persuaded? Why or how?

Finally, if you were to be given the opportunity to give advice or feedback to your school's administration team, what would it be? I want to reiterate here, that your individual response will only be heard by me.

Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

E-mail Invitation to Participants

From: Roberto C Flores <rcflore@clemson.edu>

To:

Subject: Survey Request

CONSENT INFORMATION

Dear XXXX,

You are invited to participate in a research study on intercultural competence. You were

selected as a possible participant. Please read this form and ask any questions you may

have before agreeing to be in this study.

This study is conducted by: Roberto C Flores, PhD candidate at Clemson University,

Graduate School of Education.

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of intercultural competence on the

retention of expatriated teachers in a K-12 accredited international school in Central

America. The purpose of this study will be to explore how intercultural competence

affects the retention of the expatriated teachers in this school and I will need to get an

accurate measure of your intercultural competence. If you agree to participate in this

study, you will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) online.

Completing the IDI will take approximately 15 minutes. It is unlikely that you will

experience any risks or discomfort from participating in this study. While it is possible

that reflecting on intercultural relations could be unpleasant, it is more likely that contemplation of the results will lead you to better understand your own perceptions. The data from the IDI will remain confidential. Research records will be stored securely and only I, Roberto C Flores, the primary investigator will have access to the records. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any point.

After completing the online Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Please complete the online survey by NO LATER THAN… By following these steps:

1. When you have 15 minutes go to https://v3. idiassessment.com (no www is necessary).

2. Enter your Username (……..) and Password (………). After reading the directions carefully, complete the survey.

3. When filling out the survey do NOT use any special characters anywhere in the survey (this includes: ,". />&*\)

4. Be sure to click SUBMIT at the end of the survey.

By accessing the link you acknowledge that you have read the consent information at the top of this page and that you are giving your consent to participate in this research.

Best Regards,

Roberto C Flores

PhD Candidate

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