

**MEASUREMENT, ANTECEDENTS AND  
OUTCOMES OF REPATRIATION  
ADJUSTMENT: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE  
FROM SAUDI REPATRIATES**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**By**

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# Abstract

In the last decade, the relevance and importance of international assignments have increased significantly due to the competitive global business environment (Knocke & Schuster, 2017). Organisations have become more aware of the significant role that international assignments play in the development of global leaders, the successful international implementation of business strategies, and therefore essential in securing competitive advantages (Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009; Knocke & Schuster, 2017). Thus, increasing numbers of staff are participating in various types of international assignments and this trend is unlikely to diminish in the future (Baruch, Altman & Tung, 2016; Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh, & Tangirala, 2010; Cox, Khan, & Armani, 2013).

Studies have shown that the process of relocating overseas assignees back home following the completion of their international assignments, which is known as repatriation adjustment, remains a challenging process for many employees and organisations (Sánchez, Sanz, & Aragón, 2008). Poor repatriation adjustment has been found to be associated with higher turnover rates and increased repatriates dissatisfaction (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992); job-related stress (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2002); issues with skills utilisation (Brewster & Suutari, 2005; Harvey & Novicevic, 2006; Linehan & Scullion, 2002); family and social issues; psychological wellbeing (Chi & Chen, 2007; Harvey, 1989; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007); work uncertainties (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007); and missed job opportunities (Wang, 1997).

Despite the ongoing importance of effective repatriation, research on repatriation adjustment is comparatively limited and underdeveloped (Chiang, Esch,

Birtch & Shaffer, 2015; Furuya, Stevens, Bird, Oddou, & Mendenhall, 2009; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Szkudlarek, 2010). Based on a critical review of the repatriation literature, this thesis identified four major gaps in the literature on repatriation adjustment. First, repatriation adjustment remains an under-conceptualised and under-studied construct. Second, the most widely used measure of (Black et al., 1992) repatriation adjustment was developed by rewording an expatriation measure without additional investigation whether it adequately covers the content domain of the repatriation experience (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005; Hippler, Caliguri, Johnson, & Baytalskaya, 2014). Third, repatriation adjustment research has almost exclusively utilised a variable centric approach. Although variable-centred approaches have significantly contributed to our understanding of the variables related to repatriation adjustment, person-centred approaches (Gabriel, Daniels, Diefendorff, & Greguras, 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016) have the potential to extend repatriation adjustment research by identifying how distinct repatriation adjustment profiles are associated with the antecedent and outcome. Fourth, the vast majority of studies on repatriation adjustment have largely drawn on US and Western samples with limited theoretical development in other cultural contexts (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), especially about the experience of expatriation–repatriation between novel cultures.

Based on the practical relevance of the topic and the identified gaps in the knowledge base, the objective of this thesis was to investigate the repatriation adjustment of repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures utilising a sequential mixed method design that comprised three studies. Study 1 is a qualitative enquiry while Study 2 and Study 3 are quantitative investigations.

The qualitative enquiry, Study 1, was designed to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experience by repatriates in order to develop a content valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultural contexts. The data were collected using qualitative semi-structured interviews with 19 Saudi repatriates returning “home” from three nations: Australia ( $n = 6$ ), the UK ( $n = 4$ ) or the USA ( $n = 9$ ). The data were analysed using inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using QSR NVivo11 software. The deductive analysis aimed to test and verify the repatriation adjustment facets that emerged from the prior literature on repatriation adjustment, including psychological readjustments (work, interaction, and general) and socio-cultural readjustments. The inductive analysis aimed to explore how repatriation adjustment was perceived by the repatriates. The major findings revealed the presence of the core facets and elements as per Black’s et al., (1992) definition, but identified additional facets. The additional identified facets included: socio-cultural readjustment and personal readjustments.

Thus, the preliminary readjustment facets were relabelled as professional readjustment, personal readjustment, socio-cultural readjustment, and general readjustment to better reflect and explain repatriation adjustment as perceived by repatriates returning from novel cultures. A 51-item repatriation adjustment scale was developed to measure the 4 preliminary qualitative facets. This study addressed the conceptual and measurement concerns about Black et al.’s (1992) scale raised by list authors.

The quantitative investigations, Study 2 and Study 3, were conducted using an online survey. A total of 305 Saudi repatriates participated in this study, comprising repatriates returning from four nations: Australia ( $n = 91$ ), Canada ( $n = 69$ ), the UK

( $n = 74$ ) and the USA ( $n = 71$ ). Study 2 was designed to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed from the results of Study 1. The study found support for repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct that comprised six sub-facets, work task performance (measured by 2 items), workplace interactions (measured by 7 items), personal readjustment (measured by 5 items), local social norms (measured by 7 items), local social interactions (measured by 5 items), and, general readjustment (measured by 8 items). The final scale consisted of 34 items.

Study 3, a three-step latent profile analysis (LPA), was conducted to achieve two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles for the Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment obtained from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents [cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas, and time since returning home] and outcomes [intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing]) on the obtained profiles of repatriation adjustment.

The results of Study 3 demonstrated the existence of four repatriation adjustment profiles (i.e., not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted), among the Saudi repatriates, which are statistically distinct from each other across the six facets of repatriation adjustment. The study also found that the four profiles were distinguished by three antecedents of repatriation adjustment (i.e., cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home). Further, the study found significant differences between the four profiles on the professional and personal outcomes of repatriation adjustment (i.e., organisational commitment, intention to leave the organisation, job satisfaction, skill utilisation, and subjective wellbeing). Repatriates

within the fully readjusted profile had the highest skill utilisation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and subjective wellbeing as well as the lowest intention to leave the organisation compared to the other three profiles. In contrast, repatriates within the not readjusted profile, had the lowest skill utilisation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and subjective wellbeing as well as the highest intention to leave the origination compare to the other profiles. Repatriates within the professionally readjusted profile experienced higher skill utilisation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and subjective wellbeing, but had high intention to leave the organisation. Repatriates within the socially readjusted profile had lower skill utilisation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and subjective wellbeing, but had a higher intention to leave the organisation compared to repatriates within the professionally readjusted profile.

The outcomes of this research offer a number of theoretical, practical and methodological contributions. Theoretically, the study expands the current scope of repatriation adjustment to capture repatriation adjustment upon the completion of an international assignment in a novel culture. The results of study 1 and 2 resulted in a reconceptualization of repatriation adjustment based on a revised mapping of the content domain of the construct. This enabled the development of a repatriation adjustment measure using an accepted scale development process, which addressed measurement concerns with existing scales. In addition to re-examining how repatriation is conceptualised and measured in a non-western context, the thesis also utilises a person-centred approach (Gabriel et al., 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016) to extend existing variable centred repatriation adjustment research. It expands the current understanding of the repatriation adjustment process, its antecedent, and its outcome variables by providing new insights into, first, the idea that the combination



of the six facets of repatriation adjustment can form different subgroups within a repatriate population. Second, establishing connections between the four repatriation adjustment profiles and its antecedents and outcome variables. The results and insights provided by this research offer practical contributions, particularly for Saudi public sector departments, policy makers and, crucially, human resource practitioners. The findings and results help provide a solid foundation for designing repatriation training and mentoring programs.

# Table of Contents

Keywords .....	i
Publications .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
List of Figures .....	xiv
List of Tables .....	xv
Definitions of Terms .....	xvii
Statement of Original Authorship .....	xx
Acknowledgements .....	xxi
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Preamble .....	1
1.2 Introduction .....	1
1.3 Theoretical Foundation .....	3
1.4 Purpose and Questions .....	6
1.5 Research Design and Methodology .....	8
1.6 Research Significance and Scope .....	9
1.7 Thesis Outline and Structure .....	11
1.8 Conclusion .....	13
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Preamble .....	15
2.2 Introduction .....	16
2.3 Repatriation Adjustment – Theoretical Development .....	17
2.4 The Repatriation Adjustment Theory .....	18
2.5 Toward Facets of Repatriation Adjustment .....	27
2.5.1 Socio-cultural Factor .....	27
2.5.2 Cultural Novelty Factor .....	29
2.6 Repatriation Adjustment - Operational Review .....	33
2.6.1 Critique of Existing Measures of Repatriation Adjustment .....	33
2.7 Variables Related to Repatriation Adjustment .....	37
2.7.1 Antecedents of Repatriation Adjustment .....	37
2.7.1.1 Cultural Identity .....	38
2.7.1.2 Duration of International Assignment .....	41
2.7.1.3 Time Since Repatriation .....	42
2.7.2 Outcomes of Repatriation Adjustment .....	43
2.7.2.1 Professional Outcomes .....	44
2.7.2.1.1 Organisational Commitment .....	44
2.7.2.1.2 Skill Utilisation .....	46
2.7.2.1.3 Job Satisfaction .....	47
2.7.2.1.4 Intention to Leave .....	49
2.7.2.2 Personal Outcomes .....	50

2.7.2.2.1	Subjective Wellbeing .....	50
2.8	A Person-Centred Approach to Repatriation Adjustment .....	52
2.9	Knowledge Gaps .....	55
2.10	Research Questions .....	60
2.11	Chapter Summary .....	60
2.12	Conclusion .....	63
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Research Design .....</b>	<b>64</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	64
3.2	Research Paradigm.....	64
3.3	Research Design.....	66
3.4	Methods .....	68
3.4.1	Scale Development Procedure .....	69
3.4.2	Qualitative Data Collection and Analytical Strategies .....	75
3.4.2.1	Sampling Strategy.....	75
3.4.2.2	Data Collection .....	76
3.4.2.3	Data Analysis.....	77
3.4.3	Quantitative Data Collection and Analytical Strategies .....	78
3.4.3.1	Sampling Strategy.....	79
3.4.3.2	Data Collection .....	79
3.4.3.3	Data Preparation Procedures .....	80
3.4.3.3.1	Assessment of Missing Data.....	80
3.4.3.3.2	Assessment of Outliers.....	81
3.4.3.4	Measures .....	82
3.4.3.5	Data Analysis.....	84
3.5	Conclusion.....	94
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Study 1, Scale Development .....</b>	<b>95</b>
4.1	Preamble .....	95
4.2	Introduction .....	95
4.3	Methodology.....	98
4.3.1	Sample Characteristics .....	98
4.3.2	Data Collection .....	100
4.3.3	Unit of Analysis .....	100
4.3.4	Data Analysis Procedure.....	101
4.3.5	Ethical Considerations .....	105
4.4	Findings and Discussion.....	105
4.4.1	Theme 1: Professional Readjustment .....	107
4.4.2	Theme 2: Personal Readjustment .....	113
4.4.3	Theme 3: Socio-cultural Readjustment .....	116
4.4.4	Theme 4: General Readjustment .....	116
4.4.5	Refining the Definition of Repatriation Adjustment .....	118
4.4.6	Preliminary Qualitative Facets of Repatriation Adjustment .....	118
4.4.7	Item Generation and Development.....	121
4.5	Chapter Summary .....	128
4.6	Conclusion.....	130

<b>Chapter 5: Study 2, Scale Validation.....</b>	<b>131</b>
5.1 Preamble.....	131
5.2 Introduction .....	131
5.3 Methodology.....	134
5.3.1 Sampling.....	134
5.3.1.1 Sample A Characteristics .....	135
5.3.1.2 Sample B Characteristics .....	137
5.3.2 Data Collection Procedure.....	139
5.3.3 Data Preparation Procedures.....	139
5.3.3.1 Assessment of Missing Data .....	140
5.3.3.2 Assessment of Outliers .....	140
5.3.4 Measures.....	141
5.3.5 Data Analysis.....	141
5.4 Results .....	141
5.4.1 Item Purification .....	141
5.4.1.1 Preliminary Assessment of the Factor Analysis Assumptions .....	142
5.4.1.1.1 Sample Size.....	142
5.4.1.1.2 Assessment of Normality .....	143
5.4.1.1.3 Assessment of Factorability .....	143
5.4.1.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Procedures .....	144
5.4.1.3 Reliability Statistics .....	152
5.4.1.4 Assessment of Multicollinearity .....	153
5.4.2 Scale Validity.....	154
5.4.2.1 Preliminary Assessment of Factor Analysis Assumptions .....	155
5.4.2.1.1 Sample Size.....	155
5.4.2.1.2 Assessment of Normality .....	155
5.4.2.1.3 Assessment of Factorability .....	156
5.4.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Procedure.....	156
5.4.2.3 Competing Models .....	163
5.4.2.4 Reliability Assessment.....	166
5.4.3 Validity Assessment .....	167
5.4.3.1 Content Validity .....	167
5.4.3.2 Convergent Validity.....	167
5.4.3.3 Discriminant Validity .....	170
5.4.3.4 Nomological Validity .....	171
5.4.4 Develop Norms .....	173
5.5 Discussion .....	173
5.6 Conclusion.....	176
<b>Chapter 6: Study 3, Repatriation Adjustment Profiles.....</b>	<b>177</b>
6.1 Preamble.....	177
6.2 Introduction .....	178
6.3 Method .....	181
6.3.1 Sample C Characteristics .....	182
6.3.2 Data Collection .....	183
6.3.2.1 Data Preparation Procedures .....	183
6.3.2.1.1 Assessment of Missing Data .....	184
6.3.2.1.2 Assessment of Outliers .....	184
6.3.3 Measures.....	185
6.3.4 Data Analysis.....	187

6.4	Results .....	189
6.4.1	Preliminary Assessment of the Factor Analysis Assumptions .....	190
6.4.1.1	Sample Size .....	190
6.4.1.2	Assessment of Normality .....	190
6.4.1.3	Assessment of Factorability .....	191
6.4.2	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Procedure .....	191
6.4.3	Deceptive Statistics and Correlations among Measures .....	193
6.4.4	The Latent Profile Analysis: Three-Step Approach .....	197
6.4.4.1	Step One: Profile Estimation .....	197
6.4.4.2	Step Two: Posterior Probabilities Evaluation .....	200
6.4.5	Step Three: Testing the Differences between Profiles .....	205
6.4.5.1	Latent Profile Membership and the Antecedents .....	205
6.4.5.2	Latent Profile Membership and Distal Outcomes .....	208
6.5	Discussion .....	213
6.6	Conclusion .....	216
<b>Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion .....</b>		<b>218</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	218
7.2	Study 1: Findings and Discussion .....	221
7.2.1	Overview .....	221
7.2.2	Discussion .....	222
7.2.2.1	Professional Readjustment .....	223
7.2.2.2	Personal Readjustment .....	224
7.2.2.3	Socio-cultural Readjustment .....	224
7.2.2.4	General Readjustment .....	225
7.3	Study 2: Results and Discussion .....	226
7.3.1	Overview .....	226
7.3.2	Discussion .....	228
7.4	Study 3: Results and Discussion .....	231
7.4.1	Overview .....	231
7.4.2	Discussion .....	232
7.5	Research Contributions .....	236
7.5.1	Theoretical Contributions .....	236
7.5.2	Practical Contributions .....	242
7.5.3	Methodological Contributions .....	243
7.6	Research Limitations .....	244
7.7	Future Research Recommendations .....	245
7.8	Conclusion .....	246
<b>References .....</b>		<b>249</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>		<b>279</b>

# List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Differences between home and host cultures (Hofstede, 2015).....	11
Figure 2.1 Repatriation Adjustment Framework (Black et al., 1992).....	21
Figure 2.2 Facets of Repatriation Adjustment. ....	61
Figure 3.1 Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method Designs (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006).....	67
Figure 3.2 Mixed-Method Design (Sequential Exploratory Strategy) (Creswell & Clark, 2011).....	68
Figure 3.3 Churchill’s (1979) Process of Construct Development .....	70
Figure 4.1 Facets of Repatriation Adjustment. ....	97
Figure 5.1 Four Qualitative Facets .....	132
Figure 5.2 Initial Model A: Six-First-Order Factors Model. ....	157
Figure 5.3 Final Model – A Six-First-Order Factor Model. ....	163
Figure 6.1 SABIC Values. ....	198
Figure 6.2 BLRT Values.....	199
Figure 6.3 Characteristics of Latent Profile Indicators.....	201
Figure 6.4 Repatriation Adjustment Means Associated the Four-Profile.....	203
Figure 6.5 Characteristics of the Antecedents of Latent Profile. ....	208
Figure 6.6 Means Associated with Distal Outcomes.....	209
Figure 6.7 Characteristics of the Outcome of the Latent Profile. ....	213

# List of Tables

Table 1.1 Overall Structure of the Research Design .....	9
Table 2.1 Summary of Main Findings From Previous Studies .....	25
Table 2.2 Example of Previous Studies .....	31
Table 2.3 Differences between the Variable and Person Centred Approaches (Meyer et al., 2013). .....	53
Table 3.1 Overall Structure of the Research Design .....	69
Table 3.2 Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).....	78
Table 3.3 Absolute Fit Indices.....	89
Table 3.4 Incremental Fit Indices .....	89
Table 3.5 Parsimony Fit Indices .....	90
Table 3.6 Goodness of Fit Statistics .....	91
Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants .....	99
Table 4.2 Definition of Themes and Supporting Themes .....	104
Table 4.3 Participants' Biographical Information .....	106
Table 4.4 Facets and Definitions of Repatriation Adjustment .....	119
Table 4.5 Facets and Definitions of Repatriation Adjustment from Novel Cultures.....	120
Table 4.6 Prior Scales of Psychological Readjustment .....	121
Table 4.7 Prior Scales of Socio-cultural Readjustment .....	122
Table 4.8 Generated Items and their Sources.....	124
Table 4.9 Scaling Format of Pre-existing Scales of Repatriation Adjustment.....	127
Table 5.1 Demographic Profile of Sample A .....	137
Table 5.2 Demographic Profile of Sample B .....	138
Table 5.3 Initial Pattern Matrix .....	145
Table 5.4 Factor Analysis Procedure.....	149
Table 5.5 Final Pattern Matrix.....	150
Table 5.6 Component Correlation Matrix .....	152
Table 5.7 Reliability Statistics after EFA .....	153
Table 5.8 Multicollinearity Statistics .....	154
Table 5.9 Goodness of Fit Statistics .....	158
Table 5.10 Model A Goodness of Fit Statistics.....	158
Table 5.11 Regression Weight .....	159
Table 5.12 Standardised Regression Weight.....	160

Table 5.13 Competing Models' Goodness of Fit Statistics .....	164
Table 5.14 Model A and Model C Goodness of Fit Statistics .....	164
Table 5.15 Model A and Model C Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Entire Sample (n=305) .....	165
Table 5.16 Model A Discriminant Validity Test for the Entire Sample (n=305) ....	165
Table 5.17 Model C Discriminant Validity Test Entire Sample .....	166
Table 5.18 Reliability Statistics for Sample B before CFA.....	167
Table 5.19 Average Variance Extracted for all Constructs .....	168
Table 5.20 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Repatriation Adjustment Scale .....	169
Table 5.21 Validity Test Sample B .....	171
Table 5.22 Constrained and Unconstrained Models .....	171
Table 5.23 Correlation Matrix of Constructs.....	172
Table 5.24 Norms of Repatriation Adjustment Scale.....	173
Table 6.1 Demographic Profile of Participants in Sample C.....	183
Table 6.2 LPA Fit Indices and Thresholds .....	188
Table 6.3 CFA Model Fit Statistics.....	192
Table 6.4 Competing Models Goodness of Fit Statistics .....	193
Table 6.5 Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha Scores .....	194
Table 6.6 Model Fit Statistics .....	198
Table 6.7 Profile Models Membership .....	200
Table 6.8 Posterior Probabilities for the Four-Class Profile Model.....	201
Table 6.9 Repatriation Adjustment Identification across the Four Profiles .....	202
Table 6.10 Three-Step Results for the Antecedents (R3STEP) for the Four- Profile Model.....	206
Table 6.11 Means and Standard Deviations of the Antecedents.....	206
Table 6.12 Three-Step Results for Distal Outcomes .....	209
Table 7.1 Overview of the Research Project .....	220
Table 7.2 Comparison between Previous and Current Findings .....	240



# Definitions of Terms

## *Repatriation Adjustment*

For the purpose of this thesis, repatriation adjustment refers to the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing an international assignment in novel a culture.

## *Socio-cultural Readjustment*

Socio-cultural readjustment is defined as the “component-ability to ‘fit in’ and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture” (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p. 450). The new culture in this context refers to the repatriate’s home culture. As a result of the international assignment the host cultural environment becomes more like a home culture for repatriates and the home culture becomes like a foreign culture (Baruch, Steele, & Quantrill, 2002; Paik, Segaud, & Malinowski, 2002; Stroh et al., 1998).

## *Psychological Readjustment*

Psychological readjustment refers to the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture (Black, 1988, 1994; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991) after living and working in another culture for a period of time, ranging from six months to five years (Fumham, 1988; Maybarduk, 2008).

## *Cultural Novelty*

Cultural novelty is defined as the degree to which the host culture differs from the home culture in terms of standard of living, cultural values, political systems, food, etc. (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

### ***Culture Identity***

Cultural identity is defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the home country and the host country” (Sussman, 2002, p. 392).

### ***Organisational Commitment***

Organisational commitment refers to the individual’s psychological attachment to his/her work organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) identify organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct that consists of three interrelated dimensions or facets: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

### ***Skill Utilisation***

Skills utilisation is “the extent to which the repatriates can utilise his/her acquired skills and knowledge in his/her new job after repatriation” (Suutari, & Välimaa, 2002, p. 622). It is the degree to which a repatriate will be able to utilise his/her skills in their job after repatriation (Tahir & Azhar, 2013).

### ***Intention to Leave***

The intention to leave refers to the extent to which “a repatriate failing to reintegrate with the organisation and leaving the company for another opportunity or leaving the company altogether” (Newton, 2015, p. 18).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

The general job satisfaction refers to “the extent to which employees like their work” (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992, p. 185).

### *Subjective Wellbeing*

General subjective wellbeing refers to the individual's affective and cognitive evaluations of the quality of their lives (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002).

# Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: [QUT Verified Signature](#)

Date: 25/1/2018

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## 1.1 PREAMBLE

This chapter establishes the rationale for the current research by introducing the background to the research, presenting the theoretical foundation, outlining the research purpose and the research questions, stating the research design and method, highlighting the significance of the current research, and outlining the thesis structure.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

Due to the global and competitive workplace environment, increasing numbers of staff are participating in various types of international assignments (Baruch et al., 2016; Brookfield, 2016; Chen et al, 2010; Cox et al., 2013). Consequently, the International Human Resource Management literature (IHRM) has expanded its focus to include the process and challenges of relocating overseas assignees to their home following the completion of their international assignments in a host culture. This process of returning home is referred to as ‘repatriation adjustment’ (Black Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992; Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2009; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007).

Repatriation adjustment is defined as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture upon their return from another culture (Black et al., 1992). It is the final stage of a three-stage expatriation process, taking place following two stages: the selection and preparation stage, and the actual assignment stage (Adler, 2002; Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari, 2001; Harzing & Pinnington, 2011). While contemporary IHRM literature

has examined the expatriation process (i.e., Brown, 2007; Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Gill, 2010; Thompson & Christofi, 2006; Oberg, 1960), the focus of this body of research is on expatriation adjustment and less attention has been given to the aspect of repatriation and to the individuals who, after completing their assignment, return home (Baruch et al., 2016; Cox et al., 2013; Harzing & Pinnington, 2011; Kraimer, Bolino, & Mead, 2016; Lee & Liu, 2007; Tahir & Azhar, 2013).

The repatriation stage is a critical stage in the expatriation process for organisations and individuals (Sánchez et al., 2008), due to: (a) the high costs of the expatriation process incurred by organisations (Stahl, Chua, Caligiuri, Cerdin, & Taniguchi, 2009) and organisations desire to capitalise on their investment (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012); (b) the fact that repatriation is more challenging than expatriation, as supported by empirical evidence (Adler, 2002; Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Forster, 2000; Harvey, 1989; Martin, 1984; Suutari & Brewster, 2003); and (c) repatriation being the linkage point between overseas development and a repatriate's career path (Herman & Tetrick, 2009).

Of the limited research that has been carried out on measuring repatriation adjustment (i.e., Black, 1994; Cox, 2004; Kimber, 2012) and investigating the potential antecedents of repatriation adjustment (i.e., cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since returning home) or the repatriation personal or professional outcomes (i.e., subjective wellbeing, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and turnover intention), most studies have been undertaken in Western countries. Most of the repatriation literature has been conducted with American samples (i.e., Berry, 2006; Cox, 2004; Hyder and Lövblad, 2007; Maybarduk, 2008; Sussman, 2002, 2010) or has been focused on the expatriation–repatriation experience between relatively similar cultures (i.e., Kimber, 2012). This is despite



the growing number of individuals who are temporally expatriated to a novel cultural context, for example Saudi Arabian employees to western nations (i.e., Australia, USA, UK, and Canada). Thus, there is a lack of research examining the repatriation process between novel cultural contexts (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), such as Saudi Arabian employees repatriating from Western nations back to Saudi Arabia.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

The concept of cultural adjustment first appeared in the literature in 1951, with Cora Dubois defining it as “coping with the stress of life changes which people experience when they enter a new culture” (as cited in Cox, 2004, p. 203). It was captured by the term ‘culture shock’, whereby “the individual integrates into the social interaction of the cultural system” (Martin, 1984, p. 116; DuBois, 1951 as cited in Cox, 2004). Then, in 1955, Lysgaard introduced the U-shaped theory to describe culture shock (Martin & Harrell, 2004). Lysgaard described adjustment as “a series of discrete phases” falling into three phases: honeymoon (excitement), cultural shock (frustration) and adjustment (acceptance or understanding). Later, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) expanded this theory, adopting a W-curve to encompass the entire international assignment experience and include the process of re-entry (Martin, 1984). This extended theory was referred to as reverse culture shock or re-entry shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Martin, 1986).

Although the curve theories have made significant contributions to our understanding of cultural adjustment, Black and Mendenhall (1991) and others (i.e., Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998) extensively reviewed the prior empirical studies on cultural adjustment theories and found that the pre-existing curve theories are subject to several major limitations: a lack of empirical support, the absence of methodological fit between the nature of the phenomenon and utilised statistical

techniques, and the inconsistent utilisation of the samples. Thus, Black and Mendenhall (1991) proposed a new theory, known as ‘cultural adjustment theory’ or ‘expatriation adjustment’ in a cross-cultural context.

In 1992, Black et al. extended ‘cultural adjustment theory’, which was developed to explain how adjustment occurs in the host country – ‘expatriation adjustment’ – also to explain the adjustment that takes place after individuals return home, which they labelled as ‘repatriation adjustment’.

The repatriation adjustment theory developed Black et al., (1992) has been the dominant theory in the area for the last 25 years (Bhaskar-Shirinasas et al. 2005; Knocke & Schuster, 2017). Black et al. (1992) grounded their theory using uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calbrese, 1975) and control theory (Bell & Straw, 1989). Black et al. (1992) define repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture. They describe repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct that consists of three interrelated psychological dimensions or facets: work, interaction and the general environment (Black et al., 1992).

The theory proposes that, when individuals move to a host culture or return to their home culture, a significant level of uncertainty is created. For instance, individuals might be uncertain of “what is acceptable or unacceptable or appropriate and inappropriate” (Black, 1994, p. 1490) due to the changes that have occurred within their home environment during their international assignment (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997) and the change in their own cultural identity (Berry, 2006; Cox, 2004; Maybarduk, 2008; Sussman, 2002, 2010; Tambyah & Chng, 2006; Valk, Van der Velde, Van Engen, & Szkudlarek, 2013).

Thus, individuals have a need to reduce this uncertainty, which drives them to establish two levels of control, namely predictive and behaviour control (Black et al., 1992). Predictive control refers to the capability to make sense of, or predict, one's environment with regard to the individual's capability to predict and understand how they are expected to behave, and the punishments and rewards associated with certain behaviours (Black et al., 1992). Behaviour control refers to the capability of having control over one's behaviours (Black et al., 1992). As a result, the factors that contribute to reducing uncertainty would facilitate repatriation adjustment, whereas the factors that increase uncertainty would hinder repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994).

The repatriation adjustment theory developed by Black et al. (1992) provides the broader theoretical base and foundation for understanding the repatriation adjustment in the context of the current research. However, while Black et al.'s (1992) model serves as the theoretical foundation for the thesis, I argue that there are currently several conceptual and measurement limitations present in both repatriation adjustment theory and repatriation literature that become particularly problematic in the context of novel cultural contexts. These limitations are as follows 1) despite a foundation of "classic" theories the content domain of repatriation adjustment has not been adequately mapped (Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010), especially for repatriation from novel cultures; 2) the most-widely used measure (i.e., Black et al., 1991) of repatriation adjustment was developed by rewording an expatriation measure without additional investigation of whether this adequately covers the repatriation experience (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hippler, Caliguri, Johnson, & Baytalskaya, 2014); and 3) the vast majority of studies on repatriation

adjustment have largely drawn on US and western samples with limited theoretical development in other cultural contexts (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007).

In addition to re-examining how repatriation is conceptualised and measured in a non-western context, the thesis also utilises a person-centred approach (Gabriel et al., 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016) to extend existing variable centred repatriation adjustment research. Although variable-centred approaches have significantly contributed to the improvement of the understanding of the variables related to repatriation adjustment, person-centred approaches have the potential to extend repatriation adjustment research by first, identifying the distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment and, second, examining the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) on the obtained profile membership solution using the three-step LPA approach (Gabriel et al., 2015). Repatriation adjustment profiles refer to groups of individuals formed using the combination of the repatriation adjustment facets.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this research is twofold. First, the research aimed to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. This measure would help researchers to use a valid and reliable measure for future empirical studies and practitioners to gain a more complete understanding of repatriate adjustment for repatriates returning from novel cultural contexts. Second, the research aimed to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in novel a culture. This will further our understanding by exploring the existence of distinct subgroups of repatriation adjustment that differentially combine work, interaction, general, and socio-cultural

readjustment. Furthermore, the identification of subgroups who share the same levels of the facets of repatriation adjustment would provide new insights into how the obtained profile memberships relate to antecedent and outcome variables. The new understanding obtained from utilising a person-centred approach have the potential to provide new insights into how to effectively manager repatriation to improve both organisational and employee outcomes.

The research purpose was achieved through conducting three studies that addressed five research questions. The first research question was:

**RQ1:** *How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*

This research question was addressed through conducting Study 1, which involved utilising qualitative, semi-structured interviews that were conducted to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and was an important initial step to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. The second research question was:

**RQ2:** *What are the key dimensions of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures?*

To answer this research question, Study 2 was conducted which was designed to develop and validate a revised measure of repatriation adjustment scale from the results of Study 1 and existing scales. The scale development and validation followed the guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979).

The third, fourth and fifth research questions were:

**RQ3:** *Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ4:** *Do cultural identity identification (home and host), time spent overseas and time since returning home predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?*

**RQ5:** *Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction or subjective wellbeing?*

To address these research questions Study 3 was conducted, involving a three-step Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to achieve two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles (RQ3) of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effects of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (RQ4) (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas and time since returning home) and outcomes (RQ5) (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This research utilises a mixed-method design, adopting a sequential exploratory strategy (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell and Clark (2011) the exploratory sequential mixed-method design consists of using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in a single research program.

Thus, in this research, the qualitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Study 1, while the quantitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Study 2 and Study 3 (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

*Overall Structure of the Research Design*

Research Design	Mixed-Method Design (Sequential Exploratory Strategy)		
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Research Questions	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3, 4 and 5
Data Collection Method	Semi-structured interviews	Online survey	Online survey
Sample	19 Participants	305 Participants	305 Participants LPA
Principal Data Analysis Strategies	Inductive and deductive thematic analysis	EFA CFA	ANOVA R3STEP DCON
Utilised Approach	Inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Churchill's scale development procedure (1979)	Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) (Gabriel et al., 2015)
Software Used	NVivo version 11	SPSS version 23 and AMOS version 23	Mplus version 7

*Note.* RQ = Research Questions; EFA = Exploratory Factor analysis; CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis; LPA = Latent Profile Analysis; ANOVA = Analysis of Variance' R3STEP = A command in Mplus software used to evaluate whether increasing the predictors would increase the likelihood of individuals to be in one profile over the other; DCON = A command in Mplus software used to examine the statistical differences between the profiles across set of distal outcome variables using mean scores and Chi square test.

## 1.6 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE

The topic of repatriation adjustment continues to be of great interest to both researchers and practitioners as there is an increasingly growing number of professionals who are willing to relocate worldwide, and then return to their home country (Baruch et al., 2016). It is estimated that there are over 4.8 million people working in foreign countries (OECD, 2016). Despite the growth in international assignments and ongoing research and practitioner interest in repatriation adjustment (i.e., Knocke & Schuster, 2017), repatriation adjustment research is still primarily

based on Black et al.'s (1991) conceptualisation and measure, which are subject to ongoing conceptual and operational criticisms (i.e., Hippler et al., 2014). The ultimate aim of this thesis is to reconsider how repatriation adjustment is conceptualised and measured so that findings from future empirical repatriation adjustment studies can go beyond the constraints of the current paradigm.

An increasing number of scholars (i.e., Hyder & Lövblad, 2007; Kraimer, et al., 2016; Sussman, 2002) have called for an examination of repatriation adjustment in cultural contexts other than western countries. The current research addressed this call by investigating the repatriation adjustment experience of Saudi repatriates upon completing international assignments in novel cultural contexts. The Saudi nation state and public organisations started sending their employees abroad in 1947, with 24 Saudi employees living and working abroad in countries that shared similar cultural values, such as Egypt (Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, 2013). Today, there are over 140,000 Saudis overseas, in countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and the US, (Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, 2013). The degree of cultural novelty between Saudi Arabia and the host countries (i.e., Australia, Canada, the UK and the US) is high. To better illustrate this high degree of novelty, Figure 1.1 highlights the differences between the home and host countries (Hofstede, 2015).



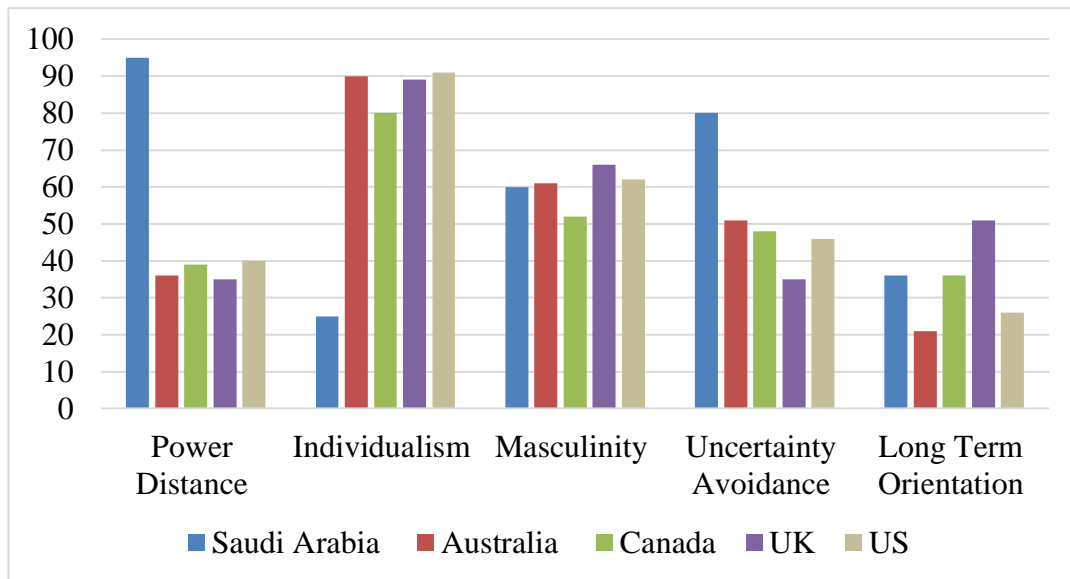


Figure 1.1 Differences between home and host cultures (Hofstede, 2015).

As a result, in this context, the cross-cultural assignees left their culture and entered into a new novel cultural context; that is, ‘the host culture’. There, the assignees might spend a significant period of time living and working before returning to their home culture (Adler, 1981; Onwumehili, Nwosu, Jackson, & James-Hughes, 2003). During their international assignments and due to the interactions with the members of the host culture, their own core cultural values might change and thus, they need to readjust upon repatriation.

## 1.7 THESIS OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE

This thesis has seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 reviews and synthesises the conceptual and empirical studies on the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment, its antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas and time since returning home) and outcome variables (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing). The chapter then presents the

major identified gaps that exist in the body of literature on repatriation adjustment, which in turn justifies the development of the five research questions.

Chapter 3 describes the design and methodology used in this study to address the research questions. Specifically, the mixed-method research design using a sequential exploratory strategy (Creswell, 2013) is described and justified, as are the parameters for the research design, participation, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 reports the findings from Study 1 – the scale development – which involved qualitative semi-structured interviews. The chapter first describes the utilised method in terms of participants, data collection and analytical strategies. The chapter then reports the findings of Study 1, alongside the development of the repatriation adjustment scale.

Chapter 5 reports the results from Study 2 – the scale validation – which involved a quantitative online survey. The chapter begins with a discussion of the methodology of Study 2, which includes a description of the sample characteristics followed by a discussion of the data collection and preparation procedures. The chapter then briefly outlines the scaling of the new measure before discussing the utilised analytical procedures. Finally, the chapter reports the results of the repatriation adjustment scale validation.

Chapter 6 reports the results from Study 3 – the repatriation adjustment profiles – which involved a quantitative online survey. The chapter commences with a discussion of the methodology of Study 3. The first section begins by discussing the characteristics of the utilised sample, the data collection and preparation procedures, followed by the analytical strategies. Second, the chapter presents the results of the LPA. This section also reports the results of the subsequent analyses, such as the

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 provides a general discussion of the findings, including a presentation of the key conclusions drawn from the data, describing the theoretical, practical and methodological contributions of the research, and then concludes this research with the limitations and further research directions.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of this research project. It presented the theoretical foundation underlying the construct of repatriation adjustment. The chapter then outlined the purpose of this research and stated the research questions. This was followed by highlighting the design and methodology used to address the research questions. This chapter also outlined the significance of the current research and its context. The chapter concluded with an overall structure of the thesis.

The next chapter reviews and synthesises the conceptual and empirical studies on the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment, its antecedents – that is, cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas and time since returning home – as well as the outcome variables – the intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing.



# Chapter 2: Literature Review

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## 2.1 PREAMBLE

The previous chapter introduced the thesis and outlined the background to this research project. It also presented the significance of the topic for elaborating repatriation adjustment theory, repatriates and their employing organisations.

The purpose of the current chapter is to: review and synthesise the conceptual, operational and empirical studies on the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment, its antecedents and outcome variables; present the current knowledge gaps that exist in the body literature on repatriation adjustment; and justify the development of the research questions.

Chapter 2 is organised as follows. The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical development and foundations underlying the construct of repatriation adjustment. The chapter then discusses the conceptual and operational views of repatriation adjustment. This is followed by a discussion on the antecedents (i.e., the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) and the outcome variables (i.e., intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) associated with repatriation adjustment. The chapter then reviews research on the distinction between variable and person-centric approaches in organisational behaviour research and argues that the application of a person-centred approach to repatriation adjustment would extend and complement the existing variable centric research. Finally, the chapter highlights the major gaps in the current literature and presents the research questions.

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

Repatriation adjustment refers to the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon the completion of their international assignments. It is the final stage of a three-stage process that is preceded by the selection and preparation stage and the actual assignment stage (Adler, 2002; Bonache et al., 2001; Harzing & Pinnington, 2010). While contemporary international human resource literature has addressed the expatriation process (i.e., Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Gill, 2010; Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013; Thompson & Christofi, 2006; Oberg, 1960), the focus of this body of research is on expatriation adjustment and less attention has been given to the aspect of repatriation and to the individuals who, after completing their assignment, return home (Baruch et al., 2016; Cox et al., 2013; Harzing & Pinnington, 2010; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Kraimer et al., 2016; Lee & Liu, 2007; Tahir & Azhar, 2013; Van Gorp, Boroş, Bracke, & Stevens, 2017).

The repatriation stage is a critical stage in the expatriation process for organisations and individuals (Sánchez et al., 2008), due to (a) the high costs of the expatriation process on organisations (Stahl, Chua, Caligiuri, Cerdin, & Taniguchi, 2009) and the desire to obtain a return on investment from the professional development of expatriates (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012); (b) the possibility that repatriation adjustment may be more challenging than expatriation, as suggested by empirical research (Adler, 2002; Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Forster, 2000; Harvey, 1989; Martin, 1984; Suutari & Brewster, 2003); and (c) repatriation is the linkage point between overseas development and the current and future career path (Herman & Tetrick, 2009); and (d) the fact that repatriation adjustment is associated with significant personal and professional consequences, such as subjective wellbeing

(Andreason & Kinneer, 2005; Black et al., 1991; Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012), the intention to leave the organisation upon repatriation (Black et al., 1992; Kraimer et al., 2009), organisational commitment (Gregersen, 1992; Schudey, Jensen & Sachs, 2012), the utilisation of international skills (Linehan & Scullion, 2002; Tahir & Azhar, 2013) and job satisfaction (Briody & Baba, 1991; Sánchez et al., 2008).

### **2.3 REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT – THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of expatriation adjustment first appeared in the literature as “coping with the stress of life changes which people experience when they enter a new culture” (Cox, 2004, p. 203). It was captured by the term ‘culture shock’, whereby “the individual integrates into the social interaction of the cultural system” (Martin, 1984, p. 116; DuBois, 1951 as cited in Cox, 2004).

In 1955, Lysgaard introduced the U-shaped theory to describe culture shock (Martin & Harrell, 2004). Lysgaard described adjustment “as a series of discrete phases” falling into three phases: honeymoon (excitement), cultural shock (frustration), and adjustment (acceptance or understanding) (Lysgaard, 1955 as cited in Martin, 1984, p. 118).

Later, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) expanded the U-shaped theory, adopting a W-curve in an attempt to cover the entire international experience and include the process of re-entry (Martin, 1984). This extended theory referred to ‘reverse culture shock’ or ‘re-entry shock’ (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Martin, 1986).

Although the curve theories have made significant contributions to the understanding of adjustment they were critiqued on several grounds. Black and Mendenhall (1991) and others (e.g., Ward et al., 1998) extensively reviewed the prior

empirical studies on cultural adjustment theories and found that the pre-existing curve theories are subject to several major limitations, such as a lack of empirical support, the absence of methodological fit between the nature of the phenomenon and utilised statistical techniques, and the inconsistent utilisation of the samples. Thus, Black and Mendenhall (1991) proposed a new theory, known as ‘cultural adjustment theory’ or ‘expatriation adjustment’ in cross-cultural contexts. The theory is considered to be the most influential and frequently used contemporary theory of cultural adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Knocke & Schuster, 2017).

#### **2.4 THE REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT THEORY**

Black et al. (1992) used the ‘cultural adjustment theory’, which was originally developed to explain adjustment that occurs in the host country (‘expatriation adjustment’), to explain the adjustment that takes a place after individuals return to their home country, labelling it ‘repatriation adjustment’.

Black et al. (1992) defined repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture once they have returned after an international assignment (Black, 1994; Black et al., 1992). Black and his colleagues (1992) employed control and uncertainty reduction theories to develop their theory of repatriation adjustment. They argue that “factors that reduce uncertainty would facilitate adjustment, while those factors that increase uncertainty would inhibit adjustment” (Black et al., 1992, p. 743) (see Figure 2.1).

Their conceptualisation underlies the assumption that when individuals move to their home environment a significant level of uncertainty is created, for example, individuals might be uncertain of “what is acceptable or unacceptable or appropriate and inappropriate” in a given context as both they and their home culture may have



changed (Black, 1994, p. 1490). Individuals have a need to reduce this uncertainty, which consequently drives them to establish two levels of control: predictive and behaviour control (Black et al., 1992).

Predictive control refers to an individual's ability to make sense or predict and understand how he/she are expected to behave, and the punishments and rewards associated with certain behaviours (Black et al., 1992). On the other hand, behaviour control refers to the individual's ability to establish control over his/her behaviours in a new environment (Black et al., 1992). As a result, the factors that contribute to reducing uncertainty would facilitate repatriation adjustment, whereas the factors that increase uncertainty would hinder repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994) (see Figure 2.1).

Black et al. (1992) indicate that the repatriation adjustment process consists of two phases, namely: anticipatory adjustment (adjustment prior to returning home) and in-country adjustment (readjustment after arriving home) (see Figure 2.1). For each phase the authors conceptualised repatriation adjustment as a multifaceted construct consisting of "three facets of psychological adjustment": work, interaction and general readjustments (Black et al., 1994, p. 1498). Work readjustment refers to the repatriate's psychological comfort with their new job tasks upon returning home (Black et al., 1992). Interaction readjustment refers to the comfort and capability of communicating with home-country nationals (Black et al., 1992). General adjustment refers to comfort with the general non-work environment, such as living conditions (Black et al., 1992).

In addition, for each phase, there are four main categories of antecedents that are hypothesised to influence psychological readjustment: individual variables, work-related variables, organisational variables and non-work variables (Black et al.,

1992). Individual variables refer to the repatriate's "attitudes, values, needs or characteristics" (MacDonald & Arthur 2005, p.146). Vidal, Valle and Aragón (2007) also stress the influence of the repatriate's personality and issues regarding their decision-making about potentially leaving the repatriating company upon their return. The work-related variables are referred to as the repatriate's adjustment to the workplace, which includes factors such as work tasks and relationships with their supervisor and co-workers (Black & Gregersen, 1999). The organisational variables refer to the ways in which the organisation supports the individual throughout the entire expatriation/repatriation cycle. This category includes all policies related to organisational practices to support international assignment management (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2002; Reiche, 2007, 2009). The non-work variables refer to the extra-organisational environment (i.e., social, cultural, economic and employment environment) in the home country (Black et al., 1992; Stahl et al., 2009) (see Figure 2.1).

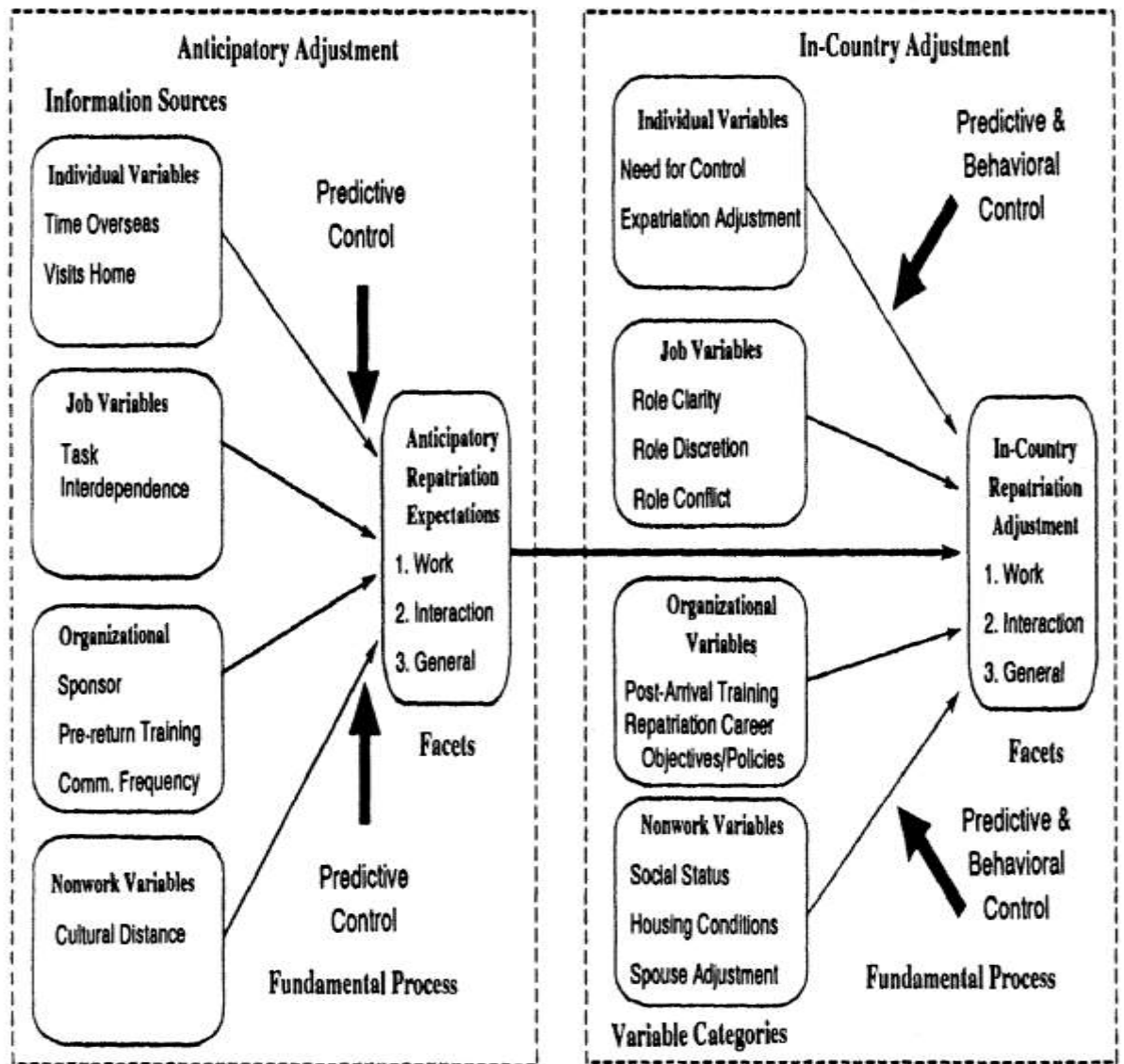


Figure 2.1 Repatriation Adjustment Framework (Black et al., 1992).

Since the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) was introduced, it has received much attention from scholars (Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Van Gorp et al., 2017). For instance, Herman and Tetrick (2009) examined the repatriation adjustment experience of 282 repatriates who returned home to either Australia, Canada or the US upon completing international assignments in Japan. The study utilised repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) and found a positive and significant relationships amongst the three facets of psychological readjustment (work, interaction and general). For instance, work

readjustment was positively related to general readjustment ( $\beta = .62, p < .001$ ) and interaction readjustments ( $\beta = .57, p < .001$ ). Interaction readjustment was also found to be positively related to the general adjustment ( $\beta = .58, p < .001$ ).

In another study, Gregersen (1992) investigated the relationship between repatriation adjustment and commitment of 174 US repatriates who returned from 30 unspecified countries. The study used the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) and found that the US repatriates had multiple commitments to the host and home workplaces. In a subsequent study, Gregersen and Black (1996) conducted a study among 173 Japanese repatriates, who were temporarily expatriated to 37 unspecified countries, utilising Black's theory. One of their aims was to test whether the main finding of Gregersen's (1992) study, which found that US repatriates had multiple commitments to the host and home workplaces, would be replicated for Japanese repatriates. The study did not find evidence of multiple commitments to the host and home workplaces for the Japanese repatriates. However, the study operationalised repatriation adjustment as a single composite score of the three sub-facets (work, interaction and general).

Black (1994) examined the repatriation experience of 173 Japanese repatriates and found positive and significant correlations between the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general). Work readjustment was positively related to the interaction and general readjustment facets ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ), ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ) respectively. Interaction readjustment was also positively related to general readjustment ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ).

In addition, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) examined the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment among 104 Finnish repatriates. Their study also

found positive and significant correlations between the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general).

Yan (2015) investigated the impact of perceived organisational support and proactive personality on re-entry adjustment for 229 Chinese repatriates. The study found a positive and significant relationships between the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general). For example, general readjustment was positively correlated with interaction readjustment ( $r = .60, p < .01$ ) and the work readjustments ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ). Interaction readjustment was also found to be positively related to work readjustment ( $r = .54, p < .01$ ).

Furuya, Stevens, Oddou, Bird and Mendenhall (2007) examined the relationship between repatriation adjustment and Human Resource (HR) policies that impact the transfer of global competencies of 305 Japanese repatriates. The study found a positive and significant relationship between the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general). For example, interaction readjustment was positively correlated with work readjustment ( $r = .52, p < .05$ ) and general readjustment ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ). General readjustment was also found to be positively related to work readjustment ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ). In another study, Furuya et al, (2009) examined factors that facilitate global management competency development during expatriation and the subsequent application of those competencies upon repatriation of 305 Japanese repatriates. The study found a positive relationship between organisational support and repatriation adjustment. The study combined the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment into one overall repatriation adjustment score.

Black and Gregersen (1991) examined the relationships between repatriation adjustment and several antecedent variables of 125 US repatriates and their spouses.

The study found a positive and significant relationships between the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general). For example, work readjustment was positively correlated with interaction readjustment ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ) and general readjustments ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ). Interaction readjustment was also found to be positively related to general readjustment ( $r = .65, p < .001$ ).

Suutari and Valimaa (2002) examined the repatriation adjustment experience of 79 Finnish repatriates. Their study found that the Finnish repatriates had experienced the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general). However, their results showed that the work readjustment sub-dimension was split into two different factors (organisation and job readjustments).

Stevens, Oddou, Furuya, Bird, and Mendenhall (2006) conducted a study involving 305 Japanese repatriates to test factors that affect repatriate job satisfaction. The study found a positive and significant relationships between repatriates' job satisfaction and the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general), which they combined into an overall readjustment score ( $r = .67, p < .01$ ).

More recently Van Heuveln (2017) applied the repatriation adjustment model to 84 repatriates who returned to 19 countries upon completing their international assignment. One of their major findings was that role clarity during repatriation significantly predicts work readjustment. Table 2.1 summaries the key conclusions of the previous studies on repatriation adjustment.

Table 2.1

*Summary of Main Findings From Previous Studies*

Study	Method		RAF			
	Sample	Primary analytical strategies	RAF	Work	Interaction	General
Herman and Tetrick (2009)	282 multinational repatriates	Regression/Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Black (1994)	173 Japanese repatriates	Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Gregerse n and Stroh (1997)	104 Finnish repatriates	Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Yan (2015)	229 Chinese repatriates	Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Furuya et al. (2007)	305 Japanese repatriates	Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Black and Gregerse n (1991)	125 US repatriates	Correlation	Work		+*	+*
			Interaction	+*		+*
			General	+*	+*	
Gregerse n (1992)	174 US repatriates	Regression/Correlation	The study operationalised repatriation adjustment as a single composite score of the three sub-facets (work, interaction and general).			

Furuya et al. (2009)	305 Japanese repatriates	Structural equation modelling	The study combined the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment into one overall repatriation adjustment score.
Suutari and Valimaa (2002)	79 Finnish repatriates	Regression/Correlation	The results showed that the work readjustment sub-dimension was split into two different factors (organisation and job readjustments).
Stevens et al. (2006)	305 Japanese repatriates	Regression/Correlation	The study combined the three psychological facets of repatriation adjustment into one overall repatriation adjustment score.

*Note*, RAF = repatriation adjustment facts; (-) = negative relationship; (+) = positive relationship; (\*) = significant relationship.

The above review provides empirical evidence and support for the three psychological facets (work, interaction and general) of Black et al.'s (1992) repatriation adjustment theory and demonstrates how it became the dominant norm for conceptualising and measuring repatriation adjustment. However, despite extensive application of the model there are concerns regarding the adequacy of the model's conceptualisation, specifically whether it covers the content domain of repatriation adjustment adequately (Haslberger et al., 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010). This is especially concerning as Haslberger et al. (2014) note that the field of repatriation adjustment has not witnessed "much theoretical development since Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall (1992) published their model 20 years ago" (p. 161). In the next section, I will argue that the current dominant conceptualisation is incomplete because (a) despite a foundation of "classic" theories the content domain of repatriation adjustment has not been adequately mapped (Haslberger et al., 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010), especially for repatriation from novel cultures; (b) the most-widely used measure (i.e., Black et al., 1991) of repatriation adjustment was developed by rewording an expatriation measure without additional investigation of whether this adequately covers the repatriation experience (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.,



2005; Hippler et al., 2014); and (c) the vast majority of studies on repatriation adjustment have largely drawn on US and western samples with limited theoretical development in other cultural contexts (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007).

## **2.5 TOWARD FACETS OF REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT**

The repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) has substantially contributed to the field of repatriation adjustment, and has been recognised as the most influential theory across cultural adjustment studies (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Van Gorp et al., 2017). However, the theory was conceptualised based on uncertainty reduction theory, in which factors that contribute to reducing the uncertainty levels would facilitate repatriation adjustment, whereas the factors that increase the level of uncertainty would inhibit repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994; Black et al., 1992). These assumptions raise the possibility of other factors that could influence the process of repatriation adjustment beyond the “three facets of psychological adjustment” – work, interaction and general readjustments (Black et al., 1994, p. 1498) – particularly when the degree between the home and host cultures is novel. The following sections discuss two factors, socio-culture adjustment and cultural novelty, which have been found to influence the process of repatriation adjustment but are not explicitly captured by Black et al.’s conceptualising of the construct.

### **2.5.1 Socio-cultural Factor**

One important factor that has been found to influence repatriation adjustment is socio-cultural adaptation. Socio-cultural adaptation was first introduced by Searle and Ward (1990). It refers to the “component-ability to ‘fit in’ and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture” (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p. 450). It is reflected in the capability to accomplish the tasks needed to interact with the home

culture, and includes the outcome of the changes in repatriates' behaviours and social skills as an attempt to meet the social and behavioural values of their home culture (Ward, 1996). Although Searle and Ward as well as other scholars (i.e., Ward & Kennedy, 1994) have investigated the concept of psychological readjustment they conceptualised psychological readjustment as the "feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction" which is crucial, but too narrow for the organisational context (Searle & Ward, 1990, p. 450).

A review of the previous repatriation adjustment literature revealed that international assignments are associated with social difficulties upon repatriation. For instance, Kimber (2012) investigated the cross-cultural re-entry of 102 US repatriates and suggested socio-cultural readjustment is an important aspect of re-entry adjustment along with the psychological aspects. Cox (2004) conducted a correlation study to investigate the relationship between and among the roles of communication, technology, and cultural identity in repatriation adjustment among 101 US repatriates. One of their major findings was that repatriates with an integrated cultural identity experienced the lowest levels of depression and social readjustment difficulties, while repatriates with a disintegrated cultural identity experienced the highest levels of depression. Further, repatriates with a host-favoured cultural identity experienced the highest levels of social difficulty.

In another study, Van Gorp et al. (2017) examined the influence of emotional support on the psychological and socio-cultural readjustment of 121 Belgian repatriates. The study found a positive and significant relationship between their psychological and socio-cultural readjustment facets ( $r = .64, p < .001$ ). However, psychological readjustment was conceptualised as the affective wellbeing of repatriates. Furthermore, Gray and Savicki (2015) studied the connection between

the psychological (positive and negative affects) and socio-cultural readjustment of 81 US repatriates. The study found that their socio-cultural readjustment was significantly and negatively correlated with their positive psychological affect ( $r = -.42, p < .01$ ) and significantly and positively related to the negative psychological affect ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ). The study also found that 50% of their participants had experienced high socio-cultural difficulties.

These findings suggest that repatriates are confronted with socio-cultural difficulties upon re-entry to their home cultures. Thus, the socio-cultural adaptation factor should be considered to reduce the uncertainty level which will then contribute to achieving a better repatriation adjustment.

### **2.5.2 Cultural Novelty Factor**

Another important factor that influences repatriation adjustment is cultural novelty. Cultural novelty, which is also known as cultural distance, refers to the degree to which the host culture differs from the home culture in terms of standard of living, cultural values, political system, food, etc. (Black et al., 1992). It has been identified as a crucial concept in repatriation adjustment, as the exposure to more novel cultures creates more difficulties upon repatriation (Sussman, 2000).

Previous studies have provided insight into the influence of cultural novelty upon repatriation adjustment. For instance, Thompson and Christofi (2006) found that the perceived difference in the degree of freedom/restriction between the home and host countries creates cultural conflicts upon re-entry, particularly when repatriates attempt to balance their individual freedom with family commitments, work-related difficulties and societal pressures.

Gregersen (1992) states “that cultural “toughness” as outlined theoretically by Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) is a relevant issue when assessing cross-cultural

adjustment” (p.42). Cultural toughness refers to the discrepancy in lifestyle and living standards between the host and the home cultures (Mendenhall & Oddou (1985). Repatriates returning from international assignments in novel cultures, that is, host cultures which are very different from their home culture, are confronted with “a higher degree of conflicting behavioural patterns, values, and self-concepts, and [this] can negatively affect adjustment” (Herman & Tetrick, 2009, p. 71). Thus, the degree of difference between home and host cultures was associated with repatriation stress among 248 participants who “originated from and lived in a diverse range of cultures” (Altweck & Marshall (2015, p. 7).

Furthermore, the results from previous studies (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1999, Sánchez et al., 2008) suggest that repatriation readjustment, which was originally labelled as expatriation adjustment, varies between nations. Black et al. (1992b) found that the level of reverse culture shock experienced differed significantly between American Finnish Japanese repatriates with 60%, 71%, and 80% of repatriates respectively experiencing reverse culture shock. .

In addition, Lee and Liu (2007) indicate that within collectivist cultures, such as the Taiwan, the degree of reverse cultural shock may be greater, as individuals within the culture tend to stay in small groups over a long period of time. Thus, as a result of expatriation, they may be isolated from their groups and, when they returned home, they may experience readjustment challenges as they need to re-establish the previous relationships or shifts in their groups.

Another example emerges from Sánchez et al.’s (2008) study, who found that when uncertainty arises as a result of poor readjustment practices, repatriates from Japanese and Spanish cultures were uncomfortable with the circumstances, whereas US and Finnish repatriates more readily accepted the uncertainty. As the authors

state, work-related variables such as the role of work clarity are “closely associated with Hofstede’s cultural dimension ‘uncertainty avoidance’” (Sánchez et al., 2008, p. 1692). Thus, there may not only be cultural differences on uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1984), but also the factors that influence work adjustment.

However, the vast majority of studies that have investigated repatriation adjustment have focused on the expatriation–repatriation between relatively similar cultural contexts, such as Suutari and Valimaa’s (2002) study which drew data from Finnish repatriates, where 69% had returned from Europe. In another example, Kimber (2012) utilised a sample of 102 US repatriates where most of them had spent their international assignment in Europe, including the UK which has a similar culture to that of the US. In addition, Sánchez et al. (2008) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and repatriation adjustment of 124 repatriates where most of them were sent to Western Europe. In another study, Cox (2004) used 101 US participants who had returned from 44 unspecified host countries. Table 2.1 provides some examples of previous studies that have been conducted across relatively similar cultural contexts.

Table 2.2

*Example of Previous Studies*

Study	Participants	Host Country	Home Country	Method
Kimber (2012)	102	Europe, including the UK	US	Survey
Cox (2004)	101	44 unspecified countries	US	Survey
Suutari and Valimaa (2002)	79	69% of them in Europe	Finland	Survey
Black (1994)	173	37 unspecified countries	Japan	Survey
Sánchez et al. (2008)	124	Most of them in Europe	Spanish	Survey
Adler (1981)	200	Mixed	Canada	Interview

Study	Participants	Host Country	Home Country	Method
Furuya et al. (2007)	305	Mixed	Japan	and survey Survey
Furuya et al. (2009)	305	Mixed	Japan	Survey
Paik et al. (2002)	12	Mixed	Mixed	Case study
Lazarova and Cerdin (2007)	133	Mixed	Mixed	Survey

On the other hand, limited attention has been given to expatriation–repatriation between more novel cultures, such as the Saudi and Australian cultural contexts. Thus, as the vast majority of studies on repatriation adjustment have largely drawn on US samples or involved repatriates retuning from multiple host countries. As a result, scholars (e.g., Hyder and Lövblad, 2007) have called for researchers to explore the topic in other cultural contexts.

Based on the above review, cultural novelty factor affects repatriation adjustment. Thus, it can be argued that repatriates returning from novel cultures would experience more readjustment difficulties due to the high degree of novelty between the two cultures, which implies leaving the country and workplace with heritage core values and returning with new, dominant ones (Guan & Dodder, 2000). Therefore, there is a critical need to explore repatriation adjustment within novel cultural contexts and across different and contrasting cultures.

Having argued that there are questions about how adequately cultural adjustment theory conceptualises repatriation adjustment especially for repatriation from novel cultures, in the next section I review concerns about how repatriation adjustment has been operationalised and measured.

## **2.6 REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT - OPERATIONAL REVIEW**

The review of repatriation adjustment literature revealed that the repatriation adjustment construct has been largely operationalised utilising the Repatriation Adjustment Scale (RAS) developed by Black et al. (1992). They define repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture (Black et al., 1992). The RAS psychological facets: interaction, work and general readjustment. The scale comprises 13 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not adjusted and 7 = completely adjusted) (Black et al., 1992). Among these 13 items, seven items measure general readjustment, three items measure interaction readjustment and three items measure work readjustment (Black et al., 1992). The work readjustment domain is operationalised in terms of adjustment to specific job responsibilities, adjustment to performance standards/expectations and adjustment to supervisory responsibilities. The key components of the interaction readjustment include: interacting with fellow nationals in general, interacting with friends and family outside of work and speaking with fellow nationals. The general readjustment domain covers a wide range of concepts, such as: healthcare facilities; entertainment/recreation opportunities; the cost of living, shopping and food; housing conditions; and living conditions in general.

This scale has been used in various studies and has been proven reliable, with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .82 (Furuya et al., 2009; Furuya et al., 2007) to .85 (Suutari & Valimaa, 2002).

### **2.6.1 Critique of Existing Measures of Repatriation Adjustment**

The most influential measure of repatriation adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005), which was originally developed by Black et al. (1991) has been subject to

ongoing conceptual and operational criticism (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hippler et al., 2014; Hunt, Schneider, & Comer, 2004). There are three major critiques.

The first major critique is that conceptually the repatriation adjustment construct has been conceptualised from “too narrow a theoretical base” (Hippler et al., 2014, p. 2). Although Black et al. (1992) attempted to operationalise repatriation adjustment as a multifaceted construct comprising work, interaction, and general adjustments, these three facets are still “three facets of psychological adjustment” (Black et al., 1994, p. 1498). Thus, this view of repatriation adjustment by Black et al. (1992), remains as a unidimensional view of cultural adjustment as it focused only on the three domains of psychological adjustment and does not address the other facets such as the socio-cultural factor.

In addition, as indicated in Section 2.5, repatriation adjustment theories underline the assumption of uncertainty reduction (Black, 1994). This means that the factors that help reduce uncertainty facilitate repatriation adjustment, and the factors that increase uncertainty hinder repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994). However, the unidirectional measure of repatriation adjustment (i.e., the focus on only psychological adjustment) raises the possibility that the measure does not capture other important factors such as socio-cultural factors

The second major critique regards the development process of the original expatriation adjustment scale (Black et al., 1991) which Hippler et al. (2014, p2.) criticised “for a development history that does not satisfy any of the criteria commonly associated with scale development”. The RAS (Black et al. 1992) was first designed to measure expatriation adjustment (adjustment to the host culture) (Black & Stephens, 1989), and was then reworded to be made appropriate for the



repatriation context (Black & Gregeres, 1991). The expatriation adjustment items were reworded for repatriation without additional investigation of whether the repatriation domain adequately covers the repatriation experience. Studies by Adler (2002) and others (i.e., Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1989; Martin, 1984; Forster, 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003) provide evidence that adjustment to the home culture is more challenging than adjustment to the host culture. Thus, it is inadequate to use the same scale to measure a more challenging construct, as expatriation adjustment might not sufficiently explain the repatriation experience (Sussman, 2001).

It is important to note that even scholars who argue for the similarity between expatriation and repatriation adjustments (i.e., Black et al., 1992), and have utilised the same scale to measure both constructs, acknowledge the differences between the two adjustments. For instance, Black and his colleagues (1992) state that “returning home is a difference in kind, not in degree, compared to being sent overseas” (p. 741). Sussman (2000) indicates that repatriation adjustment involves “different cognitive processes [that] appear to make repatriation psychologically distinct from behavioural, cognitive, and socio-cultural adaptation, which individuals undergo during cultural adaptation to another country” (p. 360).

The third critique is that previous scales of repatriation adjustment were initially developed for a specific cultural context. For example, Black et al. (1992) indicate that the RAS was designed “for understanding and guiding research concerning repatriated North American managers” (p. 741). Thus, the direct application of this scale may not be valid in other cultural contexts, as culture cannot be understood as a unitary concept (Hofstede, 1984).

The above critiques raise concerns about current conceptualisations and measures of repatriation adjustment. There is a need to develop a content valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures. In order to improve the current understanding of repatriation adjustment, there is a clear need for qualitative exploratory studies that unpack and explore the repatriation adjustment phenomenon as experienced by repatriates themselves.

**RQ1:** *How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ2:** *What are the key dimensions of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures?*

In the next section, I review antecedents and outcomes of repatriation adjustment. I argue that the person-centred approach (Gabriel et al., 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016) has the potential to extend repatriation adjustment research by identifying how distinct repatriation adjustment profiles are associated with the antecedent and outcome. A person-centred approach has the capacity to explore the existence of distinct subgroups of repatriation adjustment. Furthermore, the identification of subgroups who share the same levels of the facets of repatriation adjustment would provide new insights into how the obtained profile memberships relate to external set of antecedent and outcome variables. With this in mind, Section 2.7 overviews the literature on the variables related to repatriation adjustment.

## **2.7 VARIABLES RELATED TO REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT**

In order to gain a better understanding of the repatriation adjustment process it is important to examine the critical variables that influence the construct (Martin, 1984). The review of previous literature on repatriation adjustment found that a substantial number of studies have investigated variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) associated with repatriation adjustment and explained their relationship with the construct (Szkudlarek, 2010). Thus, the following sections review the literature on the antecedents, the personal and organisational outcome variables of repatriation adjustment to gain a better understanding of the main factors associated with the construct. It is important to note that the following reviews are not intended to provide an exhaustive account of all variables related to repatriation adjustment but rather to focus more on variables that have received less attention than others based on the most recent available reviews (e.g., Chiang, van Esch, Birtch, & Shaffer, 2017; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Schudey et al., 2012).

### **2.7.1 Antecedents of Repatriation Adjustment**

The extant literature on repatriation adjustment has examined the relationship between repatriation adjustment and its antecedents. For example, Black et al. (1992) suggest that there are four main categories of antecedent predictors that influence psychological readjustment: individual variables, work-related variables, organisational variables, and non-work variables (see Section 2.4). However, among these categories, there are variables that have received less attention than others (Chiang et al., 2017; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Schudey et al., 2012). More investigations could include cultural identity identification (home or host), length of international assignments, and time since repatriation. The following sections explain the relationship between the construct and each of these antecedents and highlights

the main knowledge, contextual and practical gaps that exist within the current repatriation adjustment field.

### **2.7.1.1 Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity refers to “the degree to which an individual identifies with the home country and the host country” (Sussman, 2002, p. 392). It is aligned with “who an individual perceives him/herself to be and the more specific cultural influences his/her life” (Tambyah & Chng, 2006, p. 464).

Scholars have found that individuals who have been expatriated for a period of time, ranging between six months to five years (Fumham, 1988; Maybarduk, 2008), experience cultural identity changes as an outcome of the interaction between the heritage and dominant cultures (Altweck & Marshall, 2015; Kim, 1988; Martin & Harrell, 2004; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013), as the interaction between the home and the host cultures provides a rich platform for cultural identity formation (Kohonen, 2005; Ting-Toomey & Gudykunst, 2005). Therefore, individuals develop and acquire their cultural identities through interactions with other members of the host culture (Ting-Toomey & Gudykunst, 2005). However, the shift in cultural identity occurs gradually; indeed, in most circumstances, repatriates do not realise the shift until they return to, and interact again with members of, their home culture (Sussman, 2010). These identity shifts do not necessarily mean the replacement of one with another, but rather the creation of a new identity which did not exist before exposure to the host culture (Kim, 2001).

Recognising the importance of an individual’s identity during re-entry to the home culture, several scholars have sought to develop theories that explain the concept of cultural identity. For instance, Berry (1980) classified four acculturation strategies resulting from culture contact: integration strategy (individuals identified

with both the host and the home cultures), assimilation strategy (individuals identified with the host culture), separation strategy (individuals identified with the home culture), and marginalisation strategy (individuals identified with neither culture). Ward and Kennedy (1994) adapted these four acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation) to explain and characterise cultural identity types during cross-cultural transition.

Further, Sussman (2002) developed a model of cultural identity that shows four types of cultural identities that repatriates undergo as a result of their temporary expatriation: affirmative (strong comfort with the home culture), subtractive (weak comfort with the home culture), additive (strong comfort with the host culture) and global (maintaining a degree of comfort with both cultures).

In addition, Cox (2004) adapted Berry's (1980) and Ward and Kennedy's (1994) cultural identity models to improve their application to repatriation research. Consequently, Cox (2004) labelled the four cultural identity types as: home-favoured (identification with the home culture), host-favoured (identification with the host culture), integrated (identification with both the home and the host cultures) and disintegrated (identification with neither culture).

Sussman (2002) investigated the relationship between re-entry stress and cultural identity among 113 American teachers who had expatriated to Japan and returned to the US. Thus, the participants were expatriated within a less novel culture. The average months for participants since they returned home, to the US, was 30 months (ranging from 1–44 months). The repatriates were asked to complete five scales: cultural adaptation, cultural identity, transition change, repatriation preparedness, and repatriation distress.

The study revealed a number of findings. First, the readjustment to the home culture was not related to adjustment to the host culture; that is, strong host culture adjustment was not related to a positive re-entry to the home culture. Second, cultural identity strength was significantly related to repatriation distress. The participants who identified with a weak home culture identity experienced high levels of repatriation distress, while those who identified with a strong home culture identity experienced lower levels of repatriation stress. The findings indicated that identity type played an important role in repatriation adjustment; repatriation adjustment was predicted by a negative home culture identity, subtractive and additive identity changes, and an absence of a global identity.

Sussman (2002) points out some important limitations in regard to the procedures and design of the research. First, the study acknowledges the need for the development of cultural identity scales that classify repatriates into cultural identity types in order to generate more accurate and precise data. Second, the study emphasises the importance of testing the model with different populations and cultural settings.

Cox (2004) studied the roles of communication, technology, and cultural identity in repatriation adjustment among 101 US participants who had returned home from 44 countries. The study participants had expatriated in both less novel cultures, such as the British cultural setting, and novel cultures, such as the Taiwanese cultural setting. The author employed the acculturation index (AI) to the repatriation context. The study found four cultural identity types in repatriates' re-entry: home-favoured, host-favoured, integrated, and disintegrated. Cox (2004) hypothesised that the home-favoured and integrated identity types would be associated with better psychological health and functional fitness, while the host-

favoured and disintegrated identity types would be associated with higher levels of depression and social difficulty.

The findings from the study supported the hypotheses. The repatriates with an integrated cultural identity experienced the lowest levels of depression and social adjustment difficulties. However, disintegrated cultural identity repatriates experienced the highest levels of depression. Further, the repatriates with a host-favoured cultural identity experienced the highest levels of social difficulty.

These findings suggest that individuals with an integrated cultural identity would have a smooth socio-cultural readjustment, whereas those with a disintegrated cultural identity would have fewer psychological readjustment difficulties. These findings differ from those of Sussman (2002), who found no significant relationship between host and home adjustments. This variation might be explained by the different sampling strategies utilised in both studies. Sussman's data were drawn from one ethnic group returning from one host culture, whereas Cox's (2004) data represented one ethnic group returning from 44 host cultures. Furthermore, this variation can be explained in terms of the time since the repatriates returned to their home culture, since in Sussman's study the average time since the return to the home culture was 30 months (range: 1-44 months), whereas in Cox's study the average was 6 months (range: 3 to 9 months).

### **2.7.1.2 Duration of International Assignment**

Some previous studies have investigated the relationship between the length of international assignment and repatriation adjustment; however, the results of these studies were inconclusive (Szkudlarek, 2010). For instance, Black and Gregersen (1991) utilised a correlation cross-sectional approach to study the three psychological repatriation adjustment factors (work, interaction and general) of US repatriates

(125) and their spouses (76) who had spent less than a year in 26 unspecified countries. The study found the time overseas variable only related to interaction and general readjustments.

Further, Suutari and Valimaa (2002) examined the repatriation adjustment experience of 79 Finnish repatriates who had spent an average of 3.6 years as expatriates. Their study found an association between the length of international assignment and general readjustment. However, most of the repatriates (69%) expatriated to Europe, which shares relatively similar cultural values to the Finnish cultural context and, thus, the length of international assignment was not related to work or interaction adjustment.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Hammer, Hart and Rogan (1998) examined the relationship between a number of variables, including the length of international assignment, and the repatriation adjustment of 44 returning US managers and 33 spouses who had been expatriated to Europe and/or Asia for an average of 3 years. The study found no relationship between the length of international assignment and repatriation adjustment.

Although the repatriates were temporarily expatriated to Europe and/or Asia, which might be different cultural contexts to the US, the host country was not included in the analysis, due to the relatively small sample size.

### **2.7.1.3 Time Since Repatriation**

The time since returning to a home culture has been found to be related to repatriation adjustment. For instance, Black and Gregersen's (1991) study, which used a correlation cross-sectional approach to examine repatriation adjustment among US repatriates who had returned to the US within 18 months, found that time



since returning home was correlated with repatriates' work and general readjustments.

In another correlation study (Black, 1994), time since returning home was also found to be related to the general readjustment of 173 Japanese repatriates who, on average, had returned home within 12 months. However, the Japanese repatriates were sent overseas across 37 countries and the study only reported the average time since repatriates returned home.

A further study examined time since returning home among 104 Finnish repatriates who had been expatriated across 31 countries and had returned home within an average of 15 months (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997). The study found the time since re-entry to the home culture was only related to work and general readjustments.

This discussion on the findings of previous studies suggests that, while there is a need to investigate the relationship between time since repatriation and repatriation adjustment across repatriates returning from novel cultures, the implication of other methodological approaches, such as the person-centred approach, could provide an alternative fuller explanation of the impact of the time since repatriation on repatriation adjustment.

### **2.7.2 Outcomes of Repatriation Adjustment**

The review of the repatriation adjustment literature revealed that outcomes of repatriation adjustment are classified into professional (i.e., organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and intention to leave) (Chiang et al., 2017; Chiang et al., 2015; Schudey et al., 2012) and individual (i.e., subjective wellbeing). The following sections reviews outcomes under each of these headings

and highlights the main knowledge, contextual and practical gaps that exist within the current repatriation adjustment literature.

### **2.7.2.1 Professional Outcomes**

Repatriation adjustment is crucial for both individuals and their employing organisations (Sánchez et al., 2008) due to (a) the high costs of expatriation incurred by the organisation (Stahl et al., 2009) and the employer's desire to capitalise on their investment (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012); and (b) the fact that repatriation adjustment is the linkage point between overseas development and an individual's current career path (Herman & Tetrick, 2009). Repatriation adjustment has been found to predict important organisational outcomes. For instance, Schudey et al. (2012) conducted a 20-year meta-analysis on repatriation adjustment and found that repatriation adjustment predicts four main variables: organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and repatriates' retention.

#### **2.7.2.1.1 Organisational Commitment**

Organisational commitment refers to the individual's psychological attachment to his/her work organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) identify organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct that consists of three interrelated dimensions or facets: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective commitment refers to "an affective or emotional attachment to the organisation such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in, the organisation" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2). Continuance commitment is defined as "a tendency to 'engage in consistent lines of activity' (Becker, 1960, p. 33) based on the individual's recognition of the 'costs' (or

lost side bets) associated with discontinuing the activity" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 3). Normative commitment is the "totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way which meets organisational goals and interests", and suggests that individuals exhibit behaviours solely because "they believe it is the 'right' and moral thing to do" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 3).

Organisational commitment has been identified as a critical variable in repatriation adjustment (Chiang et al., 2015). This is mainly because the international assignments influence repatriates' commitment (Gregersen & Black, 1996), as repatriates are "psychologically 'out-of-sight and out-of-mind' during international assignments" (Gregersen, 1992, p. 29); thus, their commitment might significantly deteriorate upon repatriation (Gregersen, 1992; Gregersen & Black, 1996).

However, a limited number of empirical studies have investigated organisational commitment for repatriates upon the completion of their international assignments (Chiang et al., 2015). For instance, Gregersen (1992) investigated several antecedents of the multiple commitments during repatriation (host and home working unit) of 174 US repatriates who returned from 30 unspecified countries. The study operationalised organisational commitment in terms of the commitment to the host and home working unit (Gregersen, 1992). The study found that the US repatriates had multiple commitments to the host and home companies. Another major finding of the study was the positive relationship between repatriation adjustment and organisational commitment. This means that if repatriates are poorly readjusted, they will have low commitment.

A subsequent study was conducted among 173 Japanese repatriates who were temporarily expatriated to 37 unspecified countries (Gregersen & Black, 1996). Although the study operationalised organisational commitment in terms of the

commitment to the host and home working unit – similar to Gregersen’s (1992) study – it did not find evidence of multiple commitments to the host and home companies for the Japanese repatriates.

Although Gregersen and Black (1996) argue that the “Japanese repatriates were selected for this comparative study because they are significantly different on a key cultural dimension (collective versus individual orientation) from US repatriates examined in recent research (Gregersen, 1992)” (Gregersen & Black, 1996, p. 218), the host countries in both studies are not considered in their analysis. In other words, it is not clear whether the American or the Japanese repatriates were returned to their home countries from novel or similar cultural contexts.

Thus, there is a clear need to examine the organisational commitment of other repatriates beyond the US context (Chiang et al., 2015; Reiche, 2012).

#### **2.7.2.1.2 Skill Utilisation**

Skill utilisation refers to the degree to which a repatriate will be able to utilise their skills in their job after repatriation (Tahir & Azhar, 2013). Skill utilisation is “the extent to which the repatriates can utilise his/her acquired skills and knowledge in his/her new job after repatriation” (Suutari, & Välimaa, 2002, p. 622).

Previous literature shows that, during an international assignment, employees acquire a wide range of skills, such as “management skills and key personal assets” (Stevens et al., 2006 p. 832); unique global expertise and intercultural skills (Channa, 2016, p. 225) and, problem-solving skills (Hao, Wen & Welch, 2016). These acquired skills are considered as a key source of competitive advantage (Channa, 2016; Yamasaki, 2016).

However, utilisation of the gained international skills “is a growing concern for repatriates” (Pattie, White & Tansky, 2010, p. 363). For instance, Linehan and Scullion (2002) found the neglect of a repatriate’s skills by the home organisation to be a major challenge facing female repatriates. Another study, which was conducted among 174 US repatriates, found that only 39 repatriates had opportunities to use skills they had obtained during their international assignments (Stroh, Gregersen & Black, 2000).

In a more recent study, Tahir (2014) explored the repatriation adjustment experience of 10 Australian and New Zealander female managers who had returned from 10 unspecified countries. The study found that 70% of the repatriates were unable to use the skills gain from their international experience.

Thus, several scholars (Paik et al., 2002; Pattie et al., 2010; Yan, Zhu & Hall, 2002) stress the importance of organisations starting to plan for skill utilisation even prior to the repatriation of their personnel. As a result, there is a clear need to examine the skill utilisation variable across repatriates returning from a novel culture.

#### **2.7.2.1.3 Job Satisfaction**

In general job satisfaction refer to “the extent to which employees like their work” (Agho et al., 1992, p. 185). Job satisfaction is considered as a key outcome of repatriation adjustment (Schudey et al., 2012; Vidal et al., 2007). Previous studies on repatriates have established the relationship between repatriation adjustment and repatriates’ job satisfaction (Briody & Baba, 1991; Vidal et al., 2007).

For instance, Stevens et al. (2006) conducted a correlational study to investigate the impact of HR practices and repatriates’ self-adjustment on the job

satisfaction of 305 Japanese repatriates. One major findings from the study was a positive significant relationship between repatriation adjustment and the satisfaction of the Japanese repatriates. However, the study utilised a variable-centred approach, which holds the assumption that the relationship between job satisfaction and repatriation adjustment is linear. In addition, the study did not maintain a control of the host country in the analysis.

In another study, Lee and Liu (2007) investigated how effective repatriation adjustment, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are in predicting Taiwanese repatriates' intentions to leave their organisation. The study was conducted among 118 Taiwanese repatriates. One major finding was the significant positive effect of readjustment on satisfaction. However, similar to Stevens et al. (2006), the study utilised a variable-centred approach and did not maintain a control of the host country in the analysis.

Vidal et al. (2007) conducted a correlational study to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and repatriation adjustment of 124 expatriates, where most of them were sent to Western Europe. The study found a positive significant relationship between repatriation adjustment and the satisfaction of the Spanish repatriates with their job upon their return. Although the majority of the repatriates were sent to similar cultural contexts – Western Europe – there was no control of the host cultures in their analyses.

These findings reveal that the utilisation of the traditional variable-centred approach to investigate the relationships between job satisfaction and repatriation adjustment have contributed significantly to the current understanding of the relationship between repatriation adjustment and job satisfaction. Thus, there is a

need to replicate the results utilising different methodological approaches, such as the person-centred approach.

#### **2.7.2.1.4 Intention to Leave**

The intention to leave refers to the extent to which “a repatriate failing to reintegrate with the organisation and leaving the company for another opportunity or leaving the company altogether” (Newton, 2015, p. 18).

Retaining repatriates is considered as a significant challenge facing organisations (Channa, 2016). Prior studies have found that 42% of US repatriates aimed to quit their work upon re-entry to their home culture, while 72% did not have the ambition to work for the same organisation after a year (Black et al., 1992b).

One significant cause of the higher intention to leave rate is the inability to utilise international skills, which in turn creates more readjustment difficulties and, thus, increases repatriates’ intention to leave the organisation (James, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2009; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007).

Some previous studies support the relationship between intention to leave the organisation and skill utilisation. For instance, Lazarova and Cerdin (2002) investigated the impact of organisational support on turnover and other variables, such as career planning sessions, mentoring programs and visible signs that the company values international work experiences, and overall wellbeing for 58 repatriates from six countries who were temporarily expatriated to the US and Canada. The study found that repatriates intended to stay in their organisations when they had the opportunity to utilise their international skills.

Another study conducted among 81 Spanish repatriates found that the intention to leave relates to job satisfaction (Vidal et al., 2007). However, other studies (Lee &

Maurer, 1999) have found a negative relationship between the intention to leave and organisational commitment. Thus, scholars (i.e., Kraimer et al., 2009; Chiang et al., 2015) have called for more studies to investigate the relationship between intention to leave and repatriation adjustment.

Therefore, given the equivocal results that have emerged from the previous studies, there is a clear need to examine the intention to leave among repatriates returning from a novel cultural context.

### **2.7.2.2 Personal Outcomes**

The review of repatriation adjustment literature revealed that poor repatriation adjustment can lead to a number of critical issues at the individual level, such as mental stress (Chi & Chen, 2007; Harvey, 1989; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), job-related stress (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2002), depression and confusion (Black et al., 1991). Thus, the subjective wellbeing of repatriates plays an important role during repatriation (Chamove & Soeterik, 2006).

#### **2.7.2.2.1 Subjective Wellbeing**

General subjective wellbeing refers to the individual's affective and cognitive evaluations of the quality of their lives (Diener et al., 2002).

Previous studies indicate that repatriation adjustment can result in significant personal challenges, including stress (Andreason & Kinneer, 2005), depression and confusion (Black et al., 1991), and anxiety (Black, 1994). In addition, the subjective wellbeing of repatriates influences their commitment and work attitudes (Kraimer et al., 2009; Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012).



Thus, some previous studies have investigated the wellbeing of repatriates. For instance, the abovementioned study conducted by Lazarova and Cerdin (2002), involving 58 repatriates from six different countries who were temporarily expatriated to the US and Canada, found a negative relationship between organisational support and the overall wellbeing of the US repatriates.

Another study, conducted among 205 repatriates, found a significant negative relationship between repatriation adjustment and the wellbeing of New Zealand returnees (Chamove & Soeterik, 2006). This means that repatriates who experienced a relatively easy readjustment scored higher on wellbeing. The study did not specify the host countries of the repatriates.

The review of the outcome variables related to repatriation adjustment revealed that the outcomes of repatriation adjustment are understood in two categories organisation (i.e., organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and intention to leave) and individual (i.e., subjective wellbeing) (Chiang et al., 2015; Schudey et al., 2012).

It was revealed that the most common method utilised to investigate the topic of repatriation adjustment is by asking repatriates to self-report the extent to which they feel readjusted to various facets of repatriation adjustment and to examine the relationships with antecedents and outcomes (i.e., Black et al., 1992; Chiang et al., 2015; Van Gorp et al., 2017). This stream of inquiry involves examining the relationships between the facets of repatriation with other variables, reflecting a variable-centred approach (Craig & Smith, 2000). While the variable-centred approach strategies have contributed significantly to the current understanding of the relationships between the facets of repatriation adjustment, they do not consider the ways in which individuals might readjust differently in the various facets. For

example, some repatriates may adjust well to work and interaction but experience difficulties in the general and socio-cultural facets, while others may adjust well to all four facets. Gray and Savicki (2015) found that some repatriates experienced high socio-cultural difficulties, while others experienced less socio-cultural challenges, suggesting that distinct types of repatriation adjustment might exist even within a unique facet of repatriation adjustment.

To adequately examine such a possibility, a person-centred approach (Craig & Smith, 2000) is required to explore the existence of distinct subgroups of repatriation adjustment that differentially combine work, interaction, general and socio-cultural readjustment. Furthermore, identifying subgroups who share the same levels repatriation adjustment facets would provide new insights into how the obtained profile memberships relate to an external set of antecedent and outcome variables. The following section further discusses the person-centred approach and explains its implications within the repatriation adjustment context.

## **2.8 A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH TO REPATRIATION ADJUSTMENT**

There has been a recent increase in the use of person-centred research strategies in organisational behaviour research (i.e., Gabriel et al., 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016; Meyer, Stanley, & Vandenberg, 2013; Morin, Boudrias, Marsh, McInerney, Dagenais-Desmarais, Madore, & Litalien, 2017; Wang & Hanges, 2011; Zyphur, 2009). The person-centred approach varies from the more traditional variable-centred approach in numerous techniques (Meyer et al., 2013; Morin, Morizot, Boudrias, & Madore, 2011). Particularly, "the variable-centred approach assumes that all individuals from a sample are drawn from a single population, and that a single set of averaged parameters can be estimated. The person-centred

approach relaxes this assumption and considers the possibility that the sample might in fact reflect multiple subpopulations, characterised by different sets of parameters”.

Meyer and Morin (2016) note:

...the objective, therefore, is to identify potential subpopulations presenting differentiated configurations (or profiles) with regard to a system of variables. Additional benefits of the person-centred approach are that (a) individuals are treated in a more holistic fashion by focusing on a system of variables taken in combination rather than in isolation and (b) it allows for the detection of complex interactions among variables that would be difficult to detect or interpret using a variable-centred approach. (p. 584)

Meyer et al. (2013) further explain the differences between the variable-centred approach and the person-centred approach, as outlined in Table 2.2.

Table 2.3

*Differences between the Variable and Person Centred Approaches (Meyer et al., 2013).*

	Variable-centred	Person-centred
Purpose	Describe relationships between variables. Account for variance in one variable using one or a set of other variables.	Identify unobserved subgroups who share similar levels of, and/or relationships among, a system of variables.
Assumptions	Observed relationships among variables generalise to the entire sample and the population from which it is drawn (i.e., the sample and population are homogeneous).	A sample and the population from which it is drawn may contain unobserved subgroups of individuals. Variables can be experienced and relate differently to one another depending on how they combine with other variables.
Strengths	Clearly identifies variance in a criterion variable explained by one or more predictor variables. Can be used to identify principles that apply to an entire population.	Identifies subgroups within a sample and treats membership as a variable. Treats individuals in a holistic fashion.

	Variable-centred	Person-centred
Common Analytic Techniques	Descriptive statistics, correlations, multiple regression, latent growth modelling.	Median-split technique, cluster analysis, LPA, latent profile growth modelling, latent transition analysis.

Thus, the person-centred approach takes a complementary perspective to the traditional variable centric approach that appears well suited to examining repatriation adjustment. Although variable-centred approaches have significantly contributed to the improvement of the understanding of the variables related to repatriation adjustment, person-centred approaches (i.e., the three-step LPA approach) have the potential to extend repatriation adjustment research by identifying how distinct repatriation adjustment profiles are associated with the antecedent and outcome variables (Craig & Smith, 2000; Wang & Hanges, 2011 as cited in Gabriel et al, 2015). Although variable-centred approaches and person-centred approaches contribute toward the same aims (Gabriel et al., 2015) – understanding repatriation adjustment in relation to the criteria – each approach requires unique analytic and interpretation procedures (Gabriel et al., 2015). For example, while the “variable-centred approaches look at how a set of continuous variables predict outcomes separately and across people, person-centred approaches allow researchers to understand how variables operate conjointly and within people to shape outcomes” (Gabriel et al, 2015, p.865).

The current thesis argues that a person-centred approaches (i.e., the three-step LPA approach) can offer numerous crucial insights into repatriation adjustment theory. First, the application of the person-centred approach could shed further light on how different repatriation adjustment facets relate to the antecedents. This is mainly because the person-centred approaches (i.e., the three-step LPA) can capture

the unobserved heterogeneity in the way participants report their repatriation adjustment in different facets. The application of the three-step LPA to the repatriation adjustment context will enable the inter-relationships between repatriation adjustment facets (i.e., work, interaction, general, and socio-cultural readjustment) be explored using innovative and more complicated methodologies (Gabriel et al., 2015).

Therefore, this thesis uses a person-centred approach to complement and extend existing repatriation adjustment research to investigate the following research questions:

**RQ3:** *Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ4:** *Do cultural identification (home and host), time spent overseas and time since returning home predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?*

**RQ5:** *Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing?*

## **2.9 KNOWLEDGE GAPS**

A critical review of the repatriation adjustment literature reveals four major gaps in the research on repatriation adjustment and its antecedents (i.e., cultural identity, time spent overseas, and time since repatriation), professional outcomes (i.e., organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and intention to leave) (Chiang et al., 2015; Schudey et al., 2012) and individual outcomes (i.e., subjective wellbeing).

The first major gap is the comparative lack of attention given to the topic of repatriation adjustment (Chiang et al., 2015; Chiang et al., 2017; Knocke & Schuster, 2017). The body of literature on the topic of repatriation adjustment is “greatly fragmented” (Szkudlarek, 2010, p 2). A number of scholars have indicated that the construct of repatriation adjustment has also been neglected by practitioners (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007; MacDonald & Arthur, 2003, 2005; Stevens et al., 2006; Suutari & Brewster, 2003) and is consistently under-researched by scholars (Forster, 1994; Sánchez et al., 2008; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Szkudlarek, 2010). This lack of focus on repatriation is due to organisations assuming that repatriated employees would face no cultural challenges with returning to their home culture (Black & Gregersen, 1998; Szkudlarek, 2010), and that there are minimal differences between expatriation adjustment and repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992). Other scholars (i.e., Szkudlarek, 2010) have attributed this oversight to the limited number of empirical studies investigating repatriation adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon.

The second major gap is the inadequate measurement of repatriation adjustment. Despite the importance of repatriated employees’ cultural adjustment to personal (i.e., subjective wellbeing) and professional outcomes (i.e., organisational commitment) there are concerns about the content validity of existing scales of repatriation adjustment. For example, existing scales focus on measuring either psychological adjustment (Black et al., 1992) or the socio-cultural domain (Kimber, 2012; Ward & Kennedy, 1999), which are important facets of repatriation adjustment; but do not capture the complete content domain of the construct. Black and Gregersen (1991) and others (i.e., Black, 1994) argue that repatriation adjustment should be conceptualised as, and measured by, multifaceted scales.

Although Black et al. (1992) attempted to measure repatriation adjustment as a multifaceted construct comprising work, interaction and general readjustments, these three facets are considered to be facets of the psychological domain of adjustment (Black, 1996). Thus, results from recent studies (i.e., Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013) have established the need to investigate cultural adjustment as a multidimensional construct that is broader than Black et al.'s (1992) conceptualisation.

In addition, prior scales of repatriation adjustment were developed from expatriation adjustment scales. The rewording of expatriation scales raises questions about the adequacy of the content domain coverage of the scales. For example, the RAS (Black et al., 1992) was first designed to measure cross-cultural adjustment (adjustment to the host culture) (Black & Stephens, 1989), and was then reworded to be made appropriate for the repatriation context (Black & Gregeres, 1991). Other examples emerged from the researches of Cox (2004) and Kimber (2012), which utilised the SCAS (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) to measure the socio-cultural domain of repatriation adjustment, although the original scale was initially developed to measure expatriation adjustment.

However, Adler (2002) and others (i.e., Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1989; Martin, 1984; Forster, 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003) provide evidence that readjustment to the home culture is more challenging than adjustment to the host culture. Thus, it is not appropriate just to use the same scale to measure a more challenging construct, as expatriation adjustment might not sufficiently explain the repatriation experience (Sussman, 2001).

It is important to note that even scholars who have argued for the similarity between expatriation and repatriation adjustments and have utilised the same scale to

measure both constructs, such as Black and his colleagues (1992), acknowledge the differences between the two types of adjustment. For instance, Black et al. (1992) state that “returning home is a difference in kind, not in degree, compared to being sent overseas” (p. 741), whereas Sussman (2000) indicates that repatriation adjustment involves “different cognitive processes [that] appear to make repatriation psychologically distinct from behavioural, cognitive, and socio-cultural adaptation, which individuals undergo during cultural adaptation to another country” (p. 360).

The third major gap is that studies that have investigated the topic of repatriation adjustment and examined the relationship between repatriation adjustment and its antecedents and outcomes have predominantly utilised the traditional variables-centred approaches (i.e., regression or correlation). While these studies have significantly contributed to advancing the current understanding of the nature of such relationships.

The use of variable-centred analytical strategies (i.e., regression or correlation) “fail to detect the existence of distinct subgroups that exhibit unique patterns of the relevant variables, especially when a subgroup represents a relatively small number of individuals” (Gabriel et al., 2015, p. 864). The identification of subgroups who share the same levels of the six facets of repatriation adjustment could extend repatriation adjustment theories by first, providing with alternative insights into the uncovered relationships between the facets of repatriation adjustment, and to represent groups of repatriates within a single target population. Second, the identification of subgroups could reconcile contradictory results and perspectives on the association between repatriation adjustment and the outcome variables. Therefore, there is a need to consider other methodological approaches, such as person-centred approaches, which would not only shift the focus and draw attention



to the “unobserved subgroups who share similar levels of, and/or relationships among, a system of variables”, but would also provide an alternative explanation of the nature of these relationships, which is the primary rationale of the person-centred approach (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 195).

The fourth major gap is that the existing literature on repatriation adjustment has primarily focused on the expatriation–repatriation between relatively similar cultures, for example, the US culture and the relatively less novel UK culture. However, little attention has been given to expatriation–repatriation between more novel cultures, such as the Saudi and Australian cultures. Thus, the vast majority of studies on repatriation adjustment and its antecedents and outcomes have drawn on US samples, scholars (i.e., Chiang et al., 2015; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007; Reiche, 2012) have called for researchers to explore the topic in other diverse cultural contexts.

Consequently, the current research attempts to address these gaps in the literature by: (a) investigating the content domain of repatriation adjustment, which will improve the current understanding of the construct; (b) developing a valid and reliable measure of repatriation adjustment that intentionally targets repatriates returning from novel cultures; (c) identifying repatriation adjustment profiles of repatriates returning from novel cultural contexts; and (d) exploring the association between profile membership and the antecedents and outcome variables using the three-step LPA (Gabriel et al., 2015).

## 2.10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research questions are:

**RQ1:** *How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ2:** *What are the key dimensions of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures?*

**RQ3:** *Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ4:** *Do cultural identity identification (home and host), time spent overseas and time since returning home predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?*

**RQ5:** *Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, or subjective wellbeing?*

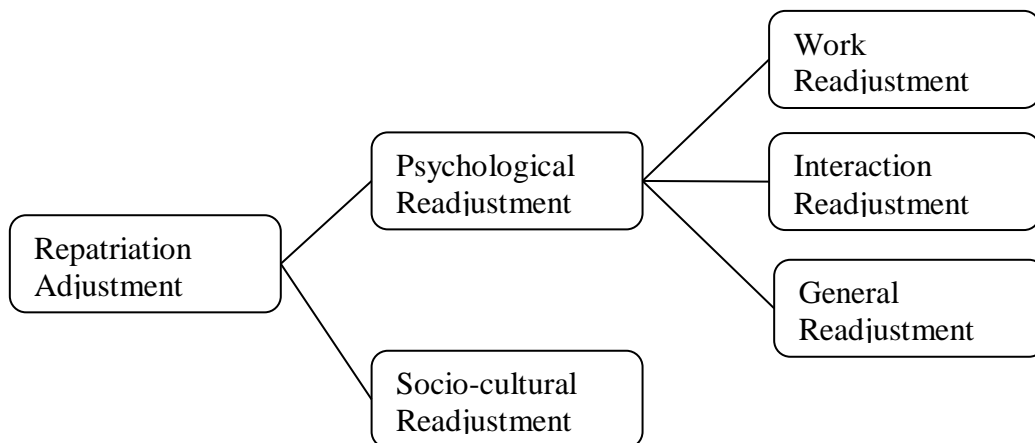
## 2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The review of previous repatriation adjustment literature revealed that the construct was first viewed as culture shock, falling in a U-curved shape within the three stages of honeymoon (excitement), cultural shock (frustration) and adjustment (acceptance or understanding). This view was then extended to take on a W-curved shape to cover the entire international experience and include the process of re-entry. Thus, the construct was conceptualised as reverse culture shock or re-entry shock.

However, these shape theory studies have endured criticism due to their lack of empirical support (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Black et al. (1992) proposed their

theory based on control theory and uncertainty reduction theory. They introduced the term ‘repatriation adjustment’ in an attempt to overcome the limitations of the curve theories and conceptualise the construct as a multifaceted phenomenon comprising the three psychological facets of work, interaction, and general adjustment. However, their theory was limited to psychological adjustment and overlooked other crucial factors such as the socio-cultural factors and cultural novelty.

While the previous leading studies (i.e., Black et al., 1992) have significantly contributed to understanding the construct of repatriation adjustment, returning home – particularly following expatriation in novel cultures – has not received the same level of attention, and the repatriation adjustment experience of repatriates returning from novel cultures still remains underexplored. This raises concerns about the content domain coverage of the cultural adjustment theory and its associated measure, especially for repatriation between novel cultures. The current review of the repatriation adjustment literature is summarised in Figure 2.2 below.



*Figure 2.2* Facets of Repatriation Adjustment.

The review of the outcome variables related to repatriation adjustment revealed that the outcomes of repatriation adjustment are understood in two categories

organisation (i.e., organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and intention to leave) and individual (i.e., subjective wellbeing) (Chiang et al., 2015; Schudey et al., 2012).

Previous studies have begun to examine the relationships between repatriation adjustment and organisational commitment (i.e., Gregersen, 1992; Gregersen & Black, 1996), skill utilisation (i.e., Scullion, 2002; Stevens et al., 2006; Tahir, 2014), job satisfaction (i.e., Lee & Liu, 2007; Stevens et al., 2006; Vidal et al., 2007), intention to leave (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2002; Lee & Maurer, 1999); and subjective wellbeing (Andreason & Kinneer, 2005; Chamove & Soeterik, 2006; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2002).

Although significant inroads have been made to advance the current understanding of the nature of such relationships, a number of scholars have called for more research on both professional and individual outcomes (i.e., Chiang et al., 2015; Reiche, 2012). Furthermore, a review of the outcome variables related to repatriation adjustment revealed that, to date, the most common method utilised to investigate the topic of repatriation adjustment is by asking repatriates to self-report the extent to which they feel readjusted to various facets of repatriation adjustment and to examine the relationships with antecedents and outcomes (i.e., Black et al., 1992; Chiang et al., 2015; Van Gorp et al., 2017). This stream of inquiry involves examining the relationships between the facets of repatriation with other variables, reflecting a variable-centred approach (Craig & Smith, 2000). While the variable-centred approach strategies have contributed significantly to the current understanding of the relationships between the facets of repatriation adjustment, they do not consider the ways in which individuals might readjust differently in the various facets. For example, some repatriates may adjust well to work and interaction

but experience difficulties in the general and socio-cultural facets, while others may adjust well to all four facets. Gray and Savicki (2015) found that some repatriates experienced high socio-cultural difficulties, while others experienced less socio-cultural challenges, suggesting that distinct types of repatriation adjustment might exist even within a unique facet of repatriation adjustment.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reviewed and synthesised the conceptual and empirical studies on the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment, its antecedents and outcome variables, which resulted in identifying the major gaps existing in the body of literature on repatriation adjustment, which in turn justified the development of the five research questions that guide the current research. The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the proposed research design and methodology guiding this inquiry.

# Chapter 3: Research Design

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical background of this research and reviewed the conceptual, and empirical studies on the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment, its antecedents (i.e., the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) and outcome variables (i.e., intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing). The chapter also revealed the major gaps in repatriation adjustment literature and justified the development of the five research questions.

The purpose of this chapter is to justify the research design and methodology employed to address the research questions. Chapter 3 is structured as follows. First, the chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm, followed by a justification of the mixed-method research design. Second, the chapter outlines the utilised scale development procedure (Churchill, 1979) and details the qualitative method used, including discussions of the sampling strategy, the qualitative data collection process and the qualitative data analytical strategies. This is followed by a discussion of the utilised quantitative methods, including the sampling strategy, quantitative data collection process, measures and quantitative data analytical strategies. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

## 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm refers to particular combinations of our basic belief system or world views (ontology), with their associated epistemologies (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The research paradigm can be described through the researcher

*ontology* (theory about what exists), *epistemology* (theory about how we know knowledge), and *methodology* (the research techniques of approaching knowledge) (Guba, 1990).

These aspects generate a holistic view of the way we think the world is (ontology), and they influence what we think can be known about it (epistemology), and how we think it can be investigated (methodology and research techniques) (Hopper & Powell, 1985; Guba, 1990). Therefore, a research paradigm is the basic belief system that determines the way knowledge is studied and interpreted (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

The current research is drawn from post-positivism paradigm employing a critical realism ontological perspective, which underlines the assumption that reality can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Limpanitgul & Robson, 2009). The critical realist view of ontology assumes that reality is there and is just waiting to be explored and accessed (Fleetwood, 2005). Thus, the current study assumes that the exploration of repatriation adjustment and its associations with the antecedent and outcome variables (i.e., antecedents [cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas, and time since returning home] and outcomes [intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing]) can be understood through employing a mixed method design utilising a sequential exploratory strategy (Creswell, 2013; Gadbury & Schreuder, 2003).

Epistemology is an approach to the existing knowledge (how we know what we know) (Crotty, 1998). In this study, this approach involves the review and examination of the relevant body of literature concerning repatriation adjustment and

its antecedent and outcome variables. Furthermore, methodology involves how to find the believed knowledge (Biedenbach & Müller, 2011).

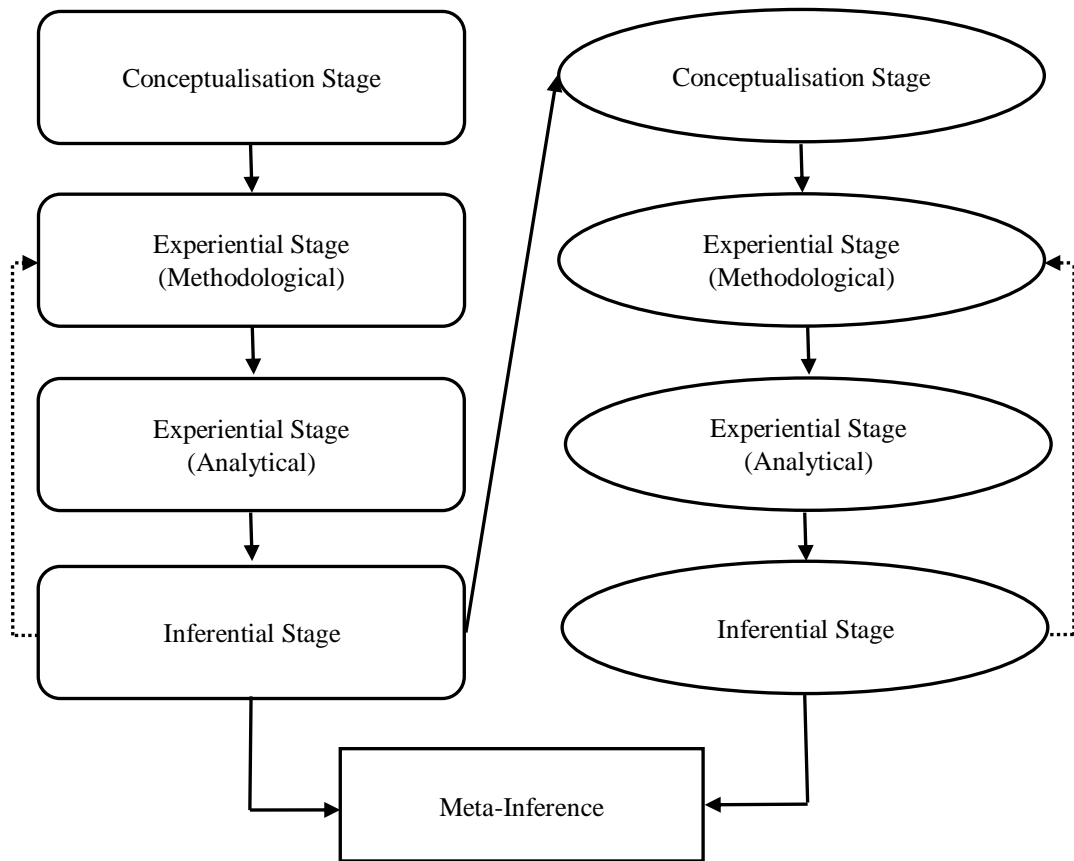
A good research method demonstrates consistency across the research questions and design (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Thus, this mixed-method research is designed to explore and explain repatriation adjustment, and its relationships with the antecedent and outcome variables, amongst Saudi public sector employees, who have returned to their home culture following the completion of an international assignment in a novel culture. As an example of post-positivism research, this study must have validity and research rigor to make significant contributions (Winter, 2000); this is addressed in the following discussion.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design must be appropriate for addressing the research questions (Creswell, 2013). Given the lack of attention to the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment (Baruch et al., 2016; Kraimer et al., 2016; Szkudlarek, 2010), the absence of an adequate measurement tool of repatriation adjustment (Hippler, et al., 2014), in particular for repatriates returning from novel cultures, is both academically concerning and practically significant. With the call from many scholars to explore further the topic of repatriation adjustment (Kraimer et al., 2016) particularly beyond the US context (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), the most appropriate and useful research design for this study is a mixed method design utilising a sequential exploratory strategy (Creswell, 2013). This supports a methodological fit amongst the findings of previous literature, research methods, analysis and expected contributions (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).



Sequential exploratory mixed-method designs (see Figure 3.1) are commonly utilised when there is a need to develop a new measurement tool of a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

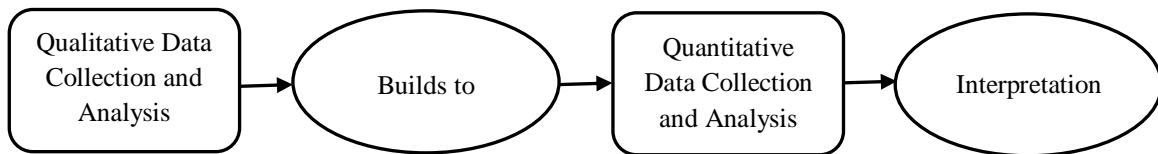


*Figure 3.1* Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method Designs (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006).

This research design involves three exploratory studies. Study 1 is a qualitative enquiry while Study 2 and Study 3 are quantitative investigations. Study 1 has separate research stages while the data for Study 2 and Study 3 were collected at the same time. The research stages are discussed in details on the following sections. The meta-inference stage incorporates the research outcomes and draws the overall conclusions of this research.

### 3.4 METHODS

According to Creswell and Clark (2011), the sequential exploratory mixed-method design consists of using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in a single study (see Figure 3.2).



*Figure 3.2* Mixed-Method Design (Sequential Exploratory Strategy) (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Thus, in this research, the qualitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Study 1, while the quantitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Studies 2 and 3. The first study concerns gaining a better understanding of the content domain of repatriation adjustment to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning from novel cultures. The second study aims to validate the new scale of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 1. The scale development and validation followed the guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979). The third study was conducted with two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

*Overall Structure of the Research Design*

Research Design	Mixed-Method Design (Sequential Exploratory Strategy)			
	Data Collection Method	Sample	Data Analysis Strategies	Utilised Approach
Study 1	Semi-structured interviews	19 Participants	Inductive and deductive thematic analysis	Inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Study 2	Online survey	305 Participants	EFA CFA LPA	Churchill's scale development procedure (1979) Latent Profile Analysis (LPA)
Study 3	Online survey	305 Participants	ANOVA R3STEP DCON	(Gabriel et al., 2015)
Research Purpose	The purpose of this research is twofold. First, the research aims to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. Second, the research aims to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture.			

*Note.* EFA = Exploratory Factor Analysis; CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis; LPA = Latent Profile Analysis; ANOVA = Analysis of Variance; R3STEP = A command in Mplus software used to evaluate whether increasing the predictors would increase the likelihood of individuals to be in one profile over the other; DCON = A command in Mplus software used to examine the statistical differences between the profiles across a set of distal outcome variables using mean scores and a Chi square test.

The following sections illustrate the utilised scale development approach, followed by discussions of the employed qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses.

### 3.4.1 Scale Development Procedure

The new repatriation adjustment scale was developed following the general guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979) in conjunction with the suggestions of other scholars (i.e., DeVellis, 2012; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Lewis, Templeton,

& Byrd, 2005). Churchill's approach is considered as one of the most cited and accepted scale development procedures (Flynn, Sakakibara, Schroeder, Bates & Flynn, 1990; Gupta & Somers, 1992; Han, Back, & Barrett, 2010). Churchill's scale development procedure (1979) consists of eight steps for developing better measures (see Figure 3.3).

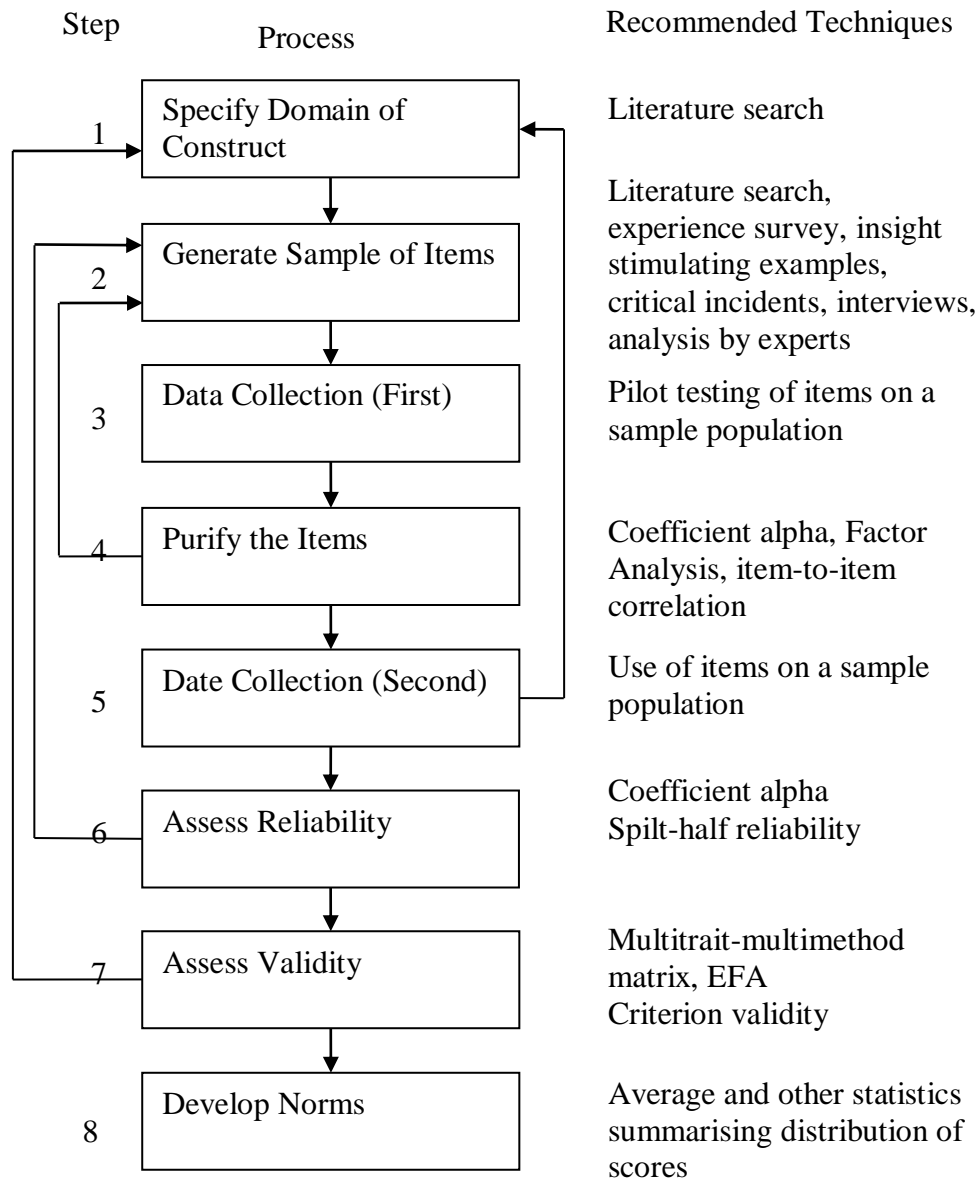


Figure 3.3 Churchill's (1979) Process of Construct Development

### **Step 1: Specify Domain of Construct**

As recommended by Churchill (1979), the first step in the process is to specify the under-researched construct. In this research, this step involved the extensive review of the related literature, which resulted in the justification of the development of a new measure (Churchill, 1979). Therefore, the extensive review of the literature on repatriation adjustment provided a reasonable justification for the need for a new scale for the concept of repatriation adjustment.

### **Step 2: Generate a Sample of Items**

This step involved using prior research findings, measurement scales and experience surveys to generate a sample of items capturing the domain (Churchill, 1979). For this step, Churchill (1979) suggests discussing the developed items with appropriate people, such as academics and government personnel. Thus, this study utilised these recommendations by: first, analysing the previous findings and instruments; second, conducting interviews with Saudi repatriates; and, third, negotiating the generated items with a supervisory team and expert persons recommended by them.

### **Step 3: Data Collection (First Round) (Pilot Testing)**

The third step involved conducting a pilot study to test the generated items (Churchill, 1979). In this study, the generated items were tested among the participants.

Scholars have suggested a range of sample sizes for a pilot test study, for example 300 participants (DeVellis, 2012) or a range of 100 to 200 participants (Clark & Watson, 1995). The determination of this pilot study's sample size is discussed in detail in the sampling section.

#### **Step 4: Purify the Items**

After the initial data collection, Churchill (1979) suggests conducting a coefficient alpha test, item-to-total correlation and EFA to purify the measurement items and to observe the scale's psychometric properties.

The coefficient alpha is a generally recommended measure for assessing the internal consistency of a set of items (Churchill, 1979). A low coefficient alpha suggests that the sample of items performs poorly, whereas a large alpha indicates that the sample of items correlates well with the true level of the construct (Churchill, 1979). An alpha score lower than .7 should be subject to item-to-item correlation (Churchill, 1979). Item-to-total correlation is a correlation between the score on the item and the sum of the scores on all other items of the construct (Churchill, 1979). It is used as a criterion for accepting or deleting an item (Churchill, 1979). Items producing an immediate drop or sharing correlations near zero should be removed from the scale (Churchill, 1979). Next, EFA is performed in order to establish the number of facets that explain the phenomenon (Churchill, 1979). An iterative process from step 4 to 2 is recommended in order to gain a satisfactory alpha score and improved factor loading (Churchill, 1979).

Although Churchill (1979) suggests conducting the internal consistency test prior to factor analysis, other scholars (i.e., DeVellis, 2012) recommend conducting the coefficient alpha test after the factor analysis. Therefore, this study followed these recent recommendations in order to refine and purify the items for the repatriation adjustment measure.

### **Step 5: Data Collection (Second Round) (Main Study)**

As Churchill (1979) suggests, after refining the items, the fifth step is to collect a new sample of data to perform new analysis functions, such as composite reliability and construct validity, which can provide more evidence for improving the scale. Thus, this study collected data from Saudi repatriates who had returned home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture.

### **Step 6: Assess Reliability**

The most basic statistical assessment of reliability is the coefficient alpha (Churchill, 1979). In addition, Gerbing and Anderson (1988) suggest the use of CFA to establish composite reliability. Therefore, the coefficient alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the newly developed scale of repatriation adjustment. The minimal acceptable level for the coefficient alpha is .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

### **Step 7: Assess Validity**

Construct validity refers to “the extent to which a set of measured variables actually represents the theoretical latent construct those variables are designed to measure” (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014, p. 601). Construct validity can be assessed using content validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity (Churchill, 1979; Lewis et al., 2005).

Content validity refers to the “appropriateness of the items on the instrument for measuring the construct” (Lewis et al., 2005, p. 396). Thus, each item should represent the overall aspect of the construct (Lewis et al., 2005). Although there is “no generally accepted quantitative index of content validity” (Hinkin, 1998), an expert’s review, conducted in the second step, can be a measure of content validity (DeVellis, 2012).

Convergent validity refers to “the extent to which it [the newly developed measure] correlates highly with other methods designed to measure the same construct” (Churchill, 1979, p. 70). It can be measured by the correlation between the items (Lewis et al., 2005).

Discriminant validity refers to “the extent to which the measure is indeed novel and not simply a reflection of some other variables” (Churchill, 1979, p. 70). Although Churchill (1979) suggests the multitrait-multimethod matrix as a measure of discriminant validity, it can also be assessed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). An item that shows a lack of cross loadings is evidence of discriminant validity (Lewis et al., 2005).

Nomological validity refers to “the degree that the summated scale makes accurate predictions of other concepts in a theoretical based model” (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010, p. 126). It should be assessed using validated scales from previous studies (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, nomological validity is established when constructs, from the previously validated measure correlate with the constructs from the specified measurement model (Hair et al., 2010).

Therefore, the validity of the newly developed measure of repatriation adjustment was established through examining the content validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity of the construct (Churchill, 1979; Lewis et al., 2005).

### **Step 8: Develop Norms**

The final step that Churchill (1979) suggests is to develop norms. Churchill (1979) indicates that “the raw score on a measuring instrument is not particularly informative”; thus, the actual norms must be understood to avoid drawing incorrect



conclusions (p. 72). This can be approached by comparing a “person’s score with the score achieved by other people” (Churchill, 1979). This technical process was therefore utilised to determine the most adjusted individual among the participants (Churchill, 1979).

### **3.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection and Analytical Strategies**

As indicated in Section 3.4, the qualitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Study 1. The purpose of Study 1, which involves qualitative semi-structured interviews, is to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates. The following sections discuss the sampling, data collection and analytical strategies used for the qualitative study.

#### **3.4.2.1 Sampling Strategy**

There are two main sampling strategies: probability-based and non-probability-based sampling (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research most often employs a non-probability strategy – also commonly known as purposive sampling (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Purposive sampling is useful to ensure that individuals within a research setting are given a voice, which provides for the use of comparisons to identify similarities and differences in interpretations across individuals (Patton, 1990). One type of purposive sampling is the snowball strategy (Patton, 1990), where participants are asked to identify interested colleagues who could supplement data on the emerging causal relationships (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

This study employed a snowball sampling strategy. The main aim of this sampling strategy was to find individuals, through a network of known others, who were willing to participate in the research and to identify other individuals who may also have been willing to take part in the study (Trotter, 2012). The researcher sent an email invitation to potential participants inviting them to take part in the study.

Respondents were then asked to forward the email to others in their professional network who met the selection criteria. The email invitation gave details of the interview procedure and asked interested participants to specify a convenient time and place for the interview (see Appendix A).

Within this type of approach the researcher should establish criteria via which to involve participants (Creswell, 2007) according to the research aims (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Thus, for this study, the selection criteria required participants to be Saudi public sector employees, who had temporarily expatriated to a novel cultural context, such as Australia, the UK or the US, for at least two years, and then returned to live and work in Saudi Arabia upon completing their international assignment. The focus on Saudi repatriates returning from countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the US was driven by two reasons. First, the degree of cultural novelty between the home and the host countries is high (Hofstede, 2015). Second, to respond to the growing number scholars (i.e., Hyder & Lövblad, 2007; Kraimer, et al., 2016; Sussman, 2002) who have called for more research on repatriation adjustment from other cultural contexts.

#### **3.4.2.2 Data Collection**

The use of semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection source is considered as one of the most widely used instruments in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Robson, 2011). A qualitative interview is defined as “a construction site of knowledge where two or more individuals discuss a theme of mutual interest” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 142). There are three commonly used types of interview, fully structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview (Robson, 2011).

The use of semi-structured interviews provides researchers with several advantages, including the opportunity to explore how respondents perceive a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). It also allows the researcher to collect in-depth information from individuals (Flick, 2014), enabling them to examine the participants' views via compelling and rich dialogue (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). In addition, semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to ask probing and clarifying questions that focus on participants' personal perspectives (Robson, 2011).

Thus, the use of semi-structured interviews as a method to collect data was determined as the most efficient, appropriate and effective technique to explore how Saudi repatriates perceive their psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. An interview protocol containing a set of open-ended questions (see Appendix A) was used as a guide during the interviews (Robson, 2011).

#### **3.4.2.3 Data Analysis**

The interview transcripts were analysed using inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using QSR NVivo11 software. Thematic analysis is defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The thematic analysis process is outlined in Table 3.2. Thematic analysis allows qualitative data to be transformed into quantitative forms (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thus, the thematic analysis was deemed the most appropriate analytical strategy for achieving the primary goal of this research, which was to develop a valid and reliable measure of repatriation adjustment that primarily targets repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture.

Table 3.2

*Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

The deductive analysis was utilised to test and verify the psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment facets among Saudi repatriates who had returned home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. The inductive analysis was used to explore how Saudi repatriates perceived repatriation adjustment after completing an international assignment in a novel culture. The inductive and deductive thematic analysis is discussed in details on Chapter 4.

### **3.4.3 Quantitative Data Collection and Analytical Strategies**

As indicated in Section 3.4, the quantitative data collection and analysis occurred as part of Studies 2 and 3. The following sections discuss the sampling strategy, data collection and analytical strategies used for the quantitative studies.

### **3.4.3.1 Sampling Strategy**

As indicated earlier, within social science research, the two most common types of sampling are probability-based and non-probability-based sampling (Patton, 1990). Non-probability-based sampling includes convenience sampling, judgmental sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Doyle, 2011; Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010).

For this current research, the quantitative studies utilised a convenience sampling strategy (Babbie, 2015). Convenience sampling strategy is defined as “a non-probability sampling that attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements” (Malhotra, 2006, p. 368).

The target population for this research was repatriates who had temporarily expatriated to novel cultures and then returned to work and live in their home culture upon completing their international assignment.

The sample frame was Saudi public sector employees who had temporarily expatriated to novel cultures within countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the US, and then returned to work and live in Saudi Arabia upon completing their international assignments. Thus, participants had the ability to yield accurate responses for the data collection. The sample was accessed in collaboration with the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission in Canberra (SACM).

### **3.4.3.2 Data Collection**

Quantitative data were collected using online surveys. The survey data collection method is defined as “a method used to gather self-report descriptive information about the attitudes, behaviours or other characteristics of some population” (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfeld, & Boot-Kewley, 1997, p. 2). It is

considered the most frequently used method particularly within organisational research (Swanson & Holton, 2005).

One great advantage of collecting the data using a survey is that it allows for collecting effective and accurate information about an issue (Edwards et al., 1997). Other advantages include the flexibility, as surveys might be used for various aims such as measuring employee satisfaction or assessing consumer behaviours (Edwards et al., 1997). This was particularly relevant with this researcher geographically displaced from respondents and proved to be an efficient and manageable method of collection.

### **3.4.3.3 Data Preparation Procedures**

Prior to the analysis, the data were screened for potential missing data or outlier cases using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). The following sections describe the analytical strategies used to identify the missing data and detect the outlier cases, and then report on the remedies used to respond to the identified cases.

#### **3.4.3.3.1 Assessment of Missing Data**

Missing data is defined as “a statistical difficulty (i.e., a partially incomplete data matrix) resulting from the decision by one or more sampled individuals to not respond to a survey or a survey item” (Lance & Vandenberg, 2009, p. 8). It is one of the most common threats of generalisability of the results (Hair et al., 2014). However, the extent of the missing data threat is based on three main criteria known as the pattern of the missing data, the amount of missing data and the reasons for missing some data (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Hair et al. (2014) suggest a four-step procedure to detect, understand and then treat the missing data, including examining the type of missing data (i.e., ignorable or not-ignorable), determining the extent of

the missing data (i.e., low or high), examining the randomness of the missing data (i.e., random or non-random) and then selecting the imputation method (i.e., hot and cold deck imputation, case substitution, mean substitution or regression imputation).

Ignorable missing data occur as part of the research design and are fully controlled by the researcher which must be justified, whereas not-ignorable missing data occur for other reasons known or unknown to the researcher and might be treated (Hair et al., 2014). The extent of the missing data should be assessed using descriptive and frequency statistics, while the randomness of the missing data should be checked using Little's (1988) Missing Completely At Random (MCAR) test (Hair et al., 2014). If the missing data does not exceed 10% or is found to be MCAR then Hair et al. (2014) suggest using the mean substitution approach as one appropriate imputation method. Thus, in this research, the missing data were assessed using the four-step procedure (Hair et al., 2014).

#### **3.4.3.3.2 Assessment of Outliers**

Outliers are defined as “cases with an extreme value on one variable [univariate] or cases with unusual combination of scores on two or more variables [multivariate]” (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996, p. 65). Univariate outliers should be detected using the standardised Z scores (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Any standardised Z score  $> 3.29$  is potentially considered as an outlier case (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Multivariate outliers should be assessed using the Mahalanobis Distance test (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Any probability value  $p < 0.001$  is potentially considered as a multivariate outlier case (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).

Thus, the data were examined for potential univariate outliers using the standardised Z test and for multivariate outliers using the Mahalanobis Distance test (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).

#### 3.4.3.4 Measures

As explained in Section 3.4, the purpose of Study 2 was to validate the new repatriation adjustment scale and, thus, the only included measure was the repatriation adjustment scale. However, Study 3 involved the repatriation adjustment scale as well as other measures, including cultural identity, intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing (see Appendix B for the measures).

##### *Repatriation Adjustment*

Repatriation adjustment was assessed using the 34-item repatriation adjustment scale resulting from Study 2. The scale assesses the six facets of task performance readjustment (measured by two items), workplace interactions readjustment (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), readjustment to the local social norms (measured by seven items), readjustment to interactions with social networks (measured by five items), and general readjustment (measured by eight items). Participants were instructed to assess the extent to which they felt readjusted after returning from novel cultures using a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = not adjusted at all, and 7 = completely adjusted.

##### *Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity was measured using a 21-item scale developed by Ward and Kennedy (1994) and used by Cox (2004). This scale asked respondents to indicate how similar their personal characteristics or preferences are to (a) other Saudis and (b) the people of the host country (i.e., Americans, Australians, Canadians or British people) using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not similar at all and 7 = extremely similar). Previous utilisations of this instrument have proven highly reliable in both



home culture (ranged from .91 to .93) and host culture (ranged from .89 to .96) identity subscales using Cronbach's alpha (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000).

#### *Intention to Leave*

Intention to leave was assessed using the 6-item instrument utilised by Lazarova and Cerdin (2007). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the six item statements using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The scale has been used in a previous study, with a high internal consistency of .83 (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007).

#### *Organisational Commitment*

Organisational commitment was assessed using the six items with the highest factor loadings of Meyer and Allen's (1997) commitment scale. Each commitment component (i.e., affective, normative and continuance commitment) was assessed using two items. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Previous studies have reported a reliability of .87, .69, and .79 for each commitment component respectively (Meyer, Stanley, & Parfyonova, 2012).

#### *Skill Utilisation*

Skill utilisation was measured using the 6-item measure used by D'Netto, Bakas and Bordia (2008). Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The scale has a high reliability of .80 (D'Netto et al., 2008).

### *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction was measured using the general job satisfaction scale used by Kim (2002). The scale has two items and asks participants to indicate their agreement with the two item statements using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The scale had a coefficient alpha of .81 (Kim, 2002).

### *Subjective Wellbeing*

Subjective wellbeing was assessed using the 9-item instrument utilised by Selmer, Chiu and Shenkar (2007). Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = much lower than usual and 5 = much higher than usual). The scale has a reliability score of .88 (Selmer et al., 2007).

#### **3.4.3.5 Data Analysis**

EFA, CFA and LPA were the principal statistical techniques used to analyse the quantitative data for Study 2 and Study 3. The following sections discuss and justify the use of each of these principal techniques and their relevant assessments.

#### **The First Principal Analysis: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

EFA is “a statistical technique applied to a single set of variables where the researcher is interested in discovering which variables in the set form coherent subsets that are relatively independent of one another” (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996, p. 635). The primary purpose of the EFA “is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 94).

According to Pallant (2016), there are three main steps of an EFA: assessing the fundamental assumptions of factor analysis, including the adequacy of sample size, normality and the factorability (Pallant, 2016; Hair et al., 2014); determining

the factor extraction; and factor rotation and interpretation. The following sections discuss the three steps in details.

### ***Step 1: The Assumptions of Factor Analysis***

Prior to running the factor analysis, the fundamental assumptions of the factor analysis, including adequacy of sample size, normality and the factorability, were examined (Pallant, 2016; Hair et al., 2014).

#### *Sample Size*

Required sample size can be determined by various procedures (Creswell, 2013). One commonly used strategy is to determine the ideal sample size based on the desired statistical techniques (Cohen, 1977; Hinkin, 1995). For a statistical technique such as EFA, Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988) suggest 150 as a sufficient sample size “to obtain an accurate solution in exploratory factor analysis as long as item intercorrelations are reasonably strong” (Hinkin, 1995, p. 973).

#### *Assessment of Normality*

Normality refers to “the shape of the data distribution for an individual metric variable and its correspondence to the normal distribution, the benchmark for statistical methods” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 71). It should be examined by using statistical methods (i.e., Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics, Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients) or by using graphical methods (i.e., histogram plots) (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic  $> .05$  indicates normal distribution, whereas a significant score of  $.00$  indicates the violation of the normality. The Skewness score provides information about the symmetry of the distribution, whereas Kurtosis scores suggest the peakedness of the distribution (Pallant, 2016). Skewness values  $< 3$  indicate a normal distribution, while a Kurtosis

score  $< 10$  indicates a normal distribution (Kline, 2015). Thus, Skewness and Kurtosis were applied to assess the normality.

#### *Assessment of Factorability*

Factorability refers to the appropriateness of the data to be considered suitable for the factor analysis test (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). It is assessed by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test of Sphericity, and the correlation coefficient between the variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). In order for the dataset to be considered as suitable for the EFA, the KMO value should be .6 or above and Bartlett's test score should be statistically significant,  $P < 0.05$ . Thus, the KMO, and Bartlett's test were applied to determine the factorability of the dataset.

#### *Assessment of Multicollinearity*

Multicollinearity is defined as "the extent to which a variable can be explained by other variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 91). It should be assessed by the correlation coefficients between the variables (Hair et al., 2014). The correlation coefficient between variables greater than .90 indicates that the variables are not sufficiently independent from each other (Hair et al., 2014).

#### ***Step 2: Factor Extraction***

The factor extraction method refers to the process of "determining the smallest number of factors that can be used to best represent the interrelationships among the set of variables" (Pallant, 2016, p. 184). Extraction methods are used to identify the number of basic dimensions of a set of variables (Pallant, 2016). There are several common factor extraction methods, such as principal components, principal factors, image factoring, maximum likelihood factoring, alpha factoring, unweighted least

squares and generalized least squares (Pallant, 2016). The most frequently used extraction method is principal components analysis (PCA; Pallant, 2016).

Although PCA and factor analysis generally yield similar results, they differ in several ways (Pallant, 2016). One of the primary differences is the consideration of the variance between the variables (Pallant, 2016). In PCA, the variables are analysed using all of the variance in the variables, whereas in factor analysis the analysis is based only on the shared variance between the variables (Pallant, 2016). In addition, Tabachnick and Fidel (1996) indicate that PCA is most appropriate when the primary purpose is “reducing a large number of variables down to a smaller number of components” (p. 664). Thus, the principal component (PC) factor analysis was used as the extraction method in conducting the EFA on the repatriation adjustment scale.

In order to determine the number of rotated factor to retain, Pallant (2016) suggests evaluating the Kaiser’s Criterion, inspecting the Scree Test (Cattell, 1996), and examining the Parallel Test (Horn, 1965).

The Kaiser’s Criterion which also known as the eigenvalue rule (Pallant, 2016), suggests retaining factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0. Inspecting the Scree Test (Cattell, 1996) involves looking at the plot to identify the point where the direction of the curve became horizontal which indicates the number of retained factors (Pallant, 2016). The Parallel Test involves comparing the size of the eigenvalues and the root of random data eigenvalues within the same sample size. Within this comparison, “only those eigenvalues that exceed the corresponding values from the random data set are retained” (Pallant, 2016, p. 185).

Thus, in this research, the factor solution was determined using the eigenvalue rule, the inspection of the scree test and the parallel test.

### ***Step 3: Factor Rotation and Interpretation***

There are two rotation methods oblique (correlated) and orthogonal (uncorrelated) (Pallant, 2016). Oblique rotation includes direct oblimin and promax, whereas the orthogonal rotation comprises varimax, quartimax and equamax (Pallant, 2016). Although both rotation methods produce similar results, Pallant (2016) recommends examining both rotations and then “report[ing] the clearest and easiest to interpret” (p. 186). Thus, the current research explored both orthogonal and oblique rotations on the repatriation adjustment scale’s 51 items.

### **The Second Principal Analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

CFA is defined as a statistical technique used “to test (confirm) specific hypotheses or theories concerning the structure underlining a set of variables” (Pallant, 2016, p. 182). It is a statistical technique that is used to examine the fit of a preconceived structural model of a construct to the data (Hair et al., 2014).

#### *Assessment of Model Fit*

The Goodness of Fit (GOF) is a “measure indicating how well a specified model reproduces the covariance matrix among the indicator variables” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 544). There are three types of commonly used model fit indices: the absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices (Hair et al., 2014).

The absolute fit indices are a “measure of overall goodness-of-fit for both structural and measurement models” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 542). The frequently used absolute fit indices and general thresholds are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Absolute Fit Indices*

Criterion	$\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI
Excellent Threshold	$p \Rightarrow .05$	$\leq .05$	$< .05$	$\geq .95$
Acceptable Threshold	$p \Rightarrow .05$	$\leq .08$	$< .08$	$\geq .90$

*Notes.*  $\chi^2$  = Discrepancy Chi-square, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, GFI = Goodness-of-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

The incremental fit indices is a “group of *goodness-of-fit* indices that assesses how well a specified model fits relative to some alternative baseline model [the null model]” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 544). Examples of commonly used incremental fit indices and their general thresholds are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

*Incremental Fit Indices*

Criterion	NFI	TLI	RNI	CFI
Excellent Threshold	$> .95$	$> .95$	$> .95$	$\geq .95$
Acceptable Threshold	$> .90$	$> .90$	$> .90$	$\geq .90$

*Notes.* NFI = Normed Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, RNI = Relative Non-centrality Index, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index.

A parsimony fit index is a “measure of overall *goodness-of-fit* representing the degree of model fit per estimated coefficient” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 545). Table 3.5 presents the commonly used parsimony fit indices and their general thresholds.

Table 3.5

*Parsimony Fit Indices*

Criterion	AGFI	CMIN/DF	PNFI
Excellent Threshold	> .95	> .95	> .95
Acceptable Threshold	> .90	> .90	> .90

*Notes.* AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, PNFI = Parsimony Normed Fit Index.

Hair et al. (2014) suggest assessing the GOF of a specified model by using at least one incremental fit index, one absolute fit index in combination with the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ). However, Jackson, Gillaspay and Purc-Stephenson (2009) recommend assessing the GOF of a specified model by using at least one index of each model fit indices (i.e., the absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices) as each model fit index provides “different measurement properties” (Jackson et al., 2009, p. 10).

Thus, in this research, the CFA was conducted using AMOS version 23. The GOF was assessed using a combination of the three model fit indices, including the absolute fit indices (i.e., Chi-square, SRMR, and RMSEA), the incremental fit indices (i.e., TLI and CFI), and the parsimonious fit indices (i.e., CMIN/DF) (Hair et al., 2014). Table 3.6 presents the model fit indices, and the general threshold, utilised on this study.



Table 3.6

Goodness of Fit Statistics

Criterion	Chi-square	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Excellent Threshold	$p \Rightarrow .05$	$<2$	$\leq .05$	$<.05$	$\geq .95$	$\geq .95$
Acceptable Threshold	$p \Rightarrow .05$	$<3$	$\leq .08$	$<.08$	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$

*Notes.* DF= Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

*Validity Assessment*

As described earlier in Step 7 of Churchill’s (1979) scale development procedure, (see Section 3.4.1), the validity of the new repatriation adjustment scale was established by examining the content validity, the convergent validity, the discriminant validity, and the nomological validity of the construct (Churchill, 1979; Lewis et al., 2005).

**The Third Principal Analysis: Latent Profile Analysis (LPA)**

LPA “is an empirically driven method that defines taxonomies or classes of people based on common characteristics” (Merz, & Roesch, 2011, p. 4). It is considered to be a modern method of person-centred approaches (Bergman & Andersson, 2010, p. 157). The person-centred approach is a research methodology that focuses on understanding the development of a phenomenon “at the individual level by regarding the individual as a functioning whole with processes operating at a system level and its components jointly contributing to what happens in development” (Bergman & Trost, 2006, p. 604).

As detailed in Chapter 2, the person-centred approach differs from the variable-centred approach in a number of ways (refer to Table 2.2). In particular, using the person-centred approach of LPA provides several advantages.

First of all, the application of person-centred strategies, such as profile analysis, to the repatriation adjustment phenomenon can expand and strengthen the current understanding of the relationship between the facets of repatriation adjustment by exploring the different levels of readjustment among repatriates.

Further, utilising person-centred approaches such as LPA to investigate the repatriation adjustment topic allows the “potential subpopulations presenting differentiated configurations (or profiles) with regard to a system of variables” (Meyer & Morin, 2016, p. 584) to be identified. Thus, identifying the potential profiles of repatriation adjustment is assumed to have theoretical and practical contributions.

Another benefit is that using a person-centred approach to investigate the variables related to repatriation adjustment allows the researcher to treat individuals in a holistic fashion (Meyer & Morin, 2016), and therefore explore and uncover subgroups of repatriates within a single target population, which would be challenging to identify utilising a variable-centred approach.

More recently, Gabriel et al. (2015) utilised a three-step approach to LPA. The three-step approach is an advanced LPA strategy that examines the relationships between profile membership and a set of external variables (i.e., antecedents or outcomes) (Gabriel et al., 2015). The three-step approach begins with estimating the model fit for the latent class using the combination of absolute and relative fit indices, as well as the parsimony principle (Gabriel et al., 2015; Morgan, Hodge & Baggett, 2016). The second step involves assigning participants to the latent class

using the posterior probability (Gabriel et al., 2015). The third step of the LPA procedure involves examining the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) on the obtained profile membership solution (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Gabriel et al. 2015). The association between the profile membership and the antecedents (i.e., cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) is examined by using the R3STEP command whereas the association between the profile membership and the outcome variables (i.e., intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing in the current study) is examined by using the DCON command in Mplus.

#### *R3STEP Command*

R3STEP is a command in Mplus that is used to examine the relationships between profile membership and the antecedent variables by evaluating whether increasing the predictors would increase the likelihood of individuals to be in one profile over the other (Gabriel et al., 2015).

#### *DCON Command*

DCON is a command in Mplus that is used to examine the relationships between the profile membership and the distal outcome variables using mean scores and Chi square test (Gabriel et al., 2015).

#### *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*

One-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used “to test for the differences between three or more independent sample means” (Allen & Bennett, 2010, p. 75). It can be used to determine the differences in mean scores for a certain group or simple population (Hair et al., 2014). Also an

ANOVA test can be used to examine the constancy of the profiles/clusters to establish the criterion validity of the model (Hair, 2014; Meyer et al., 2012). Thus, in this research an ANOVA analysis was conducted to examine the constancy of the profiles resulting from the LPA (Meyer et al., 2012).

In this research, the three-step LPA approach was utilised with two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview the research design, described the employed methods and justified the use of a mixed-method design using a sequential exploratory strategy. This research design consists of using a combination of qualitative (Study 1) and quantitative data collection methods (Study 2 and Study 3). The chapter also described the sampling strategy, the data collection process, the data analytical strategies and the measures for each method.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, reports the qualitative findings from Study 1, which were used to generate new items for the repatriation adjustment scale, which was generally guided by Churchill's (1979) scale development procedure.

# Chapter 4: Study 1, Scale Development

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## 4.1 PREAMBLE

The previous chapter discussed the methodological approach and analytical strategies employed to answer the research questions and address the identified gaps in the repatriation adjustment literature. As discussed in Chapter 2, one gap in the repatriation adjustment literature is the absence of an existing scale for measuring adjustment of repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultural contexts.

The purpose of the current chapter is to report the findings of Study 1. In Study 1, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultural contexts.

Chapter 4 is structured as follows. First, the chapter begins with a brief introduction to Study 1. The chapter then discusses the utilised method, in particular the sample, data collection, unit of analysis and the analytical strategies. Third, the chapter reports the findings of Study 1 in conjunction with discussions of the previous repatriation adjustment research and, finally, concludes with a summary of the chapter.

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Study 1 was to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an

international assignment in a novel cultural context. The findings of Study 1 were used to refine the current definition of repatriation adjustment, and then develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for the current research.

The review of repatriation adjustment literature revealed that the repatriation adjustment construct was originally viewed as an intensive and extended form of expatriation adjustment, cross-cultural adjustment or cultural shock concepts, which describe the experience of individuals who move from their home countries to work and live in other countries. For instance, the most influenced theory of adjustment (Black et al., 1992) was originally explicitly developed to explain expatriation adjustment, before being applied to the repatriation context.

Black et al. (1992) define repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture. The theory explains repatriation adjustment in terms of three psychological sub-facets – work, interaction and general readjustment (Black et al., 1992). Work readjustment refers to the repatriate's psychological comfort with their new job tasks upon returning home (Black et al., 1992). Interaction readjustment refers to the capability of communicating with the home-country nationals (Black et al., 1992). General readjustment refers to comfort with the general non-work environment, such as living conditions (Black et al., 1992).

The literature review also revealed that the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1991) does not include an important component of repatriation adjustment – socio-cultural readjustment. Socio-cultural readjustment was defined as the “component-ability to ‘fit in’ and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture” (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p. 450).

These challenges combined result in a lack of clarity in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the construct, leading to “a sense of the confusion reigning in the field” (Vidal et al., 2007, p. 318). Thus, it is important to examine repatriation adjustment theory and its components in the context of repatriation to better understand the nature of the construct as described by repatriates. To this end, Study 1 addresses the first research question – ‘*How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*’ – through conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews. The objectives of the semi-structured interviews were, first, to deductively test and verify the repatriation adjustment facets, which emerged from prior literature of repatriation adjustment, including the psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment facets. The second aim was to indicatively explore how the repatriation adjustment is perceived by repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in novel a culture. The repatriation adjustment components are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

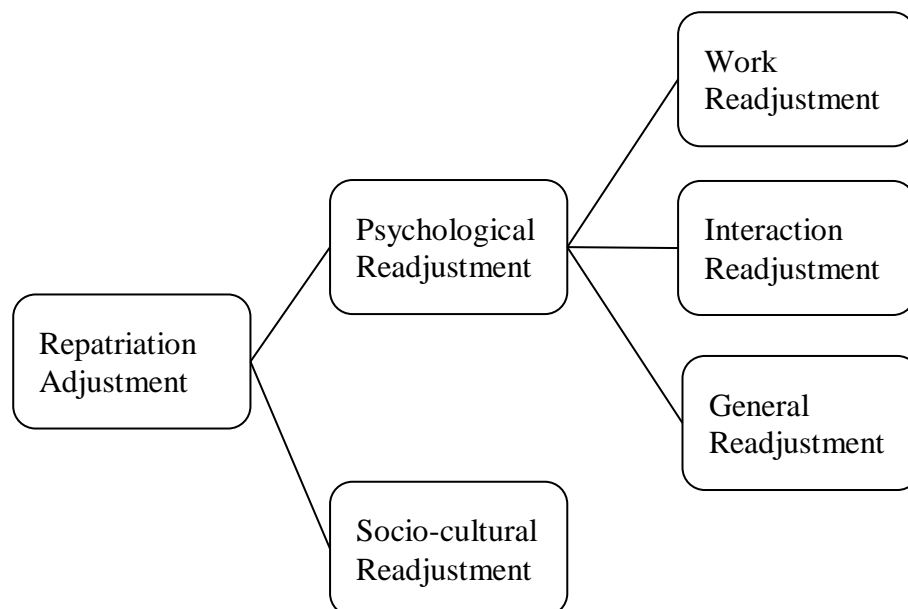


Figure 4.1 Facets of Repatriation Adjustment.

### **4.3 METHODOLOGY**

This study uses qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel cultural context. This was approached through exploring the psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment of Saudi repatriates who had returned home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture (Australia, the UK and the US). The qualitative data were used to generate items for the new repatriation adjustment scale.

The following sections describe the interview procedure and report the qualitative findings. It begins with participants' characteristics followed by the data collection, unit of analysis and data analysis procedure. Then, the qualitative findings are presented with a discussion of the extant repatriation adjustment literature.

#### **4.3.1 Sample Characteristics**

Nineteen Saudi males participated in this study. Participants were approached using a snowball sampling strategy (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), in which an email invitation was sent to potential participants inviting them to take part in the study. Respondents were then asked to forward the email to others in their professional network who met the selection criteria. The selection criteria included that participants must be Saudi public sector employees, who had temporarily expatriated to a novel cultural context such as Australia, the UK or the US for at least two years, and then had returned to work and live in Saudi Arabia upon completing their international assignment. The email invitation gave details of the interview procedure



and asked interested participants to specify a convenient time and place for the interview (see Appendix A).

All participants work in Saudi public sector departments and had temporarily expatriated for at least two years to a novel culture – that is, either Australia ( $n = 6$ ), the UK ( $n = 4$ ) or the US ( $n = 9$ ) – and participated in an international job assignment as part of their work commitments. The primary goal of the international job assignment was improving employee efficiency via acquiring global knowledge and skills while advancing their education (Ministry of Civil Service, 2014). The average time spent overseas was three years and five months (range 2–6 years). The average time since returning home was 13 months (range 2–36 months). The decision was made to include repatriates, who had returned home up to 36 months, to better capture repatriation adjustment domains across different stages since returning. This timeframe is also consistent with previous leading repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Sussman’s (2002) study where the average was 30 months, ranging from 1–44 months). See Table 4.1 for a demographic profile of the participants.

Table 4.1

*Demographic Profile of Participants*

Characteristic	Description
Number of Participants	19 Participants
Gender	Male (100%)
Age	25–29 years (15.79%), 30–34 years (26.32%), 35–39 years (36.84%), and 40–44 years (21.05%)
Educational Level	Undergraduate (5.26%), Postgraduate (94.74%)
Host Country	Australia (31.58%), the UK (21.05%), and the US (47.37%)
Marital Status	Married (78.95%), Single (21.05%)
Average Time Spent Overseas	3 years and 5 months (range 2–6 years)
Average Time Since Returning Home	13.57 months (range 2–36 months)

### 4.3.2 Data Collection

As explained in Chapter 3, the data were collected using semi-structured interviews. An interview protocol was used as a guide during the interviews (Robson, 2011) (see Appendix A). Participants were asked questions about their most recent repatriation experience, such as:

- Tell me about your experience of returning to Saudi Arabia from (the host country name).
- From your experience, what are the most important factors that facilitate/hinder the process of readjustment? Can you give me some examples?

Each participant was asked to sign a consent form before conducting the interview (see Appendix C for Participant Information and Consent Form). The interviews lasted between 35–60 minutes and took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2015. The interviews were conducted in English and were audio recorded with participants' permission.

### 4.3.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis refers to “the level of data aggregation during the subsequent analysis” (Karlsson, 2016, p. 102). The unit of analysis might be individuals, groups, artefacts, etc. (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

In most cases, the identification of the research question(s) leads to the appropriate selection of the unit of analysis. Thus, based on the research question in this study – *‘How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?’* – the unit of analysis is the readjustment experience of individual repatriates.

#### **4.3.4 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data were analysed guided by the inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The entire transcription of the interviews yielded 178 pages of text which were subjected to initial reading and re-reading, taking notes of the initial ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo 11 software program for analysis.

In the first phase of the data analysis, transcriptions were reviewed and verified while listening to the audio recordings. The notes, which were taken during the interviews, were also reviewed, providing more insights into each individual participant's repatriation adjustment story. These activities facilitated the familiarisation between the researcher and the qualitative data.

The second phase involved generating initial codes. Initial coding is defined as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). The result of this initial coding phase was the identification of 162 initial codes within about 500 coded segments.

The third phase involved searching for the potential themes across the initial codes. This phase is also referred to as axial coding, which is defined as the process of "grouping the codes according to conceptual categories that reflect commonalities among the codes" (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 215). During this phase, the repatriation adjustment facets that emerged from earlier studies included the psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment facets.

However, for each facet, the data suggested some new elements or content which were not included previously. For instance, in previous literature, (i.e., Black et al., 1992; Kunasegaran, Ismail, Rasdi, & Ismail, 2016; Yan, 2015) work readjustment is explained using: specific job responsibility, the adjustment to

performance standards/expectations and adjustment to supervisory responsibilities. However, the data in the current study revealed that work readjustment, as perceived by repatriates returning from novel cultures, is explained by additional concepts, such as readjustment to the interactions with workplace authority figures and readjustment to the interactions with work colleagues.

In addition, the data-driven concepts, such as personal readjustment, were also identified during this phase. Both the theory- and data-driven concepts are explained in a detailed discussion in the findings section.

Overall, this phase resulted in identifying nine major themes: professional readjustment, personal readjustment, expatriation and the repatriation process, adjustment time frame, prediction of repatriation adjustment, family readjustment, social readjustment, general readjustment experience and future plans for working and living in Saudi Arabia.

Phase four involved reviewing and refining the themes, first at the codes level, and then at the level of the entire data set. Within this phase, some codes were re-labelled and some coded segments were reassigned to other codes or moved around and reorganised as sub-codes. As a result, the number of major themes was reduced to four – professional readjustment, personal readjustment, social readjustment and general readjustment – as the focus was on emerging themes that were directly related to the research questions.

The fifth phase was concerned with defining the emergent themes. Thus, the four major themes and their supporting themes are outlined and defined in Table 4.2.

In the final phase of the data analysis, the major themes were further analysed to unpack the contents of each theme. The findings are presented in conjunction with current repatriation adjustment literature in section 4.4.

Table 4.2

*Definition of Themes and Supporting Themes*

Major Theme	Supporting Theme	Definition of Themes
Professional Readjustment		Refers to the extent to which repatriates felt readjusted to their workplace after they returned from their most recent international assignment in a foreign novel culture.
	Readjustment to the local work environment	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in readjusting to their workplace environment.
	Readjustment to the interactions with workplace authority figures	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in interacting with their authority figures in the workplace.
Personal Readjustment	Readjustment to the interactions with workplace colleagues	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in interacting with their colleagues in the workplace.
		Refers to the extent to which repatriates felt readjusted to their personal life after they returned from their most recent international assignment in a foreign novel culture.
	Readjustment to the local norms of punctuality	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in readjusting to the local punctuality.
	Readjustment to the local daily life	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in readjusting to their local daily life due to changes in their personal values.
Social Readjustment	Readjustment to the local norms	Indicates that participants had experienced challenges in readjusting to their local norms.
		Refers to the extent to which repatriates felt readjusted to their social norms and values after they returned from their most recent international assignment in a foreign novel culture.
General Readjustment		Refers to the extent to which repatriates felt readjusted to their day-to-day living in Saudi Arabia after they returned from their most recent international assignment in a foreign novel culture.

#### **4.3.5 Ethical Considerations**

The interviews were conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Queensland University of Technology's Ethics Guidelines. Thus, prior to commencing the data collection process, ethical clearance was obtained from QUT's Ethics Committee (Ethics Approval Number: 1400001013). A participant information sheet was sent to the participants to explain the focus of the study and to illustrate the potential benefits and risks associated with participating in the study. The participant information sheet (see Appendix C) informed the participants that participation in this research is completely voluntary and that the interview, if they agreed, would be audio-recorded.

It also stated that names of individual persons and identifiable markers would be removed from the data before dissemination, ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of their information. The participants also had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time (see Appendix C). Before conducting the interviews each participant was asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C).

#### **4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

There were two main objectives of the semi-structured interviews. The first was to verify the repatriation adjustment facets, including the psychological (work, interaction and general) and the socio-cultural readjustment facets which emerged from the prior repatriation adjustment literature. The second objective was to explore how the repatriation adjustment experience was perceived by repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. The thematic analysis resulted in four major themes: professional readjustment (supported by three subthemes), personal readjustment (supported by three subthemes), socio-cultural readjustment and general readjustment.

To ensure participants' confidentiality and privacy, each participant was assigned a pseudonym. In this study participants are represented by the letter P (for participant) with a number rather than using their actual name (Creswell, 2013).

Table 4.3 summarises the demographic information for each participants.

Table 4.3

*Participants' Biographical Information*

Participant's pseudonym	Age group	Time spent overseas	Time since returning home	Number of home visit during IA	Number of IA	Host country
P_1	35-39	5ys	6ms	N/S	N/S	UK
P_2	35-39	5ys	18ms	4	2	US and UK
P_3	40-44	6ys	2ms	5	3	Japan, US and UK
P_4	35-39	3ys	12ms	N/S	1	AUS
P_5	40-44	3ys	9ms	3	1	US
P_6	30-34	5ys	30ms	3	1	US
P_7	30-34	3ys	24ms	3	N/S	AUS
P_8	25-29	3ys	9ms	3	1	US
P_9	25-29	2ys	3ms	1	2	US
P_10	30-34	2ys	18ms	3	1	AUS
P_11	30-34	4ys	6ms	2	1	AUS
P_12	40-44	4ys	36ms	3	1	UK
P_13	35-39	2ys&6ms	24ms	2	1	AUS
P_14	30-34	3ys	12ms	2	1	US
P_15	35-39	2ys	3ms	1	2	US and UK
P_16	40-44	2ys	36ms	2	1	US



P_17	25-29	2ys	3ms	1	2	US
P_18	35-39	5ys	5ms	4	2	UK and US
P_19	35-39	5ys	2ms	4	2	UK and US

*Note*, participants who had multiple international assignments were interviewed on their most recent one; N/S = not specified.

As is typical in qualitative research, the themes are discussed in detail and include representative verbatim extracts from the interview transcripts to illustrate themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Thus, the major themes and their supporting themes are interpreted and related to the results and findings of extant literature in the following sections. Please refer to Appendix D for the interview code book.

#### **4.4.1 Theme 1: Professional Readjustment**

The first theme is professional readjustment. As indicated earlier, professional readjustment was a theory-driven theme. The concept of professional readjustment, within the previous literature on repatriation adjustment, has been referred to as the repatriate's psychological comfort with their new job tasks upon returning home (Black et al., 1992). The key facets of work readjustment comprised the readjustment to specific job responsibilities, readjustment to performance standards/expectations and readjustment to supervisory responsibilities (Black et al., 1992; Kunasegaran et al., 2016; Yan, 2015).

However, as the data in the present study show, readjusting to the workplace upon returning from novel cultures implies additional factors, as the degree of novelty between the home and host cultures is associated with shifting or replacing the individual's core values, which implies leaving the organisation with heritage core values and returning with new dominant ones (Guan & Dodder, 2000).

In this context, professional readjustment refers to how comfortable participants feel at their workplace after returning from an international assignment in a novel culture. This major theme is supported by three subthemes that cover specific areas of readjustment: the local work environment, interactions with authority figures in the workplace and interactions with colleagues. The following sections discuss these three subthemes. Each theme is supported by examples from the data in conjunction with a discussion of the current repatriation adjustment literature.

### **Sub-theme 1: Readjustment to Local Work Environment**

Returning to the home working environment was explained by the readiness, ability and capability to perform the required job tasks. In describing their experience of readjusting to their local work environment, most participants reported carrying out work-related tasks that were similar to what they had performed prior to their international assignments in novel cultures. For example, participants stated the following:

‘I returned to the same work, the same position and the same tasks; therefore, everything was the same.’ (P\_4, Repatriated from Australia)

‘Well, I would say that I returned to the same office and the same people.’ (P\_12, Repatriated from the UK)

‘When I returned to my organisation, I performed the same duties and faced the same challenges; therefore, I think that, since graduating with my master’s degree, my work has not reflected what I learned in the USA.’ (P\_16, Repatriated from the US)

Other participants indicated that they were asked to perform new work-related tasks after returning from foreign novel cultures. For instance, participants P\_14 and P\_8 stated the following:

‘I graduated with a Master’s degree. Everyone in my organisation expected me to know everything, even in areas beyond my field of study. In fact, during the first two or three months, my colleagues asked me many questions for which I had no answers.’ (P\_14, Repatriated from Australia)

‘My employer expects me to do things that I was incapable of doing before going to the United States. I do have new skills that I would love to utilise in my job.’ (P\_8, Repatriated from the US)

This finding differs from those reported in the prior repatriation adjustment literature. Although previous studies have addressed the issue of specific job responsibilities, which is a crucial concept in this context, the data suggest that repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture experience professional readjustment difficulties beyond their specific job responsibilities.

The Saudi repatriates experienced readjustment challenges in performing new work tasks or carrying out old work tasks upon repatriation for two main reasons. The first reason is the lack of concern of the Saudi public sector department – “the out-of-sight, out-of-mind syndrome” (Andreason & Kinneer, 2005). According to Andreason and Kinneer, “repatriates return to organisations that appear to have forgotten who they are, do not know what they have accomplished during their overseas assignment, and do not know how to use their international knowledge appropriately” (2005, p. 110).

The second reason might be the absence of a repatriation program, as some departments were not fully prepared for the re-entry of their employees, which might have led them to ask their repatriates to do the same work tasks they were doing before they were sent overseas, or assign work tasks which they were not capable of doing. It is worthwhile indicating that the absence of a repatriation program is a well-known dilemma in repatriation literature.

The readjustment challenges of performing new work tasks or carrying out old work tasks upon repatriation are not discussed in the extant repatriation adjustment literature. Most prior studies examined the readjustment experience of repatriates who were temporarily expatriated to relatively similar cultural contexts (i.e., Cox, 2004; Kimber, 2012; Suutari & Valimaa, 2002) and most returned to work on well-defined tasks and duties, which was found to significantly impact the cross-cultural adjustment (Benson & Pattie, 2009).

### **Subtheme 2: Readjustment to Interactions with Authority Figures in the Workplace**

Repatriates returning home upon completing their international assignments in novel cultures experienced readjustment issues regarding their interactions with authority figures due to the traditional ‘hierarchical’ managerial system in Saudi public organisations (Kirkman et al., 2009). In most cases, repatriates stated they were perceived as a threat to their managers and complained about the local traditional managerial system, as illustrated by P\_10, P\_2 and P\_8:

‘In fact, my overall situation before I went to Australia was much better than it is now. Maybe I was not a threat to managers before. With my current qualifications, they might consider me as a threat to their positions rather than as a source of new knowledge to foster improvements.’ (P\_10, Repatriated from Australia)

‘Well, the work environment is a bit different: too much bureaucracy, too many rules and too many regulations. I receive little encouragement from colleagues at work. You have to be self-motivated; everybody wants everything to be easy, and no one wants to work hard to achieve anything.’ (P\_2, Repatriated from Australia)

‘I also think that there is some fear that, if they supported me, it would create animosity because it might seem that they were favouring me over others.’ (P\_8, Repatriated from the US)

Participants P\_9 and P\_13 emphasised that the top management positions were still held by the same people as before they went overseas, which the repatriates viewed as an obstacle to their career advancement:

‘I hope that they do not think that only traditional methods will work. There are many new ideas out there that might be better. Every issue has more than one solution, and if they follow only one solution, they might miss a more cost-effective one, which they will not know about if they do not listen to new ideas. Hence, they should be open, and when they receive advice, they should consider its potential value. This is especially true of people from previous generations who are still in managerial positions and often receive all new ideas as negative. I think they should listen to their employees.’ (P\_9, Repatriated from the US)

‘I would say that the most challenging aspect of returning to work was the organisational culture, especially with people who stick to traditional ways of managing their workforce. Although I think that is a smart way to manage, when you try to explain a new and better way of doing things to them, you face a huge number of conflicts.’ (P\_13, Repatriated from Australia)

This subtheme diverges from previous repatriation adjustment literature. In the current study, Saudi repatriates experienced miscommunication and interaction issues with their managers after returning from novel cultures. This can be explained by the degree of cultural novelty between the home and host countries. The Saudi repatriates were temporarily expatriated to cultures with a low power distance (i.e., Australia, the UK and the US), which are described as ‘egalitarian’, and then returned to a high-power distance country (the Saudi cultural context), which is described as ‘hierarchical’ (Kirkman et al., 2009).

Thus, prior to expatriation, the Saudi repatriates accepted titles, ranks, privileges and status, had an unquestioning acceptance of their leaders and accepted the differences in decision-making power between leaders and followers (Madlock, 2012); they were then exposed to ‘egalitarian’, low power distance cultures, where people in authority are more willing to share their power with others (Madlock,

2012). Thus, because of the interactions with people in the host countries, Saudi repatriates embraced the low power cultural values and norms which led them to experience miscommunication and interaction issues upon their re-entry to their home culture.

The miscommunication and interaction issues between repatriates and their managers are not discussed in the current literature, as studies have tended to investigate the readjustment experience of repatriates returning to low power distance cultures (i.e., Black, 1996; Black et al., 1992) or were temporarily expatriated to similar cultural contexts (i.e., Cox, 2004; Kimber, 2012; Suutari & Valimaa, 2002).

### **Subtheme 3: Readjustment to Interactions with Colleagues in the Workplace**

The third theme is the readjustment to interactions with colleagues in the workplace. Within this subtheme, participants indicated that they had to establish new relationships with their colleagues. For instance, P\_8 stated:

‘When I came back, I found myself out of touch with my colleagues, and I felt that the organisation did not care about me! They were more concerned about how long I had to work with them, which was three years and equal to the time I spent overseas. Also, when I returned after three years abroad, I found that the people I worked with in the organisation had changed; therefore, I had to start new relationships. It was really difficult, and I would say it would be much easier to start a new job, even though it involves dealing with new people, new mentalities and a new CEO.’ (P\_8, Repatriated from the US)

The data suggest that the repatriates were looking forward to sharing the knowledge and skills that they had learnt overseas with their colleagues. This is illustrated in P\_4’s comment:

‘I was looking forward to returning and using the knowledge I gained overseas to help my organisation improve and move forward; I wanted to share the knowledge I had learnt with my colleagues.’ (P\_4, Repatriated from Australia)

The overall findings of this subtheme diverge from the previous repatriation adjustment literature. Saudi repatriates experienced miscommunication and interaction matters with their colleagues after returning from novel cultures. This might be explained by changes to standard procedures which occurred while repatriates were overseas. Thus, when they returned to work they were surprised and frustrated at what had happened in their workplace, because they were not fully aware of the changes.

This issue relates to the fundamental characteristics of the ‘hierarchical’ workplace environment, which employs a top-down management system where employees are not normally involved in the decision-making process. Thus, they were not fully aware of changes that had taken place in their workplace during their absence on international assignments.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the issue of readjusting to the interactions with workplace colleagues is not addressed in the previous literature on repatriation adjustment. This is because most repatriates studied in previous research were returning to a workplace with lower power distance cultural contexts.

#### **4.4.2 Theme 2: Personal Readjustment**

Personal readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their personal life after they return from international assignments in novel cultures. The personal readjustment theme consists of three readjustment subthemes: local norms of punctuality, local daily life and local communication norms. The following sections explain the three subthemes and are supported by examples from the data.

### **Subtheme 1: Readjustment to the Local Norms of Punctuality**

Participants indicated that they developed new personal norms during their international assignments regarding time and punctuality, and maintained these norms after returning home. For instance, participants P\_12 and P\_15 mentioned the following:

‘Yeah, personally, before I went to the UK, I knew that time is very meaningful in that culture. When I returned to Saudi Arabia, I tried many times to be on time for meetings and setting up deadlines to finalise my work. However, within my native culture, time is more flexible.’ (P\_12, Repatriated from the UK)

‘Actually, before I went to the UK, I did not really care much about time; I mean, I was not a very punctual person. In fact, while I was there, I faced many challenges when dealing with time. After returning home, I found that I had adopted new habits regarding punctuality very well.’ (P\_15, Repatriated from the UK)

The readjustment to local norms of punctuality subtheme emphasised that participants had adopted new norms of punctuality as a result of their exposure to novel cultures. Thus, it is assumed that, due to cultural differences regarding punctuality norms, the readjustment experience would be even more challenging.

### **Subtheme 2: Readjustment to Local Daily Life**

Within this subtheme, participants indicated that they experienced several difficulties in their readjustment to local daily life after returning home from a novel culture. For instance, participants stated:

‘There was more simplicity to my life abroad. Back here, time is limited due to family and other obligations. There, I felt a bit more free.’ (P\_1, Repatriated from the UK)

‘I would say that my daily routine changed. Here in Saudi Arabia, the family commitment is huge and consumes most of my time; when I was in the United States, my schedule was based on what I love to do and rarely disturbed by things such as family commitments.’ (P\_8, Repatriated from the US)



Some participants indicated that exposure to novel cultures made readjusting more complicated due to miscommunication between themselves and locals, as explained by participants P\_19 and P\_13:

‘A lot of people consider guys coming from the outside as unpleasant; they say that newcomers are always complaining about local routines and other things that differ from their experiences abroad. I have explained that, because we were living in another culture, we had outside perspectives that highlighted negative things we have here. That is why we have so many complaints.’ (P\_19, Repatriated from the US)

‘I really feel like someone alone in the desert. Yeah, no one really cares. Even if you are on the street, sometimes, you feel like a stranger.’ (P\_13, Repatriated from Australia)

These findings suggest that some participants found it difficult to fit in again with their native culture if they embraced their host culture’s norms and values, which created conflicts with the local norms and culture, which is more likely when repatriating from a novel culture.

### **Subtheme 3: Readjustment to the Local Norms**

This subtheme involves participants indicating the development of new personal skills and norms, such as the ability to state their own opinions and respecting others’ opinions, as a result of their interaction with host people in their novel cultures. For example, participants P\_13, P\_19 and P\_10 stated the following:

‘Before I went overseas, I was the kind of person who could not openly express my feelings towards friends in certain situations. I mean, when someone was telling me something that was incorrect, I could not tell them that they were wrong. Now, I have become more frank, and I can say that directly. This actually got me into some trouble at first, but once they got used to it, they sometimes asked for my opinion.’ (P\_13, Repatriated from Australia)

‘Well, I think they helped me readjust. Part of the knowledge you are gaining when you are abroad includes the ability to accommodate—how to accommodate another culture, person, opinion, advisor or professor. So, you acquire the skills needed to accommodate anyone, even if your views totally conflict with theirs. You can discuss and

achieve a goal with them, even if you do not agree with them 100 per cent.’ (P\_19, Repatriated from the US)

‘I developed the skill of being straightforward with my opinions, which made it somewhat difficult for me upon my return.’ (P\_10, Repatriated from Australia)

#### **4.4.3 Theme 3: Socio-cultural Readjustment**

Socio-cultural readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates felt readjusted to their social norms and values after they returned from international assignments in novel cultures. Socio-cultural readjustment occurs when participants feel unfamiliar with the Saudi social norms or experience difficulties with their social networks because of their exposure to novel cultures. Most participants indicated that their social networks blamed them for being different than they used to be, as noted by participant P\_19:

‘Well, they [referring to the participant’s social network] constantly said that I had changed, and they reacted to anything I said; I had many opinions about a variety of topics before I went to the US. When I returned, even though I said the same things, they accused me of being influenced by Western culture.’ (P\_19, Repatriated from the US)

Some participants stressed that they became less socially active after returning from novel cultures. P\_18 stated:

‘To be honest, I stay home most of the time unless I have to go out somewhere such as to a store. I love staying at home, and I’m sure that I am going to be less social as time passes.’ (P\_18, Repatriated from the US)

#### **4.4.4 Theme 4: General Readjustment**

General readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their day-to-day living environment in Saudi Arabia after returning from an international assignment in a novel culture. Under this general readjustment theme the majority of participants reported that they experienced several challenges in

finding suitable and comfortable accommodation. For instance, participants P\_11, P\_19 and P\_18 stated the following:

‘I spent two months looking for a suitable house.’ (P\_11, Repatriated from Australia)

‘There is a degree of difference between the United States and Saudi Arabia, which created some issues. For example, systemic things and the structure of procedures are more clearly written and standardised in the United States than they are here in Saudi Arabia. Other factors include obtaining a driver’s licence, finding a house or completing an accommodation contract; all of these steps consume more time here than they do in the United States. Even though I was a foreigner, it was very easy for me to do these things there compared to here in Saudi Arabia.’ (P\_19, Repatriated from the US)

‘Well, the funny thing is that I still do not have a home! My wife lives with her parents, and I live with my parents. Currently, we are thinking of renovating a separate unit inside my parents’ house. But, it needs a lot of work, which could take a month.’ (P\_18, Repatriated from the US)

Other participants indicated that they experienced readjustment challenges related to general resettlement at home, local transportation systems and financial hardship. Examples of such were as follows:

‘I think there are, of course, some challenges in coming back. Living abroad is more open and provides a new system of living. No matter how conservative you are, there is a difference. Even in going to a shopping mall, your family can be safe and go alone; here, you have to have a car. These are transport issues, not cultural issue, but it took some time to readjust.’ (P\_1, Repatriated from the UK)

‘It was not only a matter of returning back to Saudi Arabia; I was coming back from a different country. Even though I was returning to my home country, it did not feel like home. It was like entering a new city. So, I had to re-establish everything from the beginning. I didn’t know a lot of people or the roads and streets; so, I took a lot of time to navigate my way.’ (P\_6, Repatriated from the US)

‘I could not find the time to renew my driver’s licence because I had to start working on my arrival date; so, I could not rent a car, and my brother had to step in and rent a car for me in his name. I had to talk to everybody about my job and living arrangements before I could take a day off to do such things.’ (P\_18, Repatriated from the US)

#### **4.4.5 Refining the Definition of Repatriation Adjustment**

The repatriation adjustment literature revealed that the repatriation adjustment was defined as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture (Black et al., 1992). The theory explained repatriation adjustment in terms of three psychological sub-facets, (work, interaction, and general) (Black et al., 1992).

The qualitatively findings provided support for the presence of the core facets and elements of the Black's et al. (1992) definition, but within additional insights as gained from the interviews, and thus, extended the definition. The new proposed definition of repatriation adjustment is the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon the completion of their international assignments on novel cultures.

#### **4.4.6 Preliminary Qualitative Facets of Repatriation Adjustment**

In Chapter 2 it was proposed that in addition to psychological readjustment (Black et al., 1992) – comprising the three, interrelated psychological subdomains of work, interaction and general – there are socio-cultural influences. Therefore, the psychological and the socio-cultural facets, which are defined in Table 4.4, were tested and verified among repatriates returning home upon completing their international assignments in novel cultures using deductive and inductive thematic analysis.

Table 4.4

*Facets and Definitions of Repatriation Adjustment*

Construct	Domain	Subdomain	Conceptualisation	Source
Repatriation Adjustment	Psychological Readjustment	Work Readjustment	The repatriate's psychological comfort with their new job tasks upon returning home.	Black et al. (1992)
		Interaction Readjustment	The capability to communicate with home-country nationals	Black et al. (1992)
		General Readjustment	Comfort with the general non-work environment, such as living conditions.	Black et al. (1992)
	Socio-cultural Readjustment	Unidimensional	The component-ability to 'fit in' and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture.	Ward & Kennedy (1994)

The data suggest the partial presence of two repatriation adjustment facets, as well as the presence of a new additional insight – personal readjustment. Thus, the facets were relabelled as professional readjustment, personal readjustment, socio-cultural readjustment and general readjustment to better reflect and explain repatriation adjustment as perceived by repatriates returning from novel cultures (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

*Facets and Definitions of Repatriation Adjustment from Novel Cultures*

Construct	Facets	Qualitative sub-facets	Conceptualisation
Repatriation Adjustment	Professional Readjustment	Work environment readjustment	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their workplace environment.
		Interactions with authority figures	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their interactions with authority figures in the workplace.
		Interactions with colleagues	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their interactions with colleagues in the workplace.
		Local norms of punctuality	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to local punctuality norms.
	Personal Readjustment	Local daily life	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their local daily life due to changes in their personal values.
		Local communication norms	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their local norms.
	Socio-cultural Readjustment	Unidimensional	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their social norms and values after they return from their most recent international assignment in a novel culture.
	General Readjustment	Unidimensional	Refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their day-to-day living in Saudi Arabia after they return from their most recent international assignment in a novel culture.

#### 4.4.7 Item Generation and Development

The new revised definition of repatriation adjustment establishes the base for the operationalisation. To generate content-valid items of the new repatriation adjustment measure, the pre-existing scales for psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment were reviewed. Psychological readjustment was measured using a number of scales, including the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (ZSDS; Zung, 1965), the Repatriation Distress Scale (RDS; Sussman, 2002) and the Repatriation Experience Assessment Scale (REAS; Sussman, 2001) (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

##### *Prior Scales of Psychological Readjustment*

Scale Name	Scale Abbreviation	Type of Adjustment	Source
Repatriation Experience Assessment Scale	REAS	Psychological	Sussman (2001)
Repatriation Distress Scale	RDS	Psychological	Sussman (2002)
Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale	ZSDS	Psychological	Zung (1965) cited in Cox (2004)
Repatriation Preparedness Scale	RPS	Psychological preparedness	Sussman (2001)
Repatriation Adjustment Scale	RAS	Psychological	Black et al. (1992)
Beck Depression Inventory	BDI	Psychological	Beck (1978) cited in cited in Rogers and Ward (1993)
Cultural Adaptation/Affective	CA/A	Psychological	Sussman (2002)

However, most of the previous studies have utilised the scale developed by Black et al. (1992), as it is the most influential and most cited scale in cross-cultural studies (Black & Stephens, 1989; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The scale

measures repatriation adjustment across three psychological facets (interaction, work and general adjustment) and consists of 13 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not adjusted and 7 = completely adjusted; Black et al., 1992). Among these 13 items, seven items measure general adjustment, three items measure interaction adjustment and three items measure work adjustment (Black et al., 1992). This scale has been used in various studies and has been proven reliable, with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .82 (Furuya et al., 2009; Furuya et al., 2007) to .85 (Suutari & Valimaa, 2002).

Socio-cultural readjustment was measured using a number of scales, including the Socio-cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS; Ward & Kennedy, 1999), the Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire (SRRQ; Searle & Ward, 1990) and the Cultural Adaptation Scale (CAS; Sussman, 2002) (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

*Prior Scales of Socio-cultural Readjustment*

Scale Name	Scale Abbreviation	Type of Adjustment	Source
Socio-cultural Adaptation Scale	SCAS	Socio-cultural	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire	SRRQ	Socio-cultural	Searle & Ward (1990)
Reverse Culture Shock Scale	RCSS	Socio-cultural	Moore et al. (1987)
Cultural Adaptation Scale	CAS	Socio-cultural	Sussman (2002)

The SCAS, which was developed by Ward and Kennedy (1999), is considered as one of the most frequently used scales in previous studies. This is because the “SCAS is a flexible instrument that can be modified according to the characteristics of the sample” (Ward & Kennedy, 1999, p. 662). The SCAS uses 24 items to measure the degree of social difficulty. The scale has been utilised over a range of



samples and has shown good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha scores of .75 to .91 (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuha, 1999).

Thus, the RAS (Black et al., 1992) provided the guidelines for the scale formatting and questions. Black et al.'s (1992) scale was also included to provide further data on the nomological validity of the newly developed scale. In addition, some items of the SCAS (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) were adopted (see Table 4.8). Participants were asked to assess the extent to which they felt readjusted after returning from novel cultures.

### **Preliminary Items Evaluation**

The first round of the item-generation phase resulted in an initial pool of 148 items. Churchill (1979) suggests discussing the newly developed items with appropriate people, such as academics and government personnel. Thus, this research addressed these recommendations by, first, negotiating the generated items with the supervisory team and, second, by pre-testing the items among 10 participants within the target population before launching the survey. These evaluations led to removing redundant items and improving item wording, which significantly reduced the total number of items to 51 (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

*Generated Items and their Sources*

Facet	Item Statement	Source
Professional Readjustment	Your specific job responsibilities.	Black et al. (1992)
	Performance expectations.	Black et al. (1992)
	The work tasks you performed before you went overseas.	Item derived from data
	The work tasks assigned to you after your return from overseas.	Item derived from data
	Participating in decision-making processes.	Item derived from data
	The home organisation's rules, procedures and values.	Item derived from data
	Being able to fully express your opinions on work-related matters.	Item derived from data
	Supervisory responsibilities.	Black et al. (1992)
	Being able to questions your managers' decisions' when you perceive a better option.	Item derived from data
	Initiating new strategies for organisational improvement.	Item derived from data
	Reporting job-related concerns and issues.	Item derived from data
	Interacting with your managers.	Item derived from data
	Sharing ideas and strategies acquired during your time overseas.	Item derived from data
	Discussing work-related issues with your colleagues.	Item derived from data
Collaborating with your colleagues to make decisions.	Item derived from data	
Communicating with your colleagues.	Item derived from data	
Sharing ideas and strategies acquired overseas with your colleagues.	Item derived from data	
Personal Readjustment	The Saudi norms of punctuality for events or other commitments.	Item derived from data
	Running meetings (i.e., events, gatherings) on time.	Item derived from data
	Your daily life routine.	Item derived from data
	Enjoying the lifestyle of Saudi Arabia.	Item derived from data
	Practicing mannerisms or customs learnt during your time overseas.	Item derived from data
Seeing things from a local perspective.	Item derived from data	

	Expressing your feelings (positive or negative) about local norms.	Item derived from data
	Coping with resistance to your opinions or perspectives.	Item derived from data
	Disagreeing with unfavourable opinions.	Item derived from data
	Previous relationships with your social network (i.e., friends, relatives).	Data driven; Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Making new social relationships.	Data driven; Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Making yourself understood.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	The pace of social life.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	The norms and etiquette of social events.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Talking about yourself.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Persuading or convincing somebody about new social ideas acquired during your time overseas.	Item derived from data
	The local etiquette.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Talking with local people about your overseas experience.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Interacting with other repatriates.	Item derived from data
	Interacting with foreigners/expatriates.	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Interacting with fellow nationals in general.	Black et al. (1992); Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Interacting with friends outside of work.	Black et al. (1992); Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Speaking with fellow nationals.	Black et al. (1992); Ward & Kennedy (1999)
	Living conditions in general.	Black et al. (1992)
	Housing conditions.	Black et al. (1992)
	Food.	Black et al. (1992)
Socio-cultural Readjustment		
General Readjustment		

Shopping.	Black et al. (1992)
Cost of living.	Black et al. (1992)
Entertainment/recreation opportunities.	Black et al. (1992)
Healthcare facilities.	Black et al. (1992)
Coping with financial matters.	Item derived from data
Settling in at home before returning to work.	Item derived from data
The local transportation system and driving behaviours.	Item derived from data

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## Scaling Format

The pre-existing scales of repatriation adjustment were reviewed to determine the most appropriate scale formatting. It was found that the most common scale format was a Likert-type response scale (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

*Scaling Format of Pre-existing Scales of Repatriation Adjustment*

Scale Name	Scale Format	Type of Adjustment	Source
Socio-cultural Adaptation Scale	5-point Likert-type response scale, (1=not difficult and 5=extremely difficult)	Socio-cultural	Ward & Kennedy (1999)
Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire	5-point Likert-type response scale, (1=not difficult and 5=extremely difficult)	Socio-cultural	Searle & Ward (1990)
Repatriation Adjustment Scale	7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not adjusted and 7 = completely adjusted).	Psychological	Black et al. (1992)
Cultural Adaptation Scale	7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree).	Psychological	Sussman (2001)

Thus, consistent with the pre-existing scales of repatriation adjustment, the newly developed repatriation adjustment scale was assessed using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not adjusted and 7 = completely adjusted).

## 4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter presented the qualitative findings from Study 1 which was designed to address the first research question ‘*How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*’ The findings demonstrated that the participants explained their repatriation experience by focusing on four readjustment components or facets: professional, personal, socio-cultural and general readjustment.

The professional readjustment theme is a theory-driven theme. It has been addressed in the previous repatriation adjustment literature as the repatriate’s psychological comfort with their new job tasks upon returning home, while it was observed and measured by specific job responsibility, readjustment to performance standards/expectations and readjustment to supervisory responsibilities (Black et al., 1992; Kunasegaran et al., 2016; Yan, 2015).

Although the concepts of specific job responsibility, readjustment to performance standards/expectations and readjustment to supervisory responsibilities are crucial in any repatriation context, the current data suggest that Saudi repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures experience additional professional readjustment challenges, including: performing new work tasks or carrying out old work tasks upon repatriation, miscommunication and interaction issues with authority figures, and issues relating to interactions with workplace colleagues.

The data suggest that repatriates returning from international assignments in novel cultures gained both new personal norms and skills which, in most cases, complicated their readjustment to their native culture. The personal readjustment is

not well addressed in the previous literature on repatriation adjustment; however, some previous evidence suggests that the exposure of individuals to novel cultures is associated with experiencing a period of profound personal growth in the host culture (Kohonen, 2008). This profound growth might be due either to the absence of scales measuring personal readjustment or because most repatriation adjustment literature and theories were based on repatriates returning from relatively similar cultural contexts, which emphasised fewer changes at the personal level.

In addition, the data suggest that the participants experience challenges related to their socio-cultural readjustment. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted among repatriates returning from relatively similar cultures. For instance, socio-cultural readjustment has been conceptualised as ‘component-ability to “fit in” and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture’ (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p. 450). It is reflected in the ability to interact with a person’s native culture (Ward, 1996) as well as the changes in repatriates’ behaviours and social skills in their attempt to meet the social and behavioural values of their new cultural setting (Ward, 1996). However, the previous literature has investigated socio-cultural readjustment via a distinct construct that is related to repatriation adjustment rather than considering it as a domain of repatriation adjustment, resulting in low content-validity measures.

The findings also suggest that the participants experience difficulties regarding their general readjustment to their native cultures. Some findings were consistent with previous research involving relatively similar cultures, such as studies that have addressed the general readjustment challenges of housing, cost of living and living conditions (Black et al., 1992).

Other findings from this section diverge from the previous literature. For instance, readjustment to local transportation systems and resettlement prior to resuming work have not been addressed in previous studies. This might be because the previous studies focus on repatriation between relatively similar cultures, in which repatriates had not, for example, been exposed to totally new public transportation systems.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reported the findings of Study 1, which involved qualitative semi-structure interviews. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultural contexts. The data were analysed utilising inductive and deductive thematic analysis. The inductive thematic analysis resulted in identifying two repatriation adjustment facets – psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment – while the deductive thematic analysis resulted in, first, an explanation for new contents related to the psychological (work, interaction and general) and the socio-cultural readjustment facets and, second, the presence of a new facet – personal readjustment. The findings of Study 1 were used to refine the current definition of repatriation adjustment and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for the current research. The next chapter, Chapter 5, presents the results of Study 2, which was designed to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed from the current study.



# Chapter 5: Study 2, Scale Validation

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## 5.1 PREAMBLE

The previous chapter reported the findings of Study 1, the qualitative semi-structured interviews, which was conducted to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures. The findings from Study 1 were used to generate a new 51-item repatriation adjustment scale (see Table 4.8 in Chapter 4).

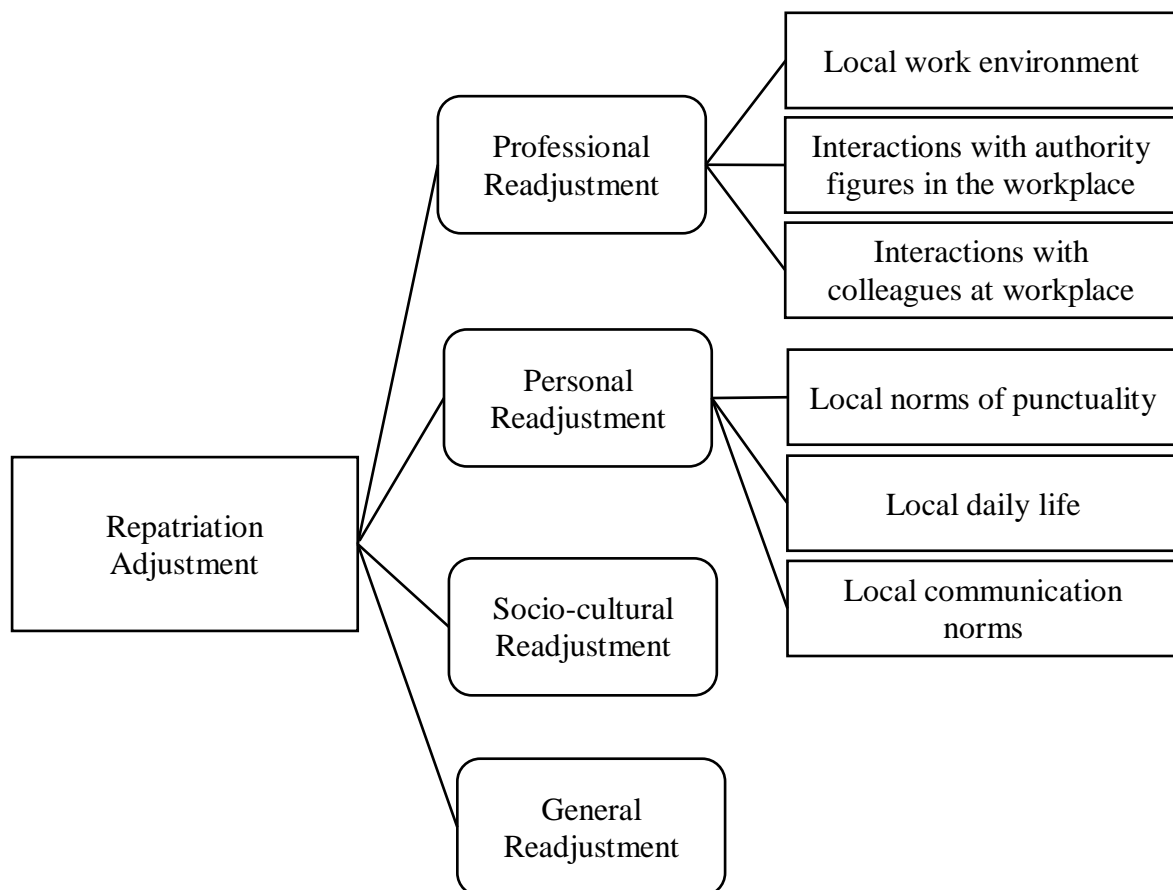
The purpose of the current chapter is to report the results of Study 2, which was designed to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed from the results of Study 1. The scale development procedure was generally guided by Churchill's (1979) scale development approach, as well as the recommendations of other scale development scholars (i.e., DeVellis, 2012), as outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 is organised as follows. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the scale-validation study. Second, the chapter discusses the methodology used in this study, describing the characteristics of the sample, the data collection and preparation procedures, and the utilised analytical procedures. The chapter then reports the results of the repatriation adjustment scale validation. This is followed by a discussion of the main results. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter.

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Study 2 was to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale, developed in Study 1. As noted in Chapter 4, in this study repatriation

adjustment is defined as the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. Repatriation adjustment was qualitatively explained in Study 1 by four main facets: professional readjustment, which has three subdomains (the local work environment, interactions with authority figures in the workplace and interactions with colleagues in the workplace); personal readjustment, which has three sub-facets (local norms of punctuality, local daily life and local communication norms); socio-cultural readjustment; and general readjustment (see Figure 5.1).



*Figure 5.1 Four Qualitative Facets*

The development of a new scale was necessary for a number of reasons. First, the prior scales of repatriation adjustment have been criticised for their low content-validity measures. Unidirectional measures of repatriation adjustment, for example

the focus on either the socio-cultural facet (i.e., Kimber, 2012; Ward & Kennedy, 1999) or the psychological facets (i.e., Black et al., 1992), can yield biased or flawed results (Hunt, Schneider, & Comer, 2004); thus, Black and Gregersen (1991) as well as others (i.e., Black, 1994) have argued that repatriation adjustment should be conceptualised as, and measured by, a multifaceted scale.

Although Black et al. (1992) attempted to operationalise repatriation adjustment as a multifaceted construct consisting of work, interaction and general readjustments, these three facets are considered to be facets of psychological readjustment (Black, 1994). Thus, this view of repatriation adjustment, by Black et al., (1992), remains a unidirectional domain of cultural readjustment (psychological readjustment). In addition, repatriation adjustment theories (Black et al., 1992) draw on the assumption of uncertainty reduction. The authors argue that any factors reducing the uncertainty level facilitate repatriation adjustment, and factors that increase the uncertainty level hinder repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994). However, the unidirectional measure of repatriation adjustment (i.e., the focus on only psychological readjustment or socio-cultural readjustment) creates high uncertainty as a result of neglecting the potential challenges associated with the other aspects of cultural adjustment. Second, the prior scales of repatriation adjustment were explicitly developed to measure expatriation adjustment, before being reworded and applied to the repatriation context. For example, the RAS, developed by Black et al. (1992) was first designed to measure cross-cultural adjustment (adjustment to the host culture) (Black & Stephens, 1989), and was then reworded to be made appropriate for the repatriation context (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Other examples emerged from the research of Cox (2004) and Kimber (2012), who utilised the SCAS developed by Ward and Kennedy (1999) to measure the socio-cultural facet of

repatriation adjustment, although the original scale was originally developed to measure expatriation adjustment.

However, Adler (2002) and others (i.e., Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Black et al., 1992; Harvey, 1989; Martin, 1984; Forster, 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003) have provided evidence that readjustment to the home culture is more challenging than adjustment to the host culture. Thus, it is not appropriate to use the same scale to measure a more challenging construct, as expatriation adjustment might not sufficiently explain the repatriation experience (Sussman, 2001) (see Section 2.5.3 of Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion). Hence, Study 2 addresses the following research question:

**RQ2:** *What are the key dimensions of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures?*

### **5.3 METHODOLOGY**

This study utilised Churchill's scale development procedure (1979), as well as the recommendations of other scale development scholars (i.e., DeVellis, 2012), to validate the new repatriation adjustment scale that was developed for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.

The following sections describe the participant characteristics, followed by the data collection and data analysis procedure. The chapter then presents the scale validation results.

#### **5.3.1 Sampling**

An online survey was distributed to Saudi public sector employees who had recently returned home upon completing their most recent international assignment

in one of four nations: Australia, Canada, the UK or the US. Participants were approached with the assistance of the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission (SACM), the responsible corporate body for Saudi expatriates in Australia. A total of 305 participants returned completed surveys. The response rate could not be calculated as I was not provided with the number of potential participants who were contacted, as the SACM distributed the invitation to participate to potential respondents.

The main analytical strategies recommended for scale validation are EFA and CFA (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2012). Churchill (1979) and others (i.e., Hair et al., 2014) suggest that EFA and CFA be conducted across multiple samples. This recommendation can be addressed “either with a split sample in the original data set or with a separate sample” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 612). Therefore, the total sample size of 305 was randomly split in two subsamples using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Sample A consists of 153 participants, while sample B has 152 participants. The primary purpose of splitting the sample into two subsamples was to use sample A as a model-building sample (pilot study), and sample B as a model-confirmation sample (Hair et al., 2014).

EFA, which is the primary statistical technique required for the item purification stage of the scale development procedure (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2012), was conducted using sample A, the model-building sample. CFA, which is the primary statistical technique required for the scale validity stage of Churchill’s scale development procedure (1979), was conducted on sample B. The two datasets were subject to separate data preparation procedures.

### **5.3.1.1 Sample A Characteristics**

Sample A comprises a total of 153 participants. At the time of data collection all participants were working in Saudi public sector departments and had recently

participated in a long-term international assignment as a compulsory obligation of their work commitments. International assignments are designed to improve the efficiency of the Saudi public sector by having participants acquire global knowledge and skills, while advancing their education (Ministry of Civil Service, 2014). Participants undertook work assignments either in Australia ( $n = 55$ ), Canada ( $n = 31$ ), the UK ( $n = 38$ ), or the US ( $n = 29$ ). Participants ranged in age from 25 to 49 years, with an average age of 30 years.

On average, participants in this sample had spent almost three years in their most recent international assignment (see Table 5.1). This time frame is comparable with previous repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Sussman's (2002) study where the average was 27 months, ranging from 6–72 months). The average time since returning home was 13 months (range 4–36 months). This time frame is consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Sussman's (2002) study where the average was 30 months, ranging from 1–44 months). The majority of participants (111) held a postgraduate degree, while 42 participants held an undergraduate degree. Almost the entire sample were male (99%); 69% were married and 30% were single. The high percentage of male participants is consistent with some previous studies (i.e., Furuya et al. (2009), where 98.70% of the Japanese repatriates were male; Gregersen and Black (1996), where 99% of the Japanese repatriates were male) (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

*Demographic Profile of Sample A*

Characteristic	Description
Number of Participants	153 Participants
Gender	152 Males (99.30%), 1 Females (0.70%)
Age	25–29 years (26.80%), 30–34 years (38.60%), 35–39 years (22.20%), 40–44 years (11.10%), and 45–49 years (1.30%)
Educational Level	Undergraduate (27.50%), Postgraduate (72.60%)
Host Country	Australia (35.90%), Canada (20.30%), the UK (24.80%), and the US (19%)
Marital Status	Married (69.90%), Single (30.1%)
Average Time Spent Overseas	39.60 months (range 18–77 months)
Average Time Since Returning Home	13.60 months (range 4–36 months)

**5.3.1.2 Sample B Characteristics**

Sample B included a total of 152 participants. At the time of data collection, all participants were working within Saudi public sector departments and had recently participated in a long-term international assignment in Australia ( $n = 36$ ), Canada ( $n = 38$ ), the UK ( $n = 36$ ) or the US ( $n = 42$ ) as a compulsory obligation of their work commitments, aimed at improving the efficiency of Saudi public sector employees via acquiring global knowledge and skills, while advancing their education (Ministry of Civil Service, 2014). Participants ranged in age from 25 to 49 years, with an average age of 35 years.

On average, participants in this sample had spent almost three years in their most recent international assignment (see Table 5.2). This time frame is comparable with previous repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Sussman's (2002) study, 27 months, ranging from 6–72 months). The average time since returning home was 13 months (ranging from 2–50 months). This time frame is consistent with previous

repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Sussman’s (2002) study, where the average was 30 months ranging from 1–44 months).

Most participants (107) held a postgraduate degree, while 45 participants held an undergraduate degree. Almost the entire sample were male (98%), where 70.40% were married and 29.60% were single (see Table 5.2). Some previous studies report similar percentages (i.e., Furuya et al.’s (2009) study, where 98.70% were male; and Gregersen and Black’s (1996) study, where 99% were male). The high rate of male participants relates to the nature of Saudi expatriation and repatriation programs.

Table 5.2

*Demographic Profile of Sample B*

Characteristic	Description
Number of Participants	152 Participants
Gender	149 Males (98%), 3 Females (2%)
Age	25–29 years (23.70%), 30–34 years (32.90%), 35–39 years (35.50%), 40–44 years (6.60%), and 45–49 years (1.30%)
Educational Level	Undergraduate (29.60%), Postgraduate (70.40%)
Host Country	Australia (22.40%), Canada (25%), the UK (23.70%), the US (27.60%), and New Zealand (1.30%)
Marital Status	Married (70.40%), Single (29.60%)
Average Time Spent Overseas	38.10 months (range 12–72 months)
Average Time Since Returning Home	13.50 months (range 2–50 months)

The two samples were subject to an independent sample *t* test and Chi-square test to assess the significant differences between the samples in the characteristic variables.

The results of the *t* test revealed that the characteristic variables of sample A and B were not significantly different across gender ( $t(303) = -1.01, p = .31$ ), age ( $t(303) = -.66, p = .51$ ), educational level ( $t(303) = .50, p = .61$ ), host country ( $t(303)$



= -2.56,  $p = .01$ ), marital status ( $t(303) = .04$ ,  $p = .96$ ), average time spent overseas ( $t(303) = .90$ ,  $p = .36$ ), or average time since returning home ( $t(303) = .11$ ,  $p = .91$ ). In addition, the results of the Chi-square test further supported the insignificant differences between the two samples on the characteristic variables: gender ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.02$ ,  $p = .31$ ), age ( $\chi^2(4) = 7.42$ ,  $p = .11$ ), educational level ( $\chi^2(3) = .27$ ,  $p = .96$ ), host country ( $\chi^2(4) = 10.09$ ,  $p = .03$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2(2) = .15$ ,  $p = .92$ ), average time spent overseas ( $\chi^2(44) = 55.5$ ,  $p = .12$ ), or average time since returning home ( $\chi^2(40) = 44.55$ ,  $p = .28$ ).

### **5.3.2 Data Collection Procedure**

As explained in Chapter 3, the data were collected using an online survey and were used to validate the new 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed in Study 1. As suggested by Churchill (1979), prior to administering the online survey, the 51 items were subject to intensive review and evaluation by the research team to ensure the adequacy and clarity of the items (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2012). The survey was then electronically administered using Key Survey, the university's online survey system, and was sent to 10 members within the target population to pre-test the items and task instructions for clarity of expression and cultural appropriateness. The 10 responses were not included in any analysis, but some of the items were re-phrased as a result of their feedback.

### **5.3.3 Data Preparation Procedures**

The two datasets (samples A and B) were screened for missing data and outliers (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996) using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The following sections describe the analytical strategies used to identify the missing data and detect outlier cases, and then report the remedies adopted to respond to the identified cases.

### 5.3.3.1 Assessment of Missing Data

As discussed in Chapter 3, the datasets were assessed for potential missing data. The missing data in both datasets were found to be ‘not-ignorable’, and the main reason for the missing data was participants’ failure to complete the survey items (Hair et al., 2010, p. 46). The extent of the missing data was assessed using descriptive and frequency statistics (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2016). The results for both datasets indicate that the missing data were low, as they did not exceed 10% (Hair et al., 2010).

The randomness of the missing data was checked using Little’s (1988) MCAR test. The results of the MCAR test for both datasets were not significant. The MCAR values for sample A were ( $\chi^2 = 4815.32$ ,  $df = 4741$ ,  $p = .22$ ), while the MCAR values were ( $\chi^2 = 4981.33$ ,  $df = 4973$ ,  $p = .46$ ) for sample B. Thus, the missing values were found to be missing at random (MAR) (Hair et al., 2010). Hair et al. (2010) recommend using the mean substitution approach to deal with missing data when the percentage of cases is low and the MCAR test non-significant. Thus, the missing values in this research were replaced using the series mean scores (Hair et al., 2010).

### 5.3.3.2 Assessment of Outliers

The datasets were examined for potential univariate and multivariate outliers using the standardised Z score and Mahalanobis Distance test (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). The result of the standardised Z score for the sample A dataset indicated that the dataset had nine univariate outlier cases with Z scores  $> 3.29$ . For the sample B dataset, the standardised Z score indicated that the dataset had seven univariate outlier cases with Z scores  $> 3.29$ . The result of the Mahalanobis Distance test for sample A indicated that there were four multivariate outlier cases. For sample B, the standardised Z score indicated that the dataset had five multivariate outlier cases.

However, the identified outlier cases were retained for further analysis as: first, the values of the 5% Trimmed mean and the actual mean were similar, which indicated that the missing “values are not different from the remaining distribution” (Pallant, 2016 p. 67); and, second, examination of the demographic and screening questions indicated that the identified outlier cases were members of the targeted population (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).

### **5.3.4 Measures**

As explained in Chapter 4, the measures asked participants to assess the extent to which they felt readjusted after returning from either Australia, Canada, the UK or the US using a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = not adjusted at all and 7 = completely adjusted.

### **5.3.5 Data Analysis**

As explained in Section 3.4.3, the data were analysed using the statistical techniques recommended by Churchill’s (1979) scale development procedure as well as others (i.e., DeVellis, 2012). The primary statistical techniques used in this study are EFA and CFA. However, prior to conducting these analytical techniques, the two datasets were subject to separate data preparation procedures.

## **5.4 RESULTS**

The following section reports the scale-validation process. This section is divided into three subsections. Section 5.4.1 reports the result of the EFA, while Section 5.4.2 reports the results of the CFA. Section 5.4.3 reports the scale-validity results.

### **5.4.1 Item Purification**

As suggested by Churchill (1979), the purpose of item purification is to improve and clean the measurement tool by detecting and removing the less effective

items, such as the ones that are sharing correlations near zero and the items that are not truly representing the construct. In order to purify the items, Churchill (1979) and others (i.e., DeVellis, 2012) recommend the use of EFA.

EFA is defined as “a statistical technique applied to a single set of variables where the researcher is interested in discovering which variables in the set form coherent subsets that are relatively independent of one another” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 635). Its “primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 94). However, before conducting the EFA, it is important to test the preliminary assumptions of the EFA (Pallant, 2016).

#### **5.4.1.1 Preliminary Assessment of the Factor Analysis Assumptions**

Prior to running the factor analysis, the fundamental assumptions of the EFA, such as the adequacy of sample size, the assumption of normality and the factorability of the dataset, were examined (Pallant, 2016; Hair et al., 2010). The following sections introduce each assumption and report the outcome of these assessments.

##### **5.4.1.1.1 Sample Size**

Required sample size can be determined by various procedures (Creswell, 2013). One commonly used strategy is to determine the ideal sample size based on the desired statistical techniques (Cohen, 1977; Hinkin, 1995). For a statistical technique such as EFA, Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988) suggest 150 as a sufficient sample size “to obtain an accurate solution in EFA as long as item intercorrelations are reasonably strong” (Hinkin, 1995, p. 973).

There were 153 participants involved in this stage of analysis. Although the sample size of 153 does not meet the minimal ratio of cases of 5:1 for the observed

items criteria (being only 3:1) (Gorsuch, 1983), the challenge of accessing and obtaining adequate sample size is a well-acknowledged issue across repatriation studies (Sussman, 2001). In addition, Tabachnick and Fidel (1996) indicate that when the factor solution has several high-loading items, which was the case in this study, then “about 150 cases should be sufficient” (p. 640). Thus, the sample size of 153 participants utilised in this stage was deemed to meet the requirement suggested by Hinkin (1995).

#### **5.4.1.1.2 Assessment of Normality**

As indicated in Chapter 3, normality was assessed using Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).

Skewness and Kurtosis tests revealed that 31 items were negatively skewed, with Skewness scores ranging from -1.15 to -.00, which means that most of the scores denote a rightward shift, indicating a univariate distribution, while 20 items were positively skewed, with Skewness scores ranging from .09 to .07, suggesting that the distribution shifted to the left (Hair et al., 2014). In addition, all the Kurtosis values were negative and ranged from -1.23 to -.02, except for five items, which had positive values and ranged from .17 to .56. This result indicates that the distributions were relatively flat (Pallant, 2016).

However, as neither Skewness nor Kurtosis scores exceeded the severity cut-off values of 3 and 10 respectively (Kline, 2015), no data transformation was conducted and the data were treated as normally distributed (Kline, 2015).

#### **5.4.1.1.3 Assessment of Factorability**

As explained in Chapter 3, factorability of the dataset was measured using the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

The results of these measures support the suitability of the dataset for a factor analysis test. The KMO value was .94, which is above the cut-off value of .60 (Pallant, 2016). The value of the Bartlett's test was statistically significant at ( $\chi^2 = 8145.813$ ,  $df = 1275$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), which further supported the suitability of the items for conducting an EFA.

#### **5.4.1.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Procedures**

Having assessed the assumptions of the EFA and established the suitability of the dataset for the EFA, the 51 items of the repatriation adjustment scale were subject to principal component (PC) factor analysis, utilising both orthogonal and oblimin rotation using SPSS version 23. The PC was utilised as the primary purpose was “reducing a large number of variables down to a smaller number of components” (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996, p. 664).

The PC analysis revealed the presence of six components with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. However, inspection of the Scree Plot (Catell, 1996) suggested two or seven components, whereas the result of the parallel analysis test (Horn, 1965) suggested a four-component solution. Although 4–7 component structures were explored, the 6-component solution was the most interpretable and, thus, the six-component solution was retained. The six rotated components accounted for 73.57% of the total variance in the data, explaining 50.77%, 6.67%, 6.01%, 4.29%, 3.31% and 2.68% respectively.

The pattern matrix (see Table 5.3) was examined to determine the factor loading and to identify which items had a cross-loading  $\geq .40$  on multiple factors and which items had loaded less than .40 across any of the six factors (Hair et al., 2010). The six-factor structure solution contained some double-loading items, as well as items that loaded less than .40 across any of the six factors.

Table 5.3

*Initial Pattern Matrix*

Item Code	Item Statement	Factor loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Pro. Adj. Item9	Being able to questions your managers' decisions' when you perceive a better option.	<b>.85</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item12	Interacting with your managers.	<b>.82</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item5	Participating in decision-making processes.	<b>.80</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item10	Initiating new strategies for organisational improvement.	<b>.76</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item7	Being able to fully express your opinions on work-related matters.	<b>.70</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item13	Sharing ideas and strategies acquired during your time overseas.	<b>.70</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item4	The work tasks assigned to you after your return from overseas.	<b>.62</b>					.34
Pro. Adj. Item11	Reporting job-related concerns and issues.	<b>.61</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item6	The home organisation's rules, procedures, and values.	<b>.57</b>					.33
Pro. Adj. Item16	Communicating with your colleagues.	<b>.54</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item17	Sharing ideas and strategies acquired overseas with your colleagues.	<b>.52</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item14	Discussing work-related issues with your colleagues.	<b>.49</b>					.38
Pro. Adj. Item15	Collaborating with your colleagues to make decisions.	<b>.41</b>					
Pro. Adj. Item8	Supervisory responsibilities.	<b>.41</b>					.36
Gen. Adj. Item4	Shopping.		<b>.80</b>				
Gen. Adj. Item3	Food.		<b>.74</b>				
Soc. Adj. Item11	Interacting with other repatriates.		<b>.73</b>				

Soc. Adj. Item12	Interacting with foreigners/expatriates.		<b>.72</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item13	Interacting with fellow nationals in general.		<b>.57</b>	.37
Soc. Adj. Item15	Speaking with fellow nationals.		<b>.55</b>	.41
Soc. Adj. Item14	Interacting with friends outside of work.	.32	<b>.42</b>	.34
Gen. Adj. Item9	Settling in at home before returning to work.		<b>.89</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item8	Coping with financial matters.		<b>.89</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item7	Healthcare facilities.		<b>.80</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item10	The local transportation system and driving behaviours.		<b>.77</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item6	Entertainment/recreation opportunities.		<b>.77</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item5	Cost of living.		<b>.76</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item2	Housing conditions.		<b>.71</b>	
Gen. Adj. Item1	Living conditions in general.		<b>.61</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item6	Talking about yourself.		<b>.80</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item9	The local etiquette.		<b>.67</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item5	The norms and etiquette of social events.		<b>.66</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item7	Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.		<b>.63</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item10	Talking with local people about your overseas experience.		<b>.59</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item3	Making yourself understood.		<b>.56</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item8	Persuading or convincing somebody about new social ideas acquired during your time overseas.		<b>.56</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item1	Previous relationships with your social network (i.e., friends, relatives).		<b>.49</b>	
Soc. Adj. Item4	The pace of social life.		<b>.48</b>	.37



Soc. Adj. Item2	Making new social relationships.		.37	
Per. Adj. Item2	Running meetings (i.e., events, gatherings) on time.		.87	
Per. Adj. Item1	The Saudi norms of punctuality for events or other commitments.		.81	
Per. Adj. Item3	Your daily life routine.		.72	
Per. Adj. Item4	Enjoying the lifestyle of Saudi Arabia.		.66	.30
Per. Adj. Item7	Expressing your feelings (positive or negative) about local norms.		.56	
Per. Adj. Item6	Seeing things from a local perspective.		.56	
Per. Adj. Item5	Practicing mannerisms or customs learnt during your time overseas.	.30	.55	
Per. Adj. Item8	Coping with resistance to your opinions or perspectives.	.34	.42	
Per. Adj. Item9	Disagreeing with unfavourable opinions.		.35	
Pro. Adj. Item3	The work tasks you performed before you went overseas.		.77	
Pro. Adj. Item1	Your specific job responsibilities.		.66	
Pro. Adj. Item2	Performance expectations.		.59	
Eigenvalue		19.6223.232.691.901.471.18		
Percent of Variance Explained		49.05 8.096.734.753.692.96		

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

The pattern matrix indicated that items ‘Per. Adj. Item 9’ and ‘Soc. Adj. Item 2’ loaded less than .40 on all factors. Therefore, item ‘Per. Adj. Item 9’ was first removed and the factor analysis was run again. The results showed that item ‘Soc. Adj. Item 2’ still loaded less than .40 across all six factors. Thus, the item ‘Soc. Adj. Item 2’ was deleted and factor analysis was run again.

The results indicated that items ‘Pro. Adj. Item 8’ and item ‘Pro. Adj. Item 15’ loaded less than .40 across all six factors and, thus, were removed one after the other. The factor analysis was run again. The results illustrated that three items were cross-

loading on multiple factors. Item 'Pro. Adj. Item 14' loaded .41 on Factor 1 and loaded .45 on Factor 6. Item 'Pro. Adj. Item 4' loaded .43 on Factor 1 and loaded .57 on Factor 2. The third item was 'Soc. Adj. Item 4', which loaded .44 on Factor 4 and loaded .41 on Factor 3. Therefore, item 'Soc. Adj. Item 4' was deleted and the factor analysis re-run. The result revealed that items 'Pro. Adj. Item 14' and 'Pro. Adj. Item 4' were still cross-loading across two factors. Thus, the items were removed separately and the factor analysis was re-run. The results showed that item 'Pro. Adj. Item 6' was cross-loading on two factors: .42 on Factor 1 and .54 on Factor 2. Thus, item 'Pro. Adj. Item 6' was removed and the factor analysis re-run.

It is noted that two general readjustment items, 'Gen. Adj. Item 3' and 'Gen. Adj. Item 4' (food and shopping), loaded highly on factor 2, readjustment to interaction with social networks, instead of loading on factor 3, which is general readjustment. However, the items were retained at this stage of analysis as their loadings could be explained by the collectivist component of the Saudi cultural norms, where either going out for food or for shopping mostly involves interaction with a social network (i.e., family members, friends). Overall, the EFA procedure resulted in the removal of 11 items due to either cross-loadings or loading less than .40 on the six factors (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4

*Factor Analysis Procedure*

Step	Item Code	Factor	Item Statement	Reason of Removal
1	Per. Adj. Item9	Personal Readjustment	Disagreeing with unfavourable opinions.	Loaded lower than .40 on all factors.
2	Soc. Adj. Item2	Socio-cultural Readjustment	Making new social relationships.	Loaded lower than .40 on all factors.
3	Per. Adj. Item8	Personal Readjustment	Coping with the resistance to your opinions or perspectives	Loaded lower than .40 on all factors.
4	Pro. Adj. Item15	Professional Readjustment	Collaborating with your colleagues to make decisions.	Loaded lower than .40 on all factors.
5	Pro. Adj. Item8	Professional Readjustment	Supervisory responsibilities.	Loaded lower than .40 on all factors.
6	Soc. Adj. Item4	Socio-cultural Readjustment	The pace of social life.	Cross loaded onto 2 factors.
7	Pro. Adj. Item14	Professional Readjustment	Discussing work-related issues with your colleagues.	Cross loaded onto 2 factors.
8	Pro. Adj. Item4	Professional Readjustment	The work tasks assigned to you after your return from overseas.	Cross loaded onto 2 factors.
9	Pro. Adj. Item6	Professional Readjustment	The home organisation's rules, procedures and values.	Cross loaded onto 2 factors.

Factor 1 was described by items measuring readjustment to workplace interactions. Factor 2 comprised items measuring readjustment to interactions with social networks, while factor 3 was made up of items measuring general readjustment. Factor 4 accounted for items measuring socio-cultural readjustment, while factor 5 was captured by items assessing personal readjustment. Factor 6 was accounted for by items measuring readjustment to work task performance (see Table 5.4). This six-component structure produced two more facets than what was initially explained by the qualitative data. Table 5.5 presents the final pattern matrix for the retained factors.

Table 5.5

*Final Pattern Matrix*

Item Code	Factor Label and Item	Factor loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>1- Readjustment to Interactions at Workplace</b>							
Pro. Adj. Item9	Being able to questions your managers' decisions' when you perceive a better option.	.87					
Pro. Adj. Item12	Interacting with your managers.	.83					
Pro. Adj. Item10	Initiating new strategies for organisational improvement.	.79					
Pro. Adj. Item5	Participating in decision-making processes.	.77					
Pro. Adj. Item13	Sharing ideas and strategies acquired during your time overseas.	.75					
Pro. Adj. Item7	Being able to fully express your opinions on work-related matters.	.71					
Pro. Adj. Item11	Reporting job-related concerns and issues.	.64					
Pro. Adj. Item17	Sharing ideas and strategies acquired overseas with your colleagues.	.55					
Pro. Adj. Item16	Communicating with your colleagues.	.53					
<b>2- Readjustment to Interactions with Social Networks</b>							
Gen. Adj. Item4	Shopping.	.77					
Soc. Adj. Item11	Interacting with other repatriates.	.74					
Soc. Adj. Item12	Interacting with foreigners/expatriates.	.73					
Gen. Adj. Item3	Food.	.71					
Soc. Adj. Item13	Interacting with fellow nationals in general.	.58					
Soc. Adj. Item15	Interacting with friends outside of work.	.56					
Soc. Adj. Item14	Interacting with friends outside of work.	.43					
<b>3- General Readjustment</b>							
Gen. Adj. Item8	Coping with financial matters.						-.88

Gen. Adj. Item9	Settling in at home before returning to work.	-0.88
Gen. Adj. Item7	Healthcare facilities.	-0.79
Gen. Adj. Item10	The local transportation system and driving behaviours.	-0.77
Gen. Adj. Item6	Entertainment/recreation opportunities.	-0.76
Gen. Adj. Item5	Cost of living.	-0.75
Gen. Adj. Item2	Housing conditions.	-0.70
Gen. Adj. Item1	Living conditions in general.	-0.60
<b>4- Readjustment to the Local Social Norms</b>		
Soc. Adj. Item6	Talking about yourself.	.78
Soc. Adj. Item7	Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.	.66
Soc. Adj. Item5	The norms and etiquette of social events.	.66
Soc. Adj. Item9	The local etiquette.	.66
Soc. Adj. Item10	Talking with local people about your overseas experience.	.56
Soc. Adj. Item8	Persuading or convincing somebody about new social ideas acquired during your time overseas.	.56
Soc. Adj. Item3	Making yourself understood.	.50
Soc. Adj. Item1	Previous relationships with your social network (i.e., friends, relatives).	.45
<b>5- Personal Readjustment</b>		
Per. Adj. Item2	Running meetings (i.e., events, gatherings) on time.	.87
Per. Adj. Item1	The Saudi norms of punctuality for events or other commitments.	.81
Per. Adj. Item3	Your daily life routine.	.69
Per. Adj. Item4	Enjoying the lifestyle of Saudi Arabia.	.62
Per. Adj. Item6	Seeing things from a local perspective.	.52
Per. Adj. Item5	Practicing mannerisms or customs learnt during your time overseas.	.52
Per. Adj. Item7	Expressing your feelings (positive or negative) about local norms.	.52
<b>6- Readjustment to Work Task Performance</b>		

Pro. Adj. Item3	The work tasks you performed before you went overseas.										.84
Pro. Adj. Item1	Your specific job responsibilities.										.75
Pro. Adj. Item2	Performance expectations.										.67
	Eigenvalue	20.83	3.24	2.70	1.96	1.52	1.22				
	Percent of Variance Explained	49.59	7.73	6.43	4.67	3.63	2.92				

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

The factor correlation matrix indicated that the strength of correlations among factors was medium, as it ranged between  $-.42$  and  $.50$ , except between component 6 and component 4 which was  $.15$ , suggesting that the correlation between the six components was small to medium (Pallant, 2016). Therefore, the option of using direct oblimin rotation suited the data requirements as several correlation coefficients were greater than  $.30$  (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6

*Component Correlation Matrix*

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Workplace interactions						
2. Local social interactions	.22					
3. General readjustment	-.42	-.32				
4. Local social norms	.51	.20	-.35			
5. Personal readjustment	.50	.27	-.40	.45		
6. Work task performance	.27	.37	-.24	.15	.31	

**5.4.1.3 Reliability Statistics**

The minimal acceptable level for the coefficient alpha is  $.70$  (DeVellis, 2012; Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978). In this case, after removing 11 items based on the EFA, the Cronbach's Alpha values showed a high level of internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alphas ranging from  $.87$  to  $.95$ . Thus, all the alpha score values were well above the minimum acceptable guideline of  $.70$  for new scales (DeVellis, 2012) (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7

*Reliability Statistics after EFA*

Component	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1. Workplace interactions	.95	9
2. Local social interactions	.90	7
3. General readjustment	.94	8
4. Local social norms	.92	8
5. Personal readjustment	.92	7
6. Work task performance	.87	3

**5.4.1.4 Assessment of Multicollinearity**

Multicollinearity is defined as “the extent to which a variable can be explained by other variables in the analysis” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 91). It should be assessed by the correlation coefficients between the variables (Hair et al., 2010). The correlation coefficient between variables greater than .90 indicates that the variables are not sufficiently independent from each other (Hair et al., 2014).

An examination of the correlation coefficient matrix revealed that the correlation between the variables ranged between .43 and .75, which is below .90 (Hair et al., 2010). This result indicated that the variables were sufficiently inter-correlated and, thus, multicollinearity was not an issue for this dataset. To further confirm the absence of multicollinearity Craney and Surles (2002) suggest using the variance inflation factor (VIF) test, where the value of  $VIF < 10.00$  with a tolerance score  $> .10$  negates the existence of a multicollinearity threat (Craney & Surles, 2002). The results indicated that the VIF values were less than 10, with tolerance scores greater than .10, thus, supporting the conclusion of an absence of multicollinearity (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8

*Multicollinearity Statistics*

Model	Variable	Tolerance	VIF
1	Workplace Interactions	.34	2.91
2	Personal Readjustment	.33	2.96
3	Local Social Norms	.35	2.78
4	Local Social Interactions	.52	1.90
5	General Readjustment	.51	1.95

*Note.* Work task performance was inserted as a dependent variable.

### 5.4.2 Scale Validity

Based upon the results obtained from the item purification, Churchill (1979) suggests conducting the construct validity and the composite reliability assessment using a new sample or data, which can provide more evidence for improving the scale.

As indicated earlier, a total of 305 observations were collected at a single point in time. The data file was then randomly split into two subsamples using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Sample A comprised 153 respondents and was used for the EFA, whereas sample B, which included 152 participants, was primarily used for the CFA and any required subsequent validity test of Churchill’s scale development procedure (1979).

As Churchill (1979) recommends assessing construct reliability within a different dataset prior to conducting the construct validity, it is crucial to assess the preliminary assumptions of the factor analysis before running the CFA (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).



### **5.4.2.1 Preliminary Assessment of Factor Analysis Assumptions**

Similar to the sample A dataset, and before running the CFA, the dataset for sample B was subjected to the fundamental assumptions of the factor analysis, such as the adequacy of sample size, the assumption of normality and the factorability of the dataset (Pallant, 2016; Hair et al., 2010); thus, the following sections report the outcome of these assessments for sample B.

#### **5.4.2.1.1 Sample Size**

There were 152 participants involved in this stage of the scale development procedure. Although it might be argued that the sample size of 152 does not meet the minimal ratio (5:1) of cases for the observed items criteria (being 3.6:1) (Gorsuch, 1983), as previously noted, the challenge of accessing and obtaining adequate sample size is a well-acknowledged issue across repatriation studies (Sussman, 2001). In addition, Tabachnick and Fidel (1996) indicate that when the factor solution has several high-loading items then “about 150 cases should be sufficient” (p. 640). Thus, the sample size of 152 participants utilised in this stage was deemed to meet the sufficiency requirement suggested by Hinkin (1995).

#### **5.4.2.1.2 Assessment of Normality**

Normality of this dataset was examined by using Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Skewness Kurtosis tests revealed that 20 items were negatively skewed, with scores of Skewness ranging from -98.15 to -.02, which means that most of the scores denote a rightward shift, indicating univariate distribution, while 31 items were positively skewed, with scores of Skewness ranging from .00 to 1.99, suggesting that the distribution shifted to the left (Hair et al., 2014). Most of the Kurtosis values were negative and ranged from -.98 to -.02, indicating that the distributions were relatively flat (Pallant, 2016).

These results suggested that the data should be treated as normally distributed (Kline, 2015); thus, no data transformation was performed.

#### **5.4.2.1.3 Assessment of Factorability**

The results of the factorability measures support the appropriateness of this dataset for factor analysis examination. The KMO value for sample B was .94, which is above the cut-off value of .60 (Pallant, 2016). The value of the Bartlett's test for sample B was statically significant at ( $\chi^2 = 8355.78$ ,  $df = 1275$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), which further supported the suitability of the items for the CFA.

#### **5.4.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Procedure**

Having tested the assumptions of the factor analysis and established the factorability of the dataset for the factor analysis, CFA was conducted to assess whether the established six-factor measurement model of the repatriation adjustment scale and factor-loading patterns fit the dataset, using AMOS version 23. The six factors, which resulted from the EFA, were specified and a model was drawn based on the result of the previous EFA (see Figure 5.2).

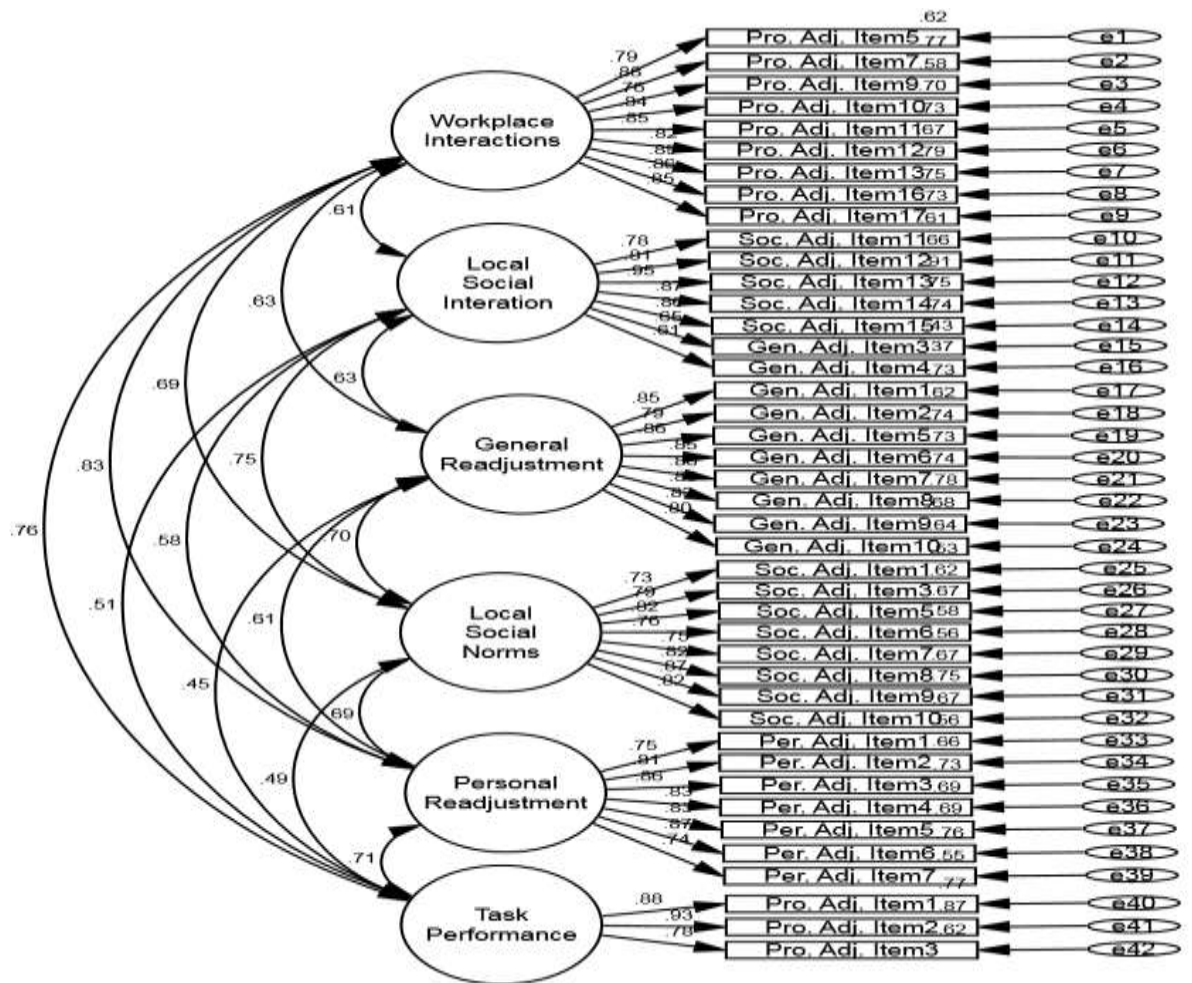


Figure 5.2 Initial Model A: Six-First-Order Factors Model.

As described in Chapter 3, the model fit was assessed using the three model fit indices, including the absolute fit indices (i.e., Chi-square, SRMR and RMSEA), the incremental fit indices (i.e., TLI and CFI) and the parsimonious fit indices (i.e., CMIN/DF) (Hair et al., 2010), as they provide “different measurement properties” (Jackson & Purc-Stephenson, 2009, p. 10) (see Table 5.9).

Table 5.9

*Goodness of Fit Statistics*

Criterion	Chi-square	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Excellent Threshold	$p > .05$	$< 2$	$\leq .05$	$< .05$	$\geq .95$	$\geq .95$
Acceptable Threshold	$p > .05$	$< 3$	$\leq .08$	$< .08$	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$

*Notes.* DF = Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

The results indicated that the model was a poor fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.21$ , TLI = .83, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .07) (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10

*Model A Goodness of Fit Statistics*

Criterion	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model A	1778.48	804	2.21	.09	.07	.84	.83

*Notes.* DF = Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

Therefore, the standardised regression weights, the standardised residual values, and the modification indices (MI) were investigated in order to improve the model fit (Brown, 2015; Hair et al., 2010). The four measures were used to assess the parameter estimates. The standardised regression weights should be significant and  $> .70$ ; the standardised residual covariance should be  $< 1.96$  and the error covariance between all of the items should be  $< 15$  (Awang, 2015; Brown, 2015; Said, Badru, & Shahid, 2011).

The regression weights table indicated that all the unconstrained estimates were significant. This is because the probability of obtaining a critical ratio in the  $p$ -value is  $< 0.001$ (\*\*\*). It appears that the regression weight for all factors in the prediction of all items is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.11

*Regression Weight*

Item Code	Factor	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Pro. Adj. Item1	<-- Work_Task_Performance	1.00				
Pro. Adj. Item2	<-- Work_Task_Performance	1.03	.06	15.43	***	par_1
Pro. Adj. Item3	<-- Work_Task_Performance	.94	.07	12.09	***	par_2
Pro. Adj. Item5	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.00				
Pro. Adj. Item7	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.10	.08	12.54	***	par_3
Pro. Adj. Item9	<-- Workplace_Interactions	.93	.09	10.43	***	par_4
Pro. Adj. Item10	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.07	.09	11.83	***	par_5
Pro. Adj. Item11	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.02	.08	12.05	***	par_6
Pro. Adj. Item12	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.08	.09	11.42	***	par_7
Pro. Adj. Item13	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.11	.08	12.57	***	par_8
Pro. Adj. Item16	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.09	.09	12.18	***	par_9
Pro. Adj. Item17	<-- Workplace_Interactions	1.10	.09	11.94	***	par_10
Per. Adj. Item1	<-- Personal_Readjustment	1.00				
Per. Adj. Item2	<-- Personal_Readjustment	1.08	.10	10.48	***	par_11
Per. Adj. Item3	<-- Personal_Readjustment	1.11	.10	10.77	***	par_12
Per. Adj. Item4	<-- Personal_Readjustment	1.20	.11	10.33	***	par_13
Per. Adj. Item5	<-- Personal_Readjustment	.99	.09	10.60	***	par_14
Per. Adj. Item6	<-- Personal_Readjustment	1.26	.11	11.03	***	par_15
Per. Adj. Item7	<-- Personal_Readjustment	.96	.10	9.32	***	par_16
Soc. Adj. Item1	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.00				
Soc. Adj. Item3	<-- Local_Social_Norms	.98	.10	9.71	***	par_17
Soc. Adj. Item5	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.03	.10	10.00	***	par_18
Soc. Adj. Item6	<-- Local_Social_Norms	.99	.10	9.25	***	par_19
Soc. Adj. Item7	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.15	.12	9.02	***	par_20
Soc. Adj. Item8	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.08	.10	9.91	***	par_21
Soc. Adj. Item9	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.13	.10	10.62	***	par_22
Soc. Adj. Item10	<-- Local_Social_Norms	1.17	.11	9.97	***	par_23
Soc. Adj. Item11	<-- Local_Social_Interations	1.00				
Soc. Adj. Item12	<-- Local_Social_Interations	1.01	.08	11.36	***	par_24
Soc. Adj. Item13	<-- Local_Social_Interations	1.33	.09	13.85	***	par_25
Soc. Adj.	<-- Local_Social_Interations	1.21	.10	12.06	***	par_26

Item Code	Factor	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Item14						
Soc. Adj. Item15	<-- Local_Social_Interactions	1.29	.10	12.01	***	par_27
Gen. Adj. Item3	<-- Local_Social_Interactions	.89	.10	8.51	***	par_28
Gen. Adj. Item4	<-- Local_Social_Interactions	.91	.11	7.86	***	par_29
Gen. Adj. Item1	<-- General_Readjustment	1.00				
Gen. Adj. Item2	<-- General_Readjustment	1.11	.09	12.05	***	par_30
Gen. Adj. Item5	<-- General_Readjustment	1.00	.07	13.93	***	par_31
Gen. Adj. Item6	<-- General_Readjustment	.99	.07	13.81	***	par_32
Gen. Adj. Item7	<-- General_Readjustment	1.09	.07	13.94	***	par_33
Gen. Adj. Item8	<-- General_Readjustment	1.08	.07	14.51	***	par_34
Gen. Adj. Item9	<-- General_Readjustment	1.00	.07	12.89	***	par_35
Gen. Adj. Item10	<-- General_Readjustment	1.07	.08	12.18	***	par_36

However, inspection of the standardised regression weights (see Table 5.12) revealed that items ‘Gen. Adj. Item3’ (food) and ‘Gen. Adj. Item4’ (shopping) had the lowest standardised loadings of .65 and .60 respectively.

Table 5.12

*Standardised Regression Weight*

Item Code	Factor	Estimate
Pro. Adj. Item1	<--- Work_Tasks_Performance	.87
Pro. Adj. Item2	<--- Work_Tasks_Performance	.93
Pro. Adj. Item3	<--- Work_Tasks_Performance	.78
Pro. Adj. Item5	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.78
Pro. Adj. Item7	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.87
Pro. Adj. Item9	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.76
Pro. Adj. Item10	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.83
Pro. Adj. Item11	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.85
Pro. Adj. Item12	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.81
Pro. Adj. Item13	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.88
Pro. Adj. Item16	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.86
Pro. Adj. Item17	<--- Workplace_Interactions	.85
Per. Adj. Item1	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.74
Per. Adj. Item2	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.81
Per. Adj. Item3	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.85
Per. Adj. Item4	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.83
Per. Adj. Item5	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.82
Per. Adj. Item6	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.87
Per. Adj. Item7	<--- Personal_Readjustment	.74

Soc. Adj. Item1	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.72
Soc. Adj. Item3	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.78
Soc. Adj. Item5	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.81
Soc. Adj. Item6	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.76
Soc. Adj. Item7	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.74
Soc. Adj. Item8	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.81
Soc. Adj. Item9	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.86
Soc. Adj. Item10	<---	Local_Social_Norms	.81
Soc. Adj. Item11	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.78
Soc. Adj. Item12	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.81
Soc. Adj. Item13	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.95
Soc. Adj. Item14	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.86
Soc. Adj. Item15	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.86
Gen. Adj. Item3	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.65
Gen. Adj. Item4	<---	Local_Social_Interactions	.60
Gen. Adj. Item1	<---	General_Readjustment	.85
Gen. Adj. Item2	<---	General_Readjustment	.78
Gen. Adj. Item5	<---	General_Readjustment	.85
Gen. Adj. Item6	<---	General_Readjustment	.85
Gen. Adj. Item7	<---	General_Readjustment	.86
Gen. Adj. Item8	<---	General_Readjustment	.88
Gen. Adj. Item9	<---	General_Readjustment	.82
Gen. Adj. Item10	<---	General_Readjustment	.80

Thus, these items were deleted and the model run again. The model fit improved slightly ( $\chi^2/df = 2.18$ , TLI = .84, CFI = .85, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .06), but was still at an unacceptable level. Inspection of the standardised regression weights indicated that all items had standardised loadings  $> .70$  and, thus, the standardised residual values were checked to assess whether any of the residual values were  $> 1.96$  (Brown, 2015).

The results indicated that items ‘Pro. Adj. Item3’ (the work tasks you performed before you went overseas), ‘Pro. Adj. Item7’ (being able to fully express your opinions on work-related matters), ‘Pro. Adj. Item9’ (being able to questions your managers’ decisions’ when you perceive a better option), ‘Per. Adj. Item5’ (practicing mannerisms or customs learnt during your time overseas) and ‘Soc. Adj.

Item1' (previous relationships with your social network i.e., friends, relatives) shared some high residual values  $> 1.96$  with other items.

The high standardised residual values between two items, for instance, indicate that the two items “are not converging with others in explaining the latent sources of variation” (Segars & Grover, 1993, p. 522). Thus, items that shared a standardised residual greater than 1.96 were deleted separately and the model fit was assessed respectively. After deleting items with high residual values, the model fit was again improved ( $\chi^2/df = 2.01$ , TLI = .88, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .06), though it was still not at an acceptable level. The standardised residual values were assessed again and results showed that all items had standardised residual values  $< 1.96$ ; thus, the MI was checked to determine if any of the error terms were co-varying greater than 15.

The results indicated a higher modification index between ‘Per. Adj. Item1’ (The Saudi norms of punctuality for events or other commitments) and ‘Per. Adj. Item2’ (Running meetings (i.e., events, gatherings) on time) at 35.54. As ‘Per. Adj. Item1’ had the lowest squared multiple correlation value of the two (.53) it was deleted from the model. The model was then run without item ‘Per. Adj. Item1’. The final model demonstrated an acceptable fit of ( $\chi^2/df = 1.94$ , TLI = .89, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06). Therefore, the CFA results demonstrate that the six-first-order factor structure model provides a good fit with the data (see Figure 5.3).



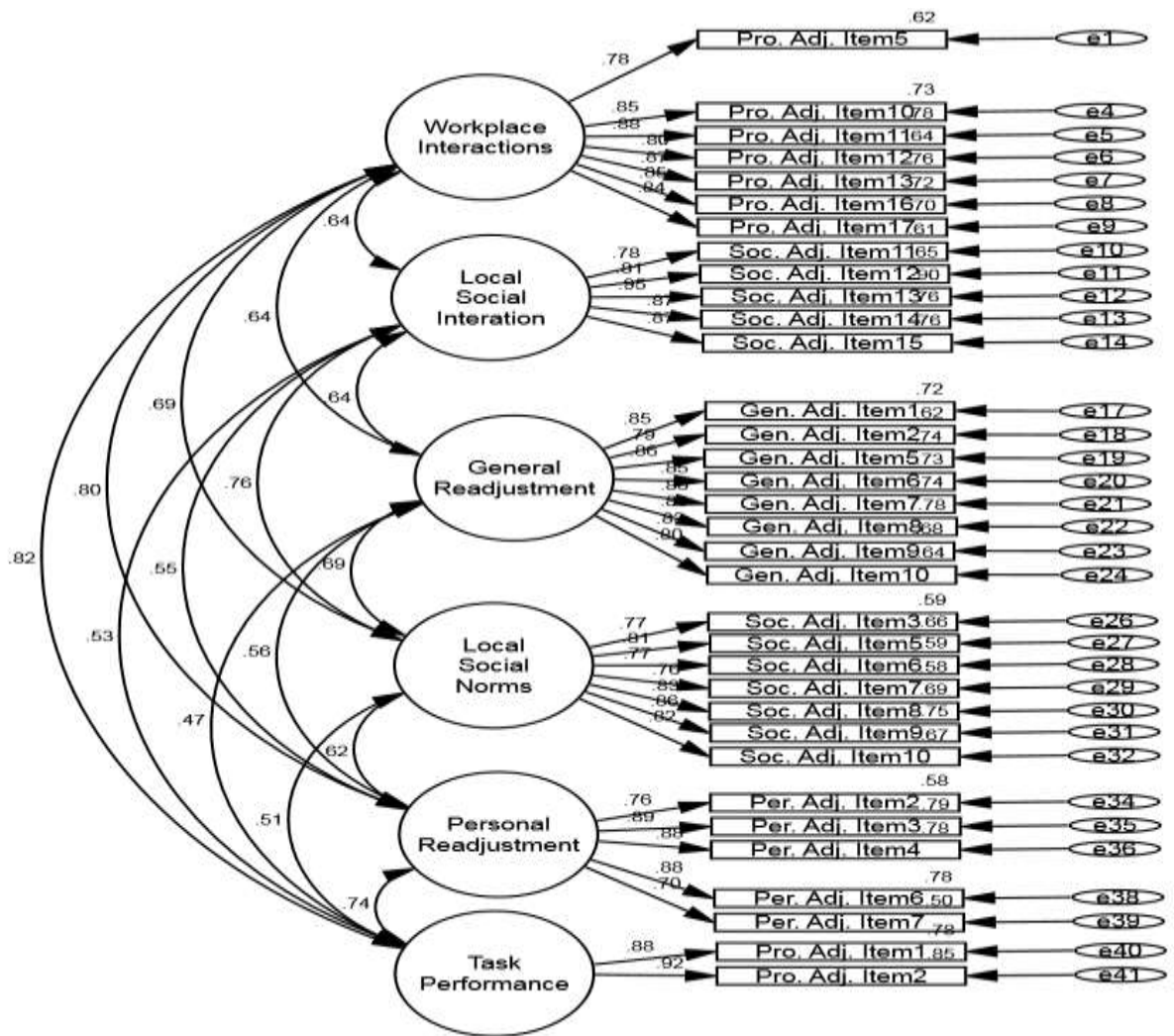


Figure 5.3 Final Model – A Six-First-Order Factor Model.

### 5.4.2.3 Competing Models

After establishing the six-first-order factor measurement model of repatriation adjustment, several measurement models were tested to compare the fit of alternative measurement models of repatriation adjustment (Hair et al., 2010). Four competing models were compared: a one-first-order factor model of repatriation adjustment (Model B), four-first-order factors and four-second-order factors (Model C), six-first-order factors and a second-order factor (Model D), and four-first-order factors and four-second-order factors with a latent variable (Model E). The models are provided in Appendix E.

The results revealed that Model B, Model D and Model E had a poor fit to the data (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.13

*Competing Models' Goodness of Fit Statistics*

Criterion	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model A	995.86	512	1.94	.07	.06	.90	.89
Model B	2415.44	527	4.58	.15	.10	.61	.59
Model C	1005.21	517	1.94	.07	.06	.90	.89
Model D	1063.22	521	2.04	.08	.08	.89	.88
Model E	1025.04	519	1.97	.08	.07	.89	.89

*Notes.* DF = Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

However, Model C, which was a second-order structure, demonstrated an acceptable fit of ( $\chi^2/df = 1.94$ , TLI = .89, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06).

This result was almost identical to the fit of Model A, which was ( $\chi^2/df = 1.94$ , TLI = .89, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06) (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.14

*Model A and Model C Goodness of Fit Statistics*

Criterion	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model A	995.86	512	1.94	.07	.06	.90	.89
Model C	1005.21	517	1.94	.07	.06	.90	.89
Difference Between Models	Chi-square	DF	P value				
	9.35	5	.09				

*Notes.* DF = Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.  
P < .05

Therefore, Model A and Model C were then replicated across the entire sample of 305 participants. The results indicated that both Model A, which was the six-first-order factor structure model, and Model C, which was a four-first-order factor and four-second-order factor structure, established acceptable fit. Model A's fit was

( $\chi^2/df = 2.53$ , TLI = .91, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05), while the fit for Model C was ( $\chi^2/df = 2.53$ , TLI = .91, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05). Again, the results were identical across both samples (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15

*Model A and Model C Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Entire Sample (n=305)*

Criterion	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model A	1297.45	512	2.53	.07	.05	.91	.91
Model C	1308.39	517	2.53	.07	.05	.91	.91
Difference Between Models	Chi-square	DF	P value				
	9.94	5	.07				

*Notes.* DF = Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.  
P < .05

Therefore, Model A and Model C were subjected to discriminant validity assessment. The results indicated that the average variance extracted (AVE) value for Model A (the six-first-order factor structure model) is greater than both the maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV). Thus, each construct in Model A is independent of the other constructs (see Table 5.16).

Table 5.16

*Model A Discriminant Validity Test for the Entire Sample (n=305)*

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Correlation Matrix & Squared Root of AVE					
					WTP	WPI	PR	LSN	LSI	GR
WTP	.88	.79	.57	.38	.89					
WPI	.94	.71	.65	.52	.76	.84				
PR	.91	.67	.65	.47	.72	.81	.82			
LSN	.92	.63	.61	.46	.52	.72	.66	.79		
LSI	.92	.71	.61	.43	.55	.67	.63	.78	.84	
GR	.94	.69	.44	.37	.50	.62	.61	.66	.62	.83

*Note.* WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment; CR = Construct Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; ASV = Average Shared Variance.

However, the discriminant validity could not be established for Model C across the entire dataset due to two reasons. First, the square root of the AVE for personal readjustment was less than 1.0 of the absolute value of the correlations within the general readjustment factor. The second reason was that the AVE for personal readjustment was less than the MSV and, thus, personal readjustment was not a truly distinct factor in Model C (see Table 5.17).

Table 5.17

*Model C Discriminant Validity Test Entire Sample*

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	GR	PR	PRO	SOC
GR	.94	.69	.53	.44	.83			
PR	.91	.67	.74	.55	.61	.82		
PRO	.87	.77	.74	.61	.65	.86	.87	
SOC	.87	.78	.67	.58	.73	.73	.82	.88

*Note.* CR = Construct Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; ASV = Average Shared Variance, GR = General Readjustment; PR = Personal Readjustment; PRO = Professional Readjustment; SOC = Socio-cultural Readjustment.

Therefore, Model A (the six-first-order factor structure model) was adopted for this thesis.

#### 5.4.2.4 Reliability Assessment

The most basic statistical assessment of reliability is the coefficient alpha (Churchill, 1979). The minimal acceptable level for the coefficient alpha is .70 ( DeVellis, 2012; Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978). Thus, the coefficient alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the repatriation adjustment scale for sample B after running the CFA. The results indicated that all the alpha score values ranged from .89 to .94, which were well above the minimum acceptable guideline of .70 for new scales (DeVellis, 2012) (see Table 5.18).

Table 5.18

*Reliability Statistics for Sample B before CFA*

Component	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1. Workplace interactions	.94	7
2. Local social interactions	.92	7
3. General readjustment	.94	8
4. Local social norms	.92	7
5. Personal readjustment	.91	5
6. Work task performance	.89	2

**5.4.3 Validity Assessment**

After establishing the model fit, Churchill (1979) suggests assessing construct validity. Construct validity refers to “the extent to which a set of measured variables actually represents the theoretical latent construct those variables are designed to measure” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 601). The construct validity was assessed by examining content validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity and nomological validity (Churchill, 1979; Lewis et al., 2005).

**5.4.3.1 Content Validity**

Content validity refers to the “appropriateness of the items on the instrument for measuring the construct” (Lewis et al., 2005, p. 396). Thus, each item should represent the overall aspect of the construct (Lewis et al., 2005). Although there is “no generally accepted quantitative index of content validity” (Hinkin, 1998), the expert’s review and evaluation, conducted during the item-generation process, was used as a measure of content validity (DeVellis, 2012).

**5.4.3.2 Convergent Validity**

Convergent validity refers to the “extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 601). However, unlike content validity, convergent validity can be examined using common measures, such as AVE, standardised factor loadings and construct

reliability (Hair et al., 2014). To establish convergent validity the value of AVE should be greater than .50, while the standardised factor loadings should be  $> .50$  (Hair et al., 2014). The acceptable reliability score for a newly developed measure is greater than .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

The evaluation of AVE for the six-first-order factor structure model revealed that the AVE for each factor was greater than .50. The assessment of the construct reliability revealed that all the six-first-order factor structure model scores were well above the minimum acceptable value (see Table 5.19).

Table 5.19

*Average Variance Extracted for all Constructs*

Component	AVE	CR
1. Workplace interactions	.70	.94
2. Local social interactions	.73	.93
3. General readjustment	.70	.95
4. Local social norms	.64	.92
5. Personal readjustment	.68	.91
6. Work task performance	.81	.89

*Note.* AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR= Construct Reliability

Inspection of the standardised factor loadings of the six-first-order factor structure model indicated that all items had a standardised factor loading  $> .70$ , ranging from .76 to .95 (see Table 5.20). Therefore the convergent validity was established for the six-first-order factor structure model of repatriation adjustment.

Table 5.20

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Repatriation Adjustment Scale*

	Standardised Estimates						C.R. Value	P
	WTP	WPI	PR	LSN	LSI	GR		
Work Task Performance (WTP)								
Pro. Adj. Item1	.88							
Pro. Adj. Item2	.91						14.66	***
Workplace Interactions (WPI)								
Pro. Adj. Item5		.78						
Pro. Adj. Item10		.85					12.01	***
Pro. Adj. Item11		.88					12.48	***
Pro. Adj. Item12		.79					11.02	***
Pro. Adj. Item13		.86					12.08	***
Pro. Adj. Item16		.84					11.75	***
Pro. Adj. Item17		.83					11.54	***
Personal Readjustment (PR)								
Per. Adj. Item2			.76					
Per. Adj. Item3			.88				11.61	***
Per. Adj. Item4			.88				11.40	***
Per. Adj. Item6			.88				11.85	***
Per. Adj. Item7			.70				9.00	***
Local Social Norms (LSN)								
Soc. Adj. Item3				.77				
Soc. Adj. Item5				.81			10.89	***
Soc. Adj. Item6				.76			10.01	***
Soc. Adj. Item7				.76			9.96	***
Soc. Adj. Item8				.82			11.05	***
Soc. Adj. Item9				.86			11.58	***
Local Social Interactions (LSI)								
Soc. Adj. Item10					.82			
Soc. Adj. Item11					.77		10.89	***
Soc. Adj. Item12					.80		13.52	***
Soc. Adj. Item13					.94		11.99	***
Soc. Adj. Item14					.87		11.98	***
Soc. Adj. Item15					.87		10.89	***
General Readjustment (GR)								
Gen. Adj. Item1						.85		
Gen. Adj. Item2						.78	12.02	***
Gen. Adj. Item5						.85	13.91	***
Gen. Adj. Item6						.85	13.78	***
Gen. Adj. Item7						.86	13.92	***
Gen. Adj. Item8						.88	14.49	***
Gen. Adj. Item9						.82	12.17	***
Gen. Adj. Item10						.80	11.12	***

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*Note.* WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment.

### **5.4.3.3 Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity refers to “the extent to which the measure is indeed novel and not simply a reflection of some other variables” (Churchill, 1979, p. 70). It was examined by using two common tests. The first was the AVE versus the ASV approach (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), where “the AVE should be “greater than the shared variance between it and all other constructs” (Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, & Ramirez, 2016, p. 124).

The second test was the comparison between a constrained model, where the relationship value between the constructs is set to the value of 1.0, and an unconstrained model, which allows the constructs to estimate the relationship values (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). Hence, the difference between constrained and unconstrained models should show a significant Chi-square value in order to establish construct validity (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988).

The results indicate that the AVE value for each of the six first-order factors is greater than both the MSV and ASV. Thus, each construct of the six-first-order factor model of the repatriation adjustment scale is independent of other constructs (see Table 5.21).



Table 5.21

*Validity Test Sample B*

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Correlation Matrix & Squared Root of AVE					
					WTP	WPI	PR	LSN	LSI	GR
WTP	.89	.81	.67	.39	.90					
WPI	.94	.70	.67	.52	.81	.84				
PR	.91	.68	.64	.43	.73	.80	.82			
LSN	.92	.64	.58	.43	.50	.68	.62	.80		
LSI	.93	.73	.58	.39	.53	.64	.54	.76	.85	
GR	.95	.70	.47	.36	.47	.64	.56	.68	.63	.84

*Note.* WTP = Work Tasks Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment; CR= Construct Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; ASV = Average Shared Variance.

The results of the comparison between the constrained and unconstrained models revealed that there was a significant difference between the models, providing further evidence of discriminant validity and, thus, the discriminant validity was established for the six-first-order factor structure measurement model of repatriation adjustment (see Table 5.22).

Table 5.22

*Constrained and Unconstrained Models*

Model	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	P value
Constrained Model	1081.83	527	0.00
Unconstrained Model	995.86	512	0.00
Difference Between the Models	125.97	15	0.00

**5.4.3.4 Nomological Validity**

Nomological validity refers to “the degree that the summated scale makes accurate predictions of other concepts in a theoretical based model” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 126). It should be assessed using validated scales from previous studies (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, nomological validity is established when constructs from the previously validated measure correlate with the constructs from the specified measurement model (Hair et al., 2010).

As explained in Chapter 3, a previous repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992), which has 13 items and three constructs (work, interaction and general readjustments), was included to assess the nomological validity of the newly developed measure.

The results indicated all three constructs from the previously validated measure (work, interaction and general readjustments) were significantly correlated with the six factors in the new measurement model (work task performance, workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms, local social interactions, and general readjustment) ( $r = .44$  to  $.92$ ,  $P < .01$ ). The correlations were relatively high particularly between work and work task performance, between interaction and local social interaction, and between general and general readjustment. This was expected, as some of Black et al.'s (1992) items were included in the new scale (see Table 5.23). Thus, nomological validity was established for the six-first-order factor structure measurement model of repatriation adjustment.

Table 5.23

*Correlation Matrix of Constructs*

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Work	1								
2. Interaction	.51**	1							
3. General	.47**	.71**	1						
4. Work Task Performance	.97**	.51**	.47**	1					
5. Workplace Interactions	.78**	.64**	.60**	.74**	1				
6. Personal Readjustment	.67**	.55**	.54**	.65**	.77**	1			
7. Local Social Norms	.46**	.73**	.60**	.46**	.66**	.60**	1		
8. Local Social Interactions	.48**	.96**	.70**	.48**	.60**	.54**	.75**	1	
9. General Readjustment	.44**	.63**	.92**	.42**	.61**	.54**	.62**	.61**	1

Note. \*\* = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Establishing the construct validity (content validity, convergent validity the discriminant validity and the nomological validity) for the six-factor model provided further support for Model A as a measurement model for the repatriation adjustment scale.

#### 5.4.4 Develop Norms

After establishing the construct validity, Churchill (1979) suggests developing norms. Churchill (1979) indicates that “the raw score on a measuring instrument is not particularly informative”; thus, the actual norms must be understood to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions (p. 72). This can be approached by comparing a “person’s score with the score achieved by other people” (Churchill, 1979, p. 72). Thus, the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis values were compared across the three samples (sample A, sample B, and samples A and B combined). The overall results showed that the norms are relatively similar across the three samples (see Table 5.24).

Table 5.24

#### *Norms of Repatriation Adjustment Scale*

Construct	Sample A				Sample B				Entire Sample			
	M	SD	SK	KU	M	SD	SK	KU	M	SD	SK	KU
WTP	4.34	1.33	-.47	-.77	4.16	1.46	-.22	-.99	4.25	1.40	-.35	-.90
WPI	4.13	1.32	.01	-1.18	3.96	1.38	.10	-.95	4.05	1.35	.05	-1.06
PR	4.21	1.40	-.08	-.97	4.07	1.45	.12	-1.12	4.14	1.43	.01	-1.06
LSN	3.95	1.09	.09	-.13	3.90	1.16	.21	-.37	3.95	1.13	.14	-.29
LSI	4.81	1.21	-.67	.29	4.91	1.23	-.64	.25	4.89	1.20	-.66	.31
GR	3.51	1.26	.27	-.91	3.52	1.36	.55	-.58	3.51	1.31	.42	-.71

*Note.* WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment; M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, SK = Skewness, KU = Kurtosis.

## 5.5 DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the results of Study 2, which was designed to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale. The newly developed scale assesses six

facets of repatriation adjustment: work task performance, workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms, local social interactions and general readjustment. The new scale demonstrates high-reliability coefficients and an acceptable validity. However, this result diverges from both the previous repatriation adjustment studies and the hypothesised four-factor structure found in the qualitative study (Study 1).

First, previous repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Black et al., 1992) operationalise repatriation adjustment using the three psychological facets of work, interaction and general readjustments, while the current study found six facets. This difference is explained by the conceptualisation of repatriation adjustment. Black et al. (1992) conceptualise repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture. The current study extends that conceptual definition to the degree of psychosocial comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing their international assignments in novel cultures.

Second, in Study 1, repatriation adjustment was qualitatively hypothesised as four first-order factors: professional readjustment, personal readjustment, socio-cultural readjustment and general readjustment. Of these factors, professional readjustment had three second-order factors (work task performance readjustment, interactions with authority figures and interactions with colleagues in the workplace), while personal readjustment had three second-order factors (readjustment to local norms of punctuality, readjustment to local daily life and readjustment to local communication norms).

However, based on the six-first-order factor model and the EFA results, two of the three hypothesised second-order factors for professional readjustment

(interactions with authority figures and interactions with colleagues in the workplace) loaded onto one first-order factor (workplace interactions). This was similar to the personal readjustment factor, as all three second-order factors loaded onto one first-order factor (personal readjustment). This empirically indicates that the items, within both facets, were measuring the same things and including them as separate factors would result in discriminant validity issues. Thus, the decision was made to combine the items of the second-order factors into the broader first-order constructs.

On the other hand, socio-cultural readjustment, which was qualitatively hypothesised as a first-order factor, split into two first-order factors (local social norms and local social interactions). This was an unexpected result. Previous repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Kimber, 2012; Ward & Kennedy, 1999) that investigated the socio-cultural facet found a single-factor structure. However, this is explained by the distance between the home and host countries. For instance, Kimber (2012) utilised a sample of 102 US citizens, most of whom had returned from Europe, including the UK which has a similar culture to that of the US. However, the current study utilised Saudi repatriates returning from four different nations, Australia, Canada, the UK and the US, where the cultural contexts are more novel (Hofstede, 1984).

The new additional facets of the repatriation adjustment scale capture perceptual and attitudinal challenges which are experienced by repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures. For instance, the factor that explained most of the variance was workplace interactions, followed by local social interactions, general readjustment, local social norms, personal readjustment and then work task performance. This suggests that workplace

interactions and local social interactions were the most dominant form of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reported the results of Study 2, which was designed to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale previously developed in Study 1. The scale-validation study found support for repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct comprising six sub-facets: work task performance (measured by two items), workplace interactions (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), local social norms (measured by seven items), local social interactions (measured by five items) and general readjustment (measured by eight items). The final model has 34 items and was proven to be a reliable and valid measure of repatriation adjustment.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, reports the results of Study 3, a three-step LPA, which aimed to: first, explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2; and, second, examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution for Saudi public sector employees who temporarily expatriated to Australia, Canada, the UK and the US and then returned to work and live in Saudi Arabia.

# Chapter 6: Study 3, Repatriation Adjustment Profiles

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## 6.1 PREAMBLE

Chapter 5 reported the results of Study 2, the validation of the new repatriation adjustment scale. The chapter found support for the operationalisation of repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct comprising six facets: readjustment to work task performance (measured by two items), readjustment to workplace interactions (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), readjustment to the local social norms (measured by seven items), readjustment to local social interactions (measured by five items) and general readjustment (measured by eight items).

The purpose of the current chapter is to report the results of Study 3. In Study 3 a three-step LPA was conducted with two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution for Saudi public sector employees who had temporarily expatriated to Australia, Canada, the UK and the US and then returned to work and live in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 6 is structured as follows. First, the chapter commences with a brief introduction to Study 3. Second, the chapter provides the methodology utilised, outlining the sample characteristics, the data collection and preparation procedures, the utilised instruments and finally the data analytical strategies employed. Third, the chapter presents the results of the LPA. Fourth, the chapter provides a discussion of the main results in conjunction with the extant literature on repatriation adjustment. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings.

## **6.2 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of Study 3 was to: first, explore the distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment for Saudi repatriates; and, second, examine the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) on the obtained profile membership solution using the three-step LPA approach (Gabriel et al., 2015).

Repatriation adjustment is defined in this study as the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing their international assignments in novel cultures. It remains a challenging transition for individuals and their employing organisations (Sánchez et al., 2008) due to: (a) the high costs of the expatriation process incurred by the organisation (Stahl et al., 2009) and the employer's desire to capitalise on their investment (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012); (b) the fact that repatriation is more challenging than expatriation, as supported by empirical evidence (Adler, 2002; Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Martin, 1984; Forster, 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Harvey, 1989); (c) repatriation being the linkage point between overseas development and repatriates' career path (Herman & Tetrick, 2009); and (d) the fact that repatriation adjustment is associated with significant personal and professional consequences, such as subjective wellbeing (Andreason & Kinneer, 2005; Black et al., 1991; Nery-Kjerfve



& McLean, 2012), the intention to leave the organisation upon repatriation (Black et al., 1992; Kraimer et al., 2009), organisational commitment (Gregersen, 1992; Schudey et al., 2012), the utilisation of international skills (Linehan & Scullion, 2002; Tahir & Azhar, 2013) and job satisfaction (Briody & Baba, 1991; Sánchez et al., 2008).

Scholars have found that the readjustment to the home country culture is often more challenging than adjustment to the host country culture (Adler, 2002; Adler & Ghadar, 1989; Martin, 1984; Forster, 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Harvey, 1989). Some researchers have argued that this challenge is due to the “critical differences between acculturation and repatriation” (i.e., Hammer et al., 1998; Martin, 1984). Martin (1984), for example, explains three main differences between expatriation and repatriation adjustments. The first difference is the individual’s expectations associated with each type of adjustment. For expatriation adjustment, expatriates expect that they might experience challenges in adapting to the host culture as they enter into a new cultural context, whereas returning repatriates do not expect such challenges upon re-entry to their home culture, as they are returning to their heritage culture. The second difference relates to the societal expectations. In the host culture, members understand that expatriates might not behave as native people do; however, the members of a repatriate’s home culture do not expect repatriates to behave differently. The third difference relates to “the change and awareness of change” (Martin, 1984, p. 123); expatriates experience changes to the environment, whereas repatriates experience changes within themselves upon re-entry to their home country (Martin, 1984).

Other scholars (i.e., Baruch et al., 2002; Paik et al., 2002; Stroh et al., 1998) indicate that as expatriates spend a period of time in a foreign culture, the foreign

cultural environment becomes more like a home culture and the home culture becomes like a foreign culture, creating a reverse culture shock which results in readjustment challenges for repatriates when re-entering their home culture.

Poor repatriation adjustment has also been found to negatively impact a range of professional, economic, social and family outcomes, including: mental stress (Chi & Chen, 2007; Harvey, 1989; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), issues with skills utilisation (Brewster & Suutari, 2005; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Gregersen & Black, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Harvey & Novicevic, 2006; Linehan & Scullion, 2002; Selmer, 1999; Stroh et al., 1998); work uncertainties (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007), missed job opportunities (Wang, 1997), a changed cultural identity (Raschio, 1987; Sussman, 2000), and job-related stress (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2002). Studies have found that, as a result, up to 44% of repatriates quit their job within two years of repatriation (Kraimer et al., 2009). Other studies have found that 42% of US repatriates aimed to quit their job upon re-entry to their home culture, while 72% did not have the ambition to work for the same organisation after a year (Black et al., 1992).

In attempting to respond to these challenges and develop a better understanding of the repatriation adjustment phenomenon, scholars have developed theories and frameworks of repatriation adjustment, and have examined the antecedents and outcomes of repatriation adjustment. However, to date, the most commonly used method to investigate the topic of repatriation adjustment and examine the relationship between repatriation adjustment and its antecedents and outcomes has been the variable-centred approach strategy (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion). While variable-centred approach strategies have contributed significantly to the current understanding of the relationship between repatriation adjustment and its personal and professional outcomes, consideration of other

methodological approaches, such as person-centred approaches, shifts the focus and draws attention to the “unobserved subgroups who share similar levels of, and/or relationships among, a system of variables”, which is the primary rationale of the person-centred approach (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 195).

Identifying subgroups who share the same levels of the six facets of repatriation adjustment could extend repatriation adjustment theories by, first, providing alternative insights into and explanations of the repatriation adjustment construct, and to represent groups of repatriates within a single target population. Second, identifying subgroups could reconcile contradictory results and perspectives on the association between repatriation adjustment and the outcome variables (Chapter 2, Section 2.7). Therefore, several important questions in the repatriation adjustment literature may be better addressed by utilising a person-centred analytic approach. To this end, Study 3 addresses the following research questions:

**RQ3:** *Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ4:** *Do cultural identity identification (home and host), the time spent overseas and the time since returning home predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?*

**RQ5:** *Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, or subjective wellbeing?*

### **6.3 METHOD**

This study utilises Gabriel et al.’s (2015) three-step LPA approach. This approach was conducted to: first, empirically explore the underlying profiles of the interaction between the six repatriation adjustment facets among Saudi public sector

employees who had temporarily expatriated to Australia, Canada, the UK or the US and then returned to Saudi Arabia; and, second, to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) and the outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Gabriel et al. 2015).

### **6.3.1 Sample C Characteristics**

Sample C was formed using the total of 305 participants (Sample A and Sample B combined). All participants were (at the time of data collection) working in the Saudi public sector and had recently participated in a long-term international assignment as a compulsory obligation of their work commitments, either in Australia and New Zealand ( $n = 91$ ), Canada ( $n = 69$ ), the UK ( $n = 74$ ) or the US ( $n = 71$ ). International assignments are designed to improve the efficiency of Saudi public sector employees by enabling them to acquire global knowledge and skills while advancing their education (Ministry of Civil Service, 2014).

On average, participants in this sample had spent almost three years on their most recent international assignment. The average time since returning home was 13 months (range 4–36 months). Most participants (218) held a postgraduate degree, while 87 participants held an undergraduate degree. Most participants were male (98.70%); 70.20% were married and 29.80% were single (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

*Demographic Profile of Participants in Sample C*

Characteristic	Description
Number of participants	305 Participants
Gender	301 Males (98.7%), 4 Females (1.30%)
Age	25–29 years (25.20%), 30–34 years (35.70%), 35–39 years (28.90%), 40–44 years (8.90%), and 45–49 years (1.30%)
Educational Level	Undergraduate (29.60%), Postgraduate (70.40%)
Host Country	Australia and New Zealand (29.90%), Canada (22.60%), the UK (24.30%), the US (23.30%)
Marital Status	Married (70.20%), Single (29.80%)
Average Time Spent Overseas	38.9 months (range 3–77 months)
Average Time Since Returning Home	13.5 months (range 0–50 months)

**6.3.2 Data Collection**

The data were collected using an online survey (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3.2). The survey was distributed to 377 Saudi public sector employees who had recently returned home upon completing their most recent international assignment in one of four nations: Australia, Canada, the UK or the US.

Participants were approached with the assistance of SACM, the corporate body responsible for Saudi expatriates in Australia. A total of 305 participants returned complete surveys. The response rate cannot be reliably calculated as the total number of the Saudi repatriates was unknown, as candidates were not directly contacted.

**6.3.2.1 Data Preparation Procedures**

Prior to conducting the LPA, the dataset was screened for missing data and outlier cases (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996) using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The following sections describe the analytical strategies used to identify the missing data and detect the outlier cases, and then report the remedies used to respond to the identified cases.

### **6.3.2.1.1 Assessment of Missing Data**

The data were assessed for potential missing data using descriptive and frequency statistics, as well as the MCAR test (Little, 1988). The results indicated that the frequency of missing data was low, as it did not exceed 10% (Hair et al., 2010). The missing data in this research were found to be ‘not-ignorable’ and the main reason for the missing data was a failure by participants to complete the survey items (Hair et al., 2010, p. 46).

The randomness of the missing data was checked using Little’s (1988) MCAR test. The result of MCAR test was not significant, ( $\chi^2 = 10180.63$ ,  $df = 1072$ ,  $p = .47$ ); thus, the missing values were found to be missing at random (MAR) (Hair et al., 2010). Hair et al. (2010) suggest using the mean substitution approach as one appropriate method for low-percentage and MCAR data. Thus, the missing values in this research were replaced using the series mean scores (Hair et al., 2010).

### **6.3.2.1.2 Assessment of Outliers**

The data were examined for potential univariate and multivariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). The result of the standardised Z score indicated that the data had two univariate outlier cases with a Z score  $< 3.29$ . The result of the Mahalanobis Distance test (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996) indicated that there were three multivariate outlier cases. However, the identified outlier cases were retained for further analysis as: first, the values of the 5% Trimmed mean and the actual mean were similar, which indicated that the missing “values are not different from the remaining distribution” (Pallant, 2013 p. 67); and, second, the identified outlier cases were members of the target population (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996).

### 6.3.3 Measures

#### *Repatriation Adjustment*

Repatriation adjustment was assessed using the 34-item repatriation adjustment scale resulting from Study 2. The scale measures the six facets of repatriation adjustment: work task performance readjustment (measured by two items), workplace interactions readjustment (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), readjustment to the local social norms (measured by seven items), readjustment to interactions with social networks (measured by five items) and general readjustment (measured by eight items). Participants were instructed to assess the extent to which they felt readjusted after returning from novel cultures using a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = not adjusted at all to 7 = completely adjusted.

#### *Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity was measured using the 21-item scale developed by Ward and Kennedy (1994). This scale asked respondents to indicate how similar their personal characteristics or preferences are to (a) other Saudis and (b) the people of the host country (i.e., Americans, Australians, Canadians or British) using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = not similar at all and 7 = extremely similar).

#### *Time Spent Overseas*

Time spent overseas was measured by asking repatriates how many months they had spent overseas on their most recent international assignment (Black, 1994).

### *Time since Returning Home*

Time since returning home was measured by asking repatriates to indicate how many months they had been in Saudi Arabia since returning from their most recent international assignment (Black, 1994).

### *Intention to Leave*

Intention to leave was assessed using Lazarova and Cerdin's (2007) 6-item instrument. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement to the six item statements using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

### *Organisational Commitment*

Organisational commitment was assessed using the six items with the highest factor loadings of Meyer and Allen's (1997) commitment scale. Each commitment component (i.e., affective, normative and continuance commitment) was assessed using two items. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

### *Skill Utilisation*

Skill utilisation was measured by using D'Netto, Bakas and Bordia's (2008) 6-item measure. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

### *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction was measured by using Kim's (2002) general job satisfaction scale. The scale has two items and asks participants to indicate their agreement with



the two item statements using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

### *Subjective Wellbeing*

Subjective wellbeing was assessed using Selmer, Chiu and Shenkar's (2007) 9-item instrument. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = much lower than usual to 5 = much higher than usual).

### **6.3.4 Data Analysis**

The LPA was conducted using the maximum likelihood estimator in MPlus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015). The LPA utilises "latent categorical variables to identify groups of individuals with similar patterns of scores on a set of variables" (Meyer et al., 2012, p. 8) – in this case the six facets of repatriation adjustment.

The LPA was conducted following the three-step procedure suggested by Gabriel et al. (2015). The first step involves estimating the latent profiles using the profile indicators. The optimal number of profiles that fit the data is achieved based on: first, specifying a two-profile model; and, second, increasing the number of profiles progressively (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007).

As recommended by Gabriel et al. (2015) and other scholars (i.e., Meyer et al. 2012; Muthén & Muthén, 2000), the proposed successive profile models were assessed using the combination of absolute and relative fit indices, as well as the parsimony principle (Morgan, Hodge & Baggett, 2016). The criteria included: (a) the sample adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (SABIC; Sclove, 1987), (b) entropy values, (c) bootstrapped likelihood ratio test (BLRT; McLachlan & Peel, 2000), (d) the Lo-Mendell-Rubin (LMR-LRT; Biometrika, 2001) likelihood ratio test, and (e)

number of cases in each profile. Table 6.2 provides an overview of the LPA fit indices and thresholds.

Table 6.2

*LPA Fit Indices and Thresholds*

Fit Index	Type	Threshold	Source
Sample Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (SABIC)	Relative fit indices	Smaller values indicate a better profile solution	Sclove (1987)
Entropy	Relative fit indices	Values closer to 1 indicate ‘clearer delineation between classes’.	Morgan (2015, p. 79)
Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT)	Absolute fit indices	P-value <.05 indicates that there is statistically significant improvement in fit when an additional profile is included	McLachlan & Peel (2000)
Lo-Mendell-Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test (LMR-LRT)	Absolute fit indices	P-value <.05 indicates that there is a statistically significant improvement in fit when an additional profile is included	Biometrika (2001); Morgan (2015).
Number of cases in each profile	Profile validation	<i>n</i> -for each profile >20	Meyer et al., (2012); Nylund et al., (2007) Hair et al., (2014)

The second step of the three-step procedure involves assessing the obtained profile model using the posterior probabilities associated with each profile (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Gabriel et al. 2015). The third step of the LPA procedure involves examining the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) on the obtained profile membership solution (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Gabriel et al., 2015).

Following the recommendations by Gabriel et al. (2015) and other scholars (i.e., Lanza, Tan & Bray, 2013; Vermunt, 2010), the association between the profile membership and the antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) was examined using the R3STEP command, whereas the association between the profile membership and the outcome variables (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing in the current study) was examined using the DCON command in Mplus.

According to Gabriel et al. (2015), the R3STEP command is “a series of multinomial logistic regressions that are used to assess whether an increase in an antecedent would result in a higher probability that a person belongs to one class over another class” (p. 867). The DCON command “provides comparisons among the profiles on each of the outcome variables modelled (i.e., determines whether each profile is significantly different from each other on each dependent variable separately)” (Gabriel et al., 2015, p. 867). It is recommended that a separate analysis be run for the antecedents (R3STEP) and outcome variables (DCON) (Gabriel et al., 2015; Lanza, et al., 2013).

## **6.4 RESULTS**

The following section reports results of the CFA and the three-step LPA procedures. This section is divided into four main subsections. Section 6.4.1 reports the results of the fundamental assumptions of factor analysis. Section 6.4.2 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations between scales. Section 6.4.3 reports the results of the CFA. Section 6.4.4 reports the three-step LPA approach.

### **6.4.1 Preliminary Assessment of the Factor Analysis Assumptions**

According to Pallant (2016), it is critical to examine the fundamental assumptions of factor analysis: the adequacy of sample size, the assumption of normality and the factorability of the dataset prior to running the factor analysis to avoid measurement error (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). Thus, the following sections assess these assumptions and report their outcomes.

#### **6.4.1.1 Sample Size**

To conduct CFA, some scholars (i.e., Boomsa, 1982; Byrne, 2010; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hinkin, 1995; Hoelter 1983) recommend a minimum sample size of 200 participants. Other scholars (i.e., Gorsuch, 1983; Hair et al., 2014) suggest the 5:1 as a rule of thumb for the minimum ratio of cases for the observed items.

The final sample size of 305 participants exceeds the minimum recommendation of 200 criterion, but does not meet the minimal ratio of cases for the observed items criteria 5:1 rule (being 3:1) (Gorsuch, 1983). However, as indicated earlier, the challenge of accessing and obtaining an adequate sample size is a well-acknowledged issue across repatriation studies (Sussman, 2001).

In addition, Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) indicate that small samples are appropriate when the produced factor solution has several high-loading items, which was indeed the case in this study. Thus, the sample size of 305 participants utilised in this study is deemed to be sufficient to conduct the CFA.

#### **6.4.1.2 Assessment of Normality**

Normality was examined by using Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). The Skewness Kurtosis tests revealed that 49 items were negatively skewed, with Skewness scores ranging from -1.73 to -.00,

which means that the scores denote a rightward shift, indicating a univariate distribution. On the other hand, 55 items were positively skewed, with Skewness scores ranging from 2.08 to .00, suggesting that the distribution shifted to the left (Hair et al., 2014). In addition, all the Kurtosis values were negative and ranged from -1.27 to -.01, except for five items which had positive values ranging from .00 to 5.81. This result indicated that the distributions were relatively flat (Pallant, 2016). However, as neither Skewness nor Kurtosis scores exceeded the severity cut-off values of 3 and 10 respectively, data transformation was not justified and, thus, the data should be treated as being normally distributed (Kline, 2015).

#### **6.4.1.3 Assessment of Factorability**

Factorability was assessed by the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The results of these measures support the suitability of the dataset for a factor analysis test. The KMO value was .94, which is above the cut-off value of .6 (Pallant, 2016). The value of Bartlett's test for Sphericity was statically significant at ( $\chi^2 = 34220.03$ ,  $df = 5356$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), which further supported the suitability of the items for factor analysis.

#### **6.4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Procedure**

As explained in Chapter 3, 15 scales were used to measure cultural identity (two dimensions: home and host), repatriation adjustment (six facets), organisational commitment (three dimensions), intention to leave, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing. All these scales have been used in previous studies and have been proven to be valid and reliable measures (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3.4), with the exception of the repatriation adjustment scale which was developed as part of the current research. A CFA was conducted to assess discriminant validity and test for common method variance among the 15 measures using AMOS version 23 (Hair

et al., 2014). The CFA was conducted in two steps. First, a series of separate CFAs were conducted. Six CFAs were conducted for cultural identity, repatriation adjustment, organisational commitment, intention to leave, skill utilisation and subjective wellbeing measures. Job satisfaction was not included at this stage as it has only two measures. For each CFA measurement model the modification indices were examined and the covariance between error terms was used as required to obtain model fit. The results of the model fit indices for the six measures revealed acceptable fit (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.3

*CFA Model Fit Statistics*

Construct	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Cultural Identity Measures (2 factors)	2005.98	793	2.53	.07	.06	.91	.90
Repatriation Adjustment (6 factors)	1297.45	512	2.53	.07	.05	.91	.91
Organisational Commitment (3 factors)	25.59	6	4.26	.10	.02	.98	.96
Intention to Leave	7.89	3	2.63	.07	.01	.99	.97
Skill Utilisation	19.16	6	3.19	.08	.01	.99	.97
Subjective Wellbeing							

*Notes.* DF= Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

Second, the 15 factors were included in one model, and an adequate model fit was achieved ( $\chi^2/df = 1.80$ , TLI = .91, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .52, SRMR = .05). All items loaded significantly onto their latent factor, with factor loadings above .5. The 15-factor measurement model was examined against Model B, where cultural identity was measured using one latent factor. Model B revealed a poor fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.73$ , TLI = .82, CFI = .83, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .10); thus, providing

further support that the obtained 15-factor measurement model fits the data better than alternative models with fewer factors (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.4

*Competing Models Goodness of Fit Statistics*

Construct	Chi-square	DF	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model A	3585.34	1982	1.80	.52	.05	.92	.91
Model B	5445.64	1990	2.73	.07	.10	.83	.82

*Notes.* DF= Degree of Freedom, CMIN/DF = Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual, CFI = Comparative-Fit-Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index.

**6.4.3 Deceptive Statistics and Correlations among Measures**

The means, standard deviations and correlations of the Study 3 variables are presented in Table 6.3. The correlation coefficients between the constructs ranged from  $-.78$  to  $.84$ . The correlation coefficients between the six facets of repatriation adjustment were inspected and are provided in Table 6.3.

Table 6.5

*Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha Scores*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Work Task Performance	4.35	1.37	(.88)																
2. Workplace Interactions	3.99	1.36	.61**	(.94)															
3. Personal Readjustment	4.03	1.36	.60**	.77**	(.90)														
4. Local Social Norms	3.96	1.12	.44**	.69**	.68**	(.92)													
5. Local Social Interactions	5.01	1.15	.49**	.55**	.55**	.63**	(.92)												
6. General Readjustment	3.52	1.31	.40**	.60**	.60**	.64**	.57**	(.94)											
7. Home Cultural Identity	4.21	1.30	.21**	.46**	.51**	.45**	.36**	.53**	(.97)										
8. Host Cultural Identity	3.94	1.25	.01	-.30**	-.38**	-.26**	.00	-.26**	-.49**	(.96)									
9. Time Spent Overseas	38.92	14.06	-.16**	-.18**	-.28**	-.16**	-.27**	-.18**	-.27**	.16**	<i>n/a</i>								
10. Time Since Repatriation	13.75	10.46	.05	.26**	.21**	.32**	.04	.21**	.16**	-.14*	.06	<i>n/a</i>							
11. Intention to Leave	4.06	1.60	-.47**	-.61**	-.64**	-.42**	-.37**	-.49**	-.51**	.40**	.24**	-.07	(.90)						
12. Skill Utilisation	4.08	1.72	.51**	.69**	.65**	.52**	.42**	.52**	.41**	-.21**	-.15**	.19**	-.79**	(.94)					
13. Affective Commitment	3.89	1.75	.42**	.50**	.53**	.38**	.34**	.47**	.46**	-.36**	-.18**	.04	-.78**	.67**	(.89)				
14. Continuance Commitment	3.88	1.70	.43**	.55**	.53**	.39**	.32**	.39**	.43**	-.27**	-.23**	.11	-.73**	.72**	.55**	(.87)			
15. Normative Commitment	3.72	1.40	.50**	.57**	.60**	.39**	.35**	.43**	.46**	-.29**	-.23**	.07	-.82**	.83**	.70**	.77**	(.87)		
16. Job Satisfaction	3.99	1.84	.49**	.67**	.67**	.45**	.38**	.51**	.50**	-.35**	-.23**	.12*	-.84**	.84**	.73**	.71**	.84**	(.92)	
17. Subjective Wellbeing	3.15	.54	.20**	.30**	.33**	.26**	.24**	.28**	.32**	-.15**	-.12*	.06	-.37**	.34**	.25**	.36**	.38**	.37**	(.87)

Note. N = 305.

The coefficients on the diagonal are the Cronbach's alpha of each scale.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



All correlations between the six facets of repatriation adjustment, work task performance, workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms, local social interactions and general readjustment were positive (ranging from .40 to .77) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). This result was expected, as it is consistent with the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) and previous repatriation adjustment studies (Yan, 2015). For instance, Black and Gregersen (1991) found significant positive correlations between the work, interaction and general adjustment facets of US repatriates (ranging from .46 to .65). In another study, Yan (2015) found significant positive correlations between the three facets of repatriation adjustment – work, interaction and general (ranging from .47 to .60).

The correlation coefficients between cultural identity measures (identification with home and identification with host) and the six facets of repatriation adjustment were also inspected. The correlations between the home cultural identity and all six facets of repatriation adjustment were positive (ranging from .21 to .53) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). This result is consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies. For example, Cox (2001) found that home cultural identification was significantly correlated with depression and social difficulty upon re-entry.

However, the correlations between the host cultural identity and workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms and general readjustment were negative (ranging from -.49 to -.26) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). In addition, there were no correlations between the host cultural identity and two repatriation adjustment facets – work task performance ( $r = .01$ ) and local social interactions ( $r = .00$ ). This result is also consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies. For example, Cox (2001) found an insignificant correlation between identification with the host culture and depression and social difficulty upon re-entry.

The correlations between time spent overseas and the six facets of repatriation adjustment were negative (ranging from -.28 to -.18) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). This result is partly consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies. For example, Black and Gregersen (1991) found a negative and significant correlation between the time spent overseas and interaction and general readjustments.

The correlations between time since repatriation and the six facets of repatriation adjustment were positive (ranging from .04 to .26) and significant only with four facets: workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms and general readjustment. Time since repatriation was not correlated with work task performance and local social interactions. This result is partly consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies. For example, Cox (2004) found no correlation between time since repatriation and depression and social difficulty upon re-entry. In addition, Black and Gregersen (1991) found no relationship between work interactions and general readjustment and repatriation adjustment.

The correlations between the intention to leave the organisation and the six facets of repatriation adjustment were negative (ranging from -.64 to -.37) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). This result is aligned with previous studies. For instance, Lee and Liu (2007) found a significant and negative correlation between the intention to leave the organisation and repatriation adjustment.

The correlations between skill utilisation, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing were positive (ranging from .20 to .69) and significant ( $p < .01$ ). These results are also, partly consistent with previous repatriation adjustment studies. For instance, Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found a positive and significant correlation between skill utilisation and job readjustment. In another study, Stevens et al. (2006) found a

positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and work interactions and general readjustment upon repatriation. In addition, Gregersen (1992) found a positive significant relationship between organisational commitment and repatriation adjustment.

#### **6.4.4 The Latent Profile Analysis: Three-Step Approach**

The LPA was conducted following the three-step procedure suggested by Gabriel et al. (2015), which was discussed in the data analysis section (see Section 6.3.3). The following sections report the results of the three-step LPA procedure.

##### **6.4.4.1 Step One: Profile Estimation**

The purpose of this step was to determine the profile model that best fits the data using a combination of absolute and relative fit indices, as well as the parsimony principle (Gabriel et al., 2015; Morgan, Hodge, & Baggett, 2016) (see Section 6.3.4).

The optimal number of profiles is achieved by specifying a two-profile model, and then increasing the number of profiles progressively (Nylund et al., 2007) until non-convergence issues are detected between the proposed models (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). As recommended by Gabriel et al. (2015) and other scholars (i.e., Meyer et al., 2012; Muthén & Muthén, 2000), the proposed successive profile models were assessed using a combination of absolute and relative fit indices, as well as the parsimony principle. The indices used were: SABIC, BLRT, LMR-LRT, Entropy and the number of cases associated with each profile.

The results of the model fit indicators SABIC, BLRT, LMR-LRT suggested that there was more than one ‘best’ model across the different indices (see Table 6.6).

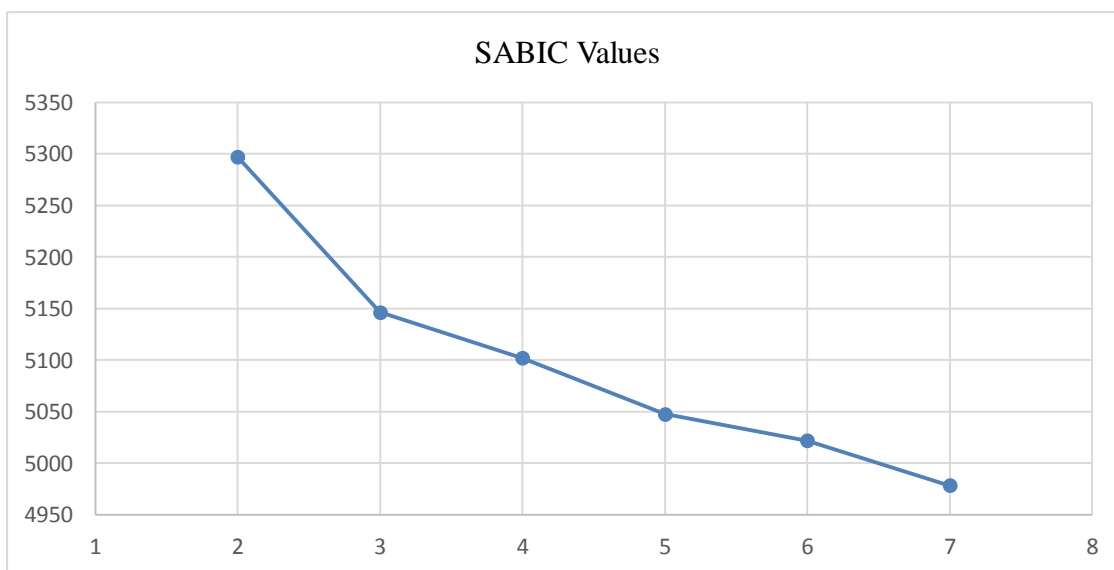
Table 6.6

*Model Fit Statistics*

Model	SABIC	BLRT	LMR - LRT	Entropy
2-Profile	5297	-3042.72*	836.868*	.92
3-Profile	5146.411	-2624.29*	168.431*	.90
4-Profile	5102.035	-2540.07*	62.218	.86
5-Profile	5047.455	-2494.07*	42.633	.85
6-Profile	5021.991	-2475.04*	47.878	.87
7-Profile	4978.342	-2451.1*	61.49	.88

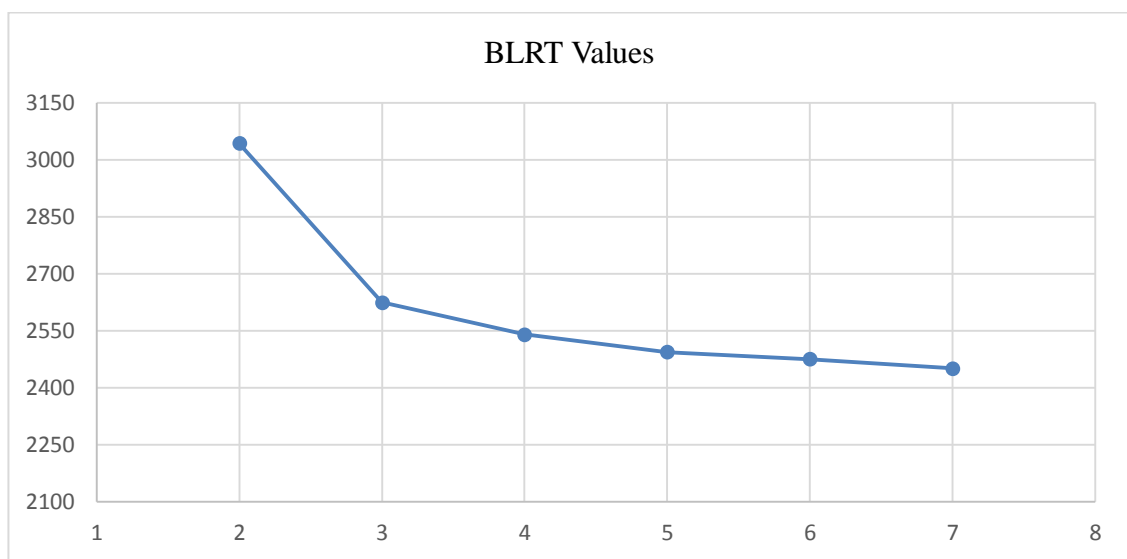
*Note.* \*  $P < .05$ . SABIC = Sample-adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion, BOOTLRT = Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test, LMR-LRT = Lo-Mendell-Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test.

The SABIC values are significantly lower with each progressive model. For SABIC, the ‘best’ model is the model with the smallest value. However, SABIC is mostly guaranteed to arrive at a single lower value corresponding to a K-class model, with  $K < K_{\max}$  (Morgan, 2015). In these cases, it is recommended that diminishing gains in model fit are examined using ‘elbow’ plots, like the use of the scree plot of eigenvalues used in EFA (Little, 2013). Thus, SABIC values were plotted against the number of classes. The result showed a drop in the marginal gain of adding classes, which resulted in a pronounced angle (i.e., elbow) in the plot between class 3 and 4, suggesting that a four-class solution was appropriate (see Figure 6.1).



*Figure 6.1* SABIC Values.

For the BLRT and adjusted LMR-LRT the ‘best’ model is the model with the smallest number of classes that is not significantly improved by the addition of another class. However, the BLRT may never yield a non-significant P-value before the number of classes reach  $K_{\max}$  (Little, 2013). In such cases, it is recommended to inspect the plot of the log likelihood for ‘elbow’ criterion (Little, 2013). The inspection of the plot of BLRT verses the number of classes observed an elbow at either three or four classes (see Figure 6.2).



*Figure 6.2* BLRT Values.

The LMR-LRT indicated that a three-profile solution was the most appropriate model as it had the smallest number of profiles, and is not significantly improved by the succeeding model (Little, 2013). In addition, the LMR-LRT for the four-class solution was non-significant.

The fifth selection criterion was the examination of entropy value (Gabriel et al., 2015). An entropy value closer to 1 indicates the clarity in classification (Morgan, 2015). According to Muthen (2004), an entropy value  $\geq .85$  is considered as high. The entropy value for the four-profile solution was ‘strongly overestimated’ at .86, suggesting that more than three profiles are “needed to account for the within-

class variation” (Muthen, 2004, p. 355). Thus, the entropy value of .86 indicates that the participants could adequately be assigned to the four-profile solution.

The sixth selection criterion was the examination of the number of cases in each profile. The results revealed that the four-class profile model did not contain profiles with a small number of individuals, while the fifth profile model comprised a profile represented by only 17 individuals (see Table 6.7), thus further supporting the fit of the four-profile model to the data.

Table 6.7

*Profile Models Membership*

Profile Model	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2-group model	149	156					
3-group model	33	134	138				
4-group model	35	72	66	132			
5-group model	31	102	61	94	17		
6-group model	31	106	42	14	94	18	
7-group model	9	96	42	16	12	92	18

**6.4.4.2 Step Two: Posterior Probabilities Evaluation**

The second step involves assessing the profile model, obtained from step one, using the posterior probabilities and then assigning participants to a class membership. The four-profile model was assessed using the posterior probabilities associated with each profile (Gabriel et al., 2015; Meyer et al., 2012). The result indicated that the four-profile model was more clearly defined than the five-class profile, as indicated by a high probability that individuals fit into the profile to which they were allocated and a low probability of fitting into other profiles (see Table 6.8). The probability of individuals fitting their allocated profiles was very high at .97 to .93, whereas the probability of individuals fitting other profile was low at .00 to .07.

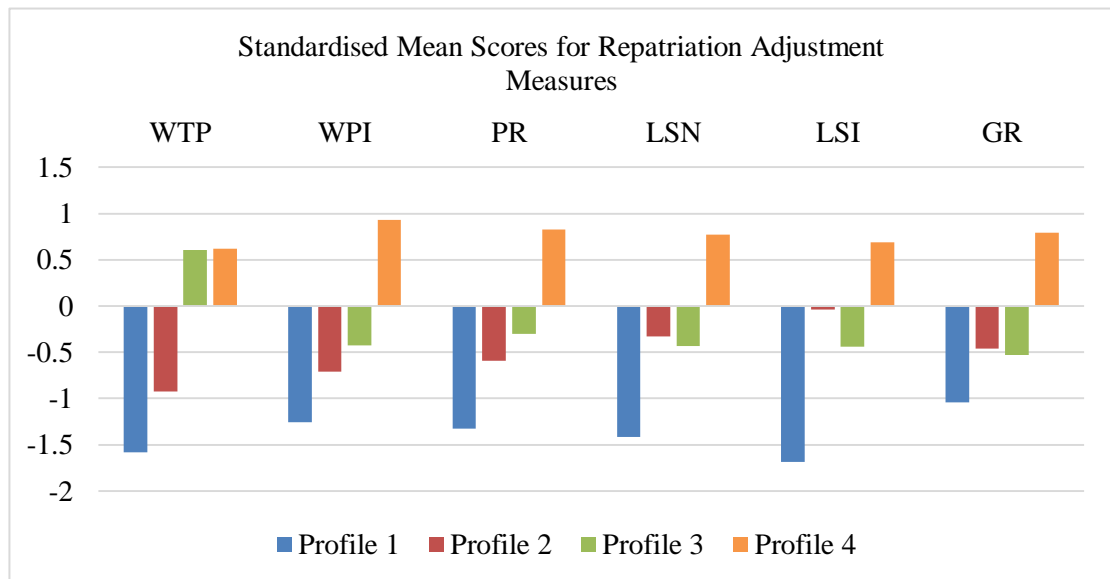
Table 6.8

*Posterior Probabilities for the Four-Class Profile Model.*

Profile	1	2	3	4
1	<b>0.93</b>	0.06	0.00	0.00
2	0.00	<b>0.87</b>	0.07	0.01
3	0.00	0.07	<b>0.88</b>	0.04
4	0.00	0.00	0.02	<b>0.97</b>

*Note.* Values in bold are average posterior probabilities associated with the profiles to which individuals were assigned.

Further, as suggested by Gabriel et al. (2015) and Meyer et al. (2012), a plot of the standard scores for the profile’s indicators (in this case the six repatriation adjustment facets) across the four profile groups was used as further evidence of the presence of the four profiles. The results showed that the pattern of means across the four profile groups was different (see Figure 6.3).



*Note.* Standardised mean scores are reported to support interpretation. WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment.

*Figure 6.3* Characteristics of Latent Profile Indicators.

In addition, Meyer et al. (2012) suggest assessing the constancy of the profiles resulting from the LPA by conducting an ANOVA. Thus, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare repatriation adjustment levels among the four-profile model,

using profile membership as the independent variable and the six facets of repatriation adjustment as the dependent variables.

The results indicated significant differences in the six facets of repatriation adjustment: work task performance ( $F(3, 301) = 282.98, p < .000$ ), workplace interactions ( $F(3, 301) = 255.68, p < .000$ ), personal readjustment ( $F(3, 301) = 150.57, p < .000$ ), local social norms ( $F(3, 301) = 124.35, p < .000$ ), local social interactions ( $F(3, 301) = 173.72, p < .000$ ) and general readjustment ( $F(3, 301) = 103.82, p < .000$ ). Thus, a post-hoc pairwise analysis was conducted using the Tukey HSD (Honest Significant Difference) adjustment to compare the differences between the profiles. The multiple comparisons showed significant differences for the six dimensions of repatriation adjustment across the four profiles (see Table 6.9).

Table 6.9

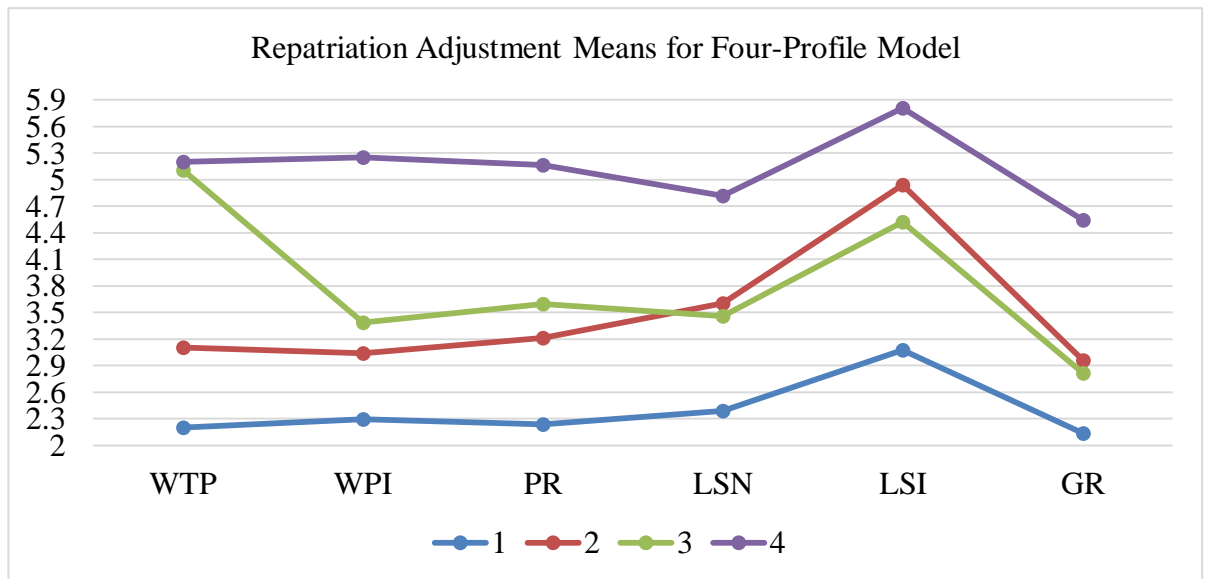
*Repatriation Adjustment Identification across the Four Profiles*

Profile Indicator	Profile Membership				Post-hoc comparisons*
	1	2	3	4	
WTP (SD)	2.17 (.58)	3.07 (.64)	5.18 (.74)	5.20 (.75)	1>2>3,4
WPI (SD)	2.28 (.80)	3.02 (.63)	3.41 (.69)	5.26 (.76)	1>2>3>4
PR (SD)	2.22 (.66)	3.22 (.85)	3.62 (.97)	5.16 (.87)	1>2>3>4
LSN (SD)	2.37 (.69)	3.59 (.78)	3.48 (.53)	4.82 (.84)	1>4>3,2
LSI (SD)	3.06 (1.08)	4.96 (.83)	4.50 (.69)	5.81 (.61)	1>2>3>4
GR (SD)	2.15 (.66)	2.91 (.90)	2.83 (.73)	4.56 (1.06)	1>4>3,2
Number of cases	35	72	66	132	

*Note.* \* Post-hoc comparisons indicate which profile means differ significantly at  $p < .05$  (SD) = Standard Deviation; WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment.

Figure 6.4 provides a graphical representation of the differences among the four profiles of repatriation adjustment measures.





Note. WTP = Work Task Performance; WPI = Workplace Interactions; PR = Personal Readjustment; LSN = Local Social Norms; LSI = Local Social Interactions; GR = General Readjustment.

Figure 6.4 Repatriation Adjustment Means Associated the Four-Profile.

As a result, based on the combination of absolute and relative fit indices, parsimony principle and theoretical meaningfulness, the four-class profile model was preferred over the three- and five-class profile models; thus, multiple profile groups with distinct patterns of repatriation adjustment exist within Saudi repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in Australia, Canada, the UK or the US. Therefore, in response to research question 3, the results demonstrated the presence of four quantitatively distinct repatriation adjustment profiles. The results from the ANOVA and post-hoc comparisons provided earlier (see Table 6.13), were used to name each profile.

Profile 1 was represented by 11.48% of the population. This profile has the lowest scores of all the profile indicators (the six facets of repatriation adjustment). Profile 1 also has the smallest sample among the four profiles. The mean scores indicate that individuals in this profile experience the greatest challenges in

readjusting to their home culture upon repatriation compared to the other profiles. Thus, this profile is labelled 'not readjusted'.

Profile 2 includes 23.61% of the target population. Repatriates within this profile rated significantly higher on all six facets of repatriation adjustment than those in profile 1 and slightly higher than those in profile 3 in two facets of repatriation adjustment (local social norms and general readjustment). Profile 2 was slightly higher than profile 3 in one facet of repatriation adjustment (local social interaction). This indicates that the individuals with this profile experience a better readjustment to their home culture upon repatriation than those within profile 1, but not compared to those within profile 3. Thus, this profile is labelled 'socially readjusted'.

Profile 3 was represented by 21.64% of the population. Repatriates in this profile rated significantly higher in all six facets of repatriation adjustment than those within profile 1 and significantly higher than those within profile 2 in three facets of repatriation adjustment (work task performance, workplace interactions and personal readjustment). This finding suggests that individuals with this profile experience a better readjustment to their home culture upon repatriation than those within profile 2, but not compared to those within profile 4. Thus, this profile is labelled 'professionally readjusted'.

Profile 4 comprises most of the population (43.28%). Repatriates in this profile rated significantly higher in all six facets of repatriation adjustment than those in profile 1 and profile 2, and slightly higher than those in profile 3 in one facet of repatriation adjustment (work task performance). This suggests that individuals with this profile experience the least challenges in readjusting to their home culture upon

repatriation compared to repatriates within the other three profiles. Thus, this profile is labelled ‘fully readjusted’.

#### **6.4.5 Step Three: Testing the Differences between Profiles**

The third step of the LPA involves examining the effect of the auxiliary variables (i.e., antecedents and outcomes) on the obtained profile membership groups (Gabriel et al., 2015). Following the recommendations by Gabriel et al. (2015) and other scholars (i.e., Lanza, Tan & Bray, 2013; Vermunt, 2010), the association between profile membership, antecedents and the distal outcomes was examined by using the R3STEP and the DCON commands. The following sections report the results of the final step of the three-step LPA procedure.

##### **6.4.5.1 Latent Profile Membership and the Antecedents**

The association between the four profiles and the antecedent variables (i.e., cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas and time since repatriation) was examined by using the R3STEP command (Gabriel et al., 2015; Lanza et al., 2013; Vermunt, 2010).

According to Gabriel et al. (2015), the higher the positive values of the antecedents the more likely for individuals to be classified in the first profile out of the two being compared, while the higher the negative values of the antecedents the lower the probability for individuals to be categorised in the first profile out of the two being compared.

The results indicate that repatriates higher in the home cultural identification antecedent are more likely to be in the professionally or fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles. This result shows a relatively close connection between the professionally and the fully readjusted profiles. The

result suggests that repatriates who maintain higher home cultural values experience higher readjustment to their home culture upon their repatriation (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.10

*Three-Step Results for the Antecedents (R3STEP) for the Four-Profile Model*

Antecedent	Profiles					
	NOT	NOT	NOT	SOC	SOC	PRO
	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ
	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs
	SOC	PRO	FUL	PRO	FUL	FUL
	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ
Home ID	0.36	-0.13	1.19***	-0.50*	-0.83***	-1.33***
Host ID	0.02	0.51	-0.39	0.48	0.42	-0.91***
TSO	-0.01	0.00	-0.04***	0.02	0.02*	-0.05***
TSR	0.00	-0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.04*	0.07

*Note.* All values are estimates from the R3STEP logistic regression analysis. Home ID = home cultural identification antecedent; Host ID = host cultural identification antecedent; TSO = Time spent overseas antecedent; TSR = Time since returning home antecedent; NOT READJ = not readjusted profile; SOC READJ = socially readjusted profile; PRO READJ = professionally readjusted profile; FUL READJ = fully readjusted profile.

\* $P < .05$

\*\* $P < .01$

\*\*\* $P < .001$

The means and standard deviations for the antecedent variables are reported in

Table 6.11.

*Table 6.11 Means and Standard Deviations of the Antecedents*

Profile	<i>n</i>	Antecedent							
		Home ID		Host ID		TSO		TSR	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Not readjusted	35	3.50	1.27	4.08	1.42	42.80	13.10	11.57	9.10
Socially readjusted	72	3.85	1.25	4.17	1.28	39.88	15.16	11.67	8.30
Professionally readjusted	66	3.41	1.01	4.50	1.15	43.97	11.96	11.05	9.81
Fully readjusted	132	4.99	1.01	3.50	1.07	34.84	13.59	16.39	11.55

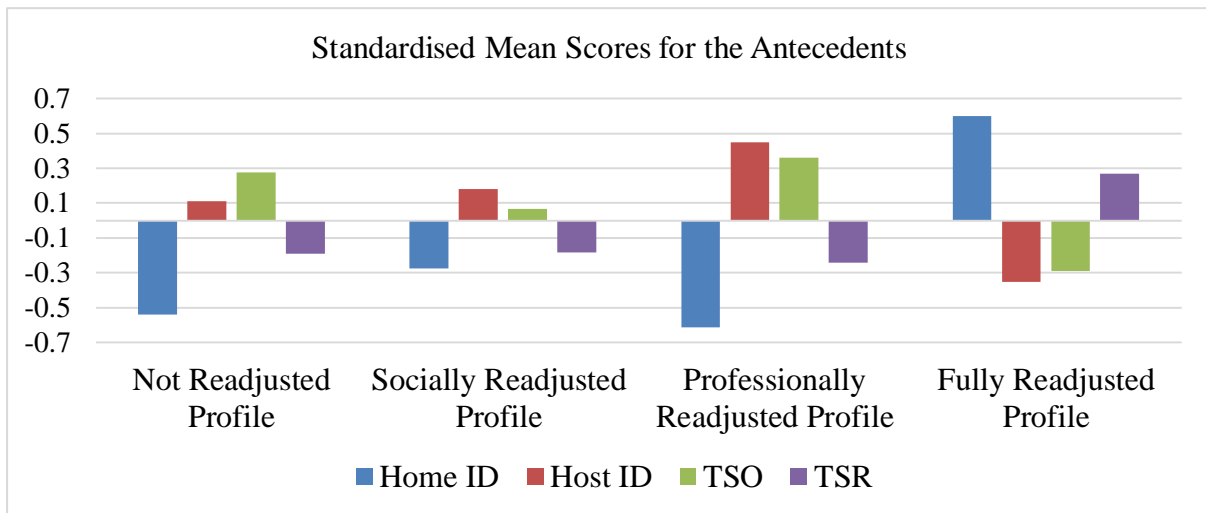
*Note.* Home ID = home cultural identification antecedent; Host ID = host cultural identification antecedent; TSO = Time spent overseas antecedent; TSR = Time since returning home antecedent; M = profile mean's score; SD = std. deviation.

In contrast, the results also demonstrate that being higher in host cultural identity is associated with repatriates being classified in the not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles than in the professionally or fully readjusted profiles. The

result shows that repatriates who rate higher in embracing host cultural values experience lower readjustment level to their home culture upon their repatriation.

In terms of the time spent in the host country, the results reveal an association between the time spent in the host country and the professionally and fully readjusted profiles. In particular, the results indicate that the shorter the time spent in the host country, the higher the probability of repatriates being in the professionally or fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles. In addition, the results show an association between the time since returning to the home country and the professionally and fully readjusted profiles. The results reveal that the longer the time since the repatriate returned home, the higher the probability of repatriates being in the professionally and fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles.

Further, as suggested by Meyer et al. (2012), a plot of the standardised mean scores for the antecedents across the four profile groups was examined. The results showed the standardised mean differences across the four profiles, providing further evidence of the effect of the antecedents on the four profile groups (see Figure 6.5).



*Note.* Standardised scores are reported to support interpretation.

Home ID = home cultural identification antecedent; Host ID = host cultural identification antecedent; TSO = Time spent overseas antecedent; TSR = Time since returning home antecedent.

*Figure 6.5* Characteristics of the Antecedents of Latent Profile.

#### 6.4.5.2 Latent Profile Membership and Distal Outcomes

The association between profile membership and the distal outcome variables (i.e., intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing) was examined by using the DCON command (Gabriel et al., 2015; Lanza et al., 2013; Vermunt, 2010).

Thus, the results of the DCON command, which were the mean scores of the distal outcome variables, intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing are presented in Table 6.12.

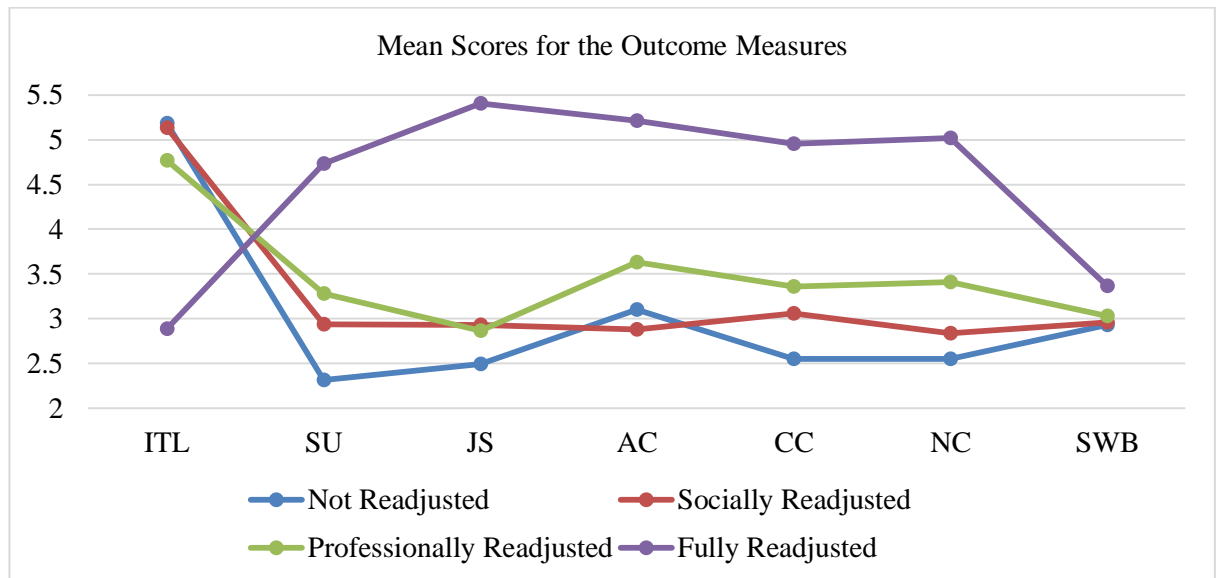
Table 6.12

Three-Step Results for Distal Outcomes

Outcome Variable	Profile				Chi square
	NOT	SOC	PRO	FUL	
	READJ	READJ	READJ	READJ	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
Intention to leave	5.18 <sub>4</sub>	5.13 <sub>4</sub>	4.76 <sub>4</sub>	2.88 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	201.26***
Skill utilisation	2.31 <sub>2,3,4</sub>	2.93 <sub>1,4</sub>	3.28 <sub>1,4</sub>	4.73 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	208.99***
Job satisfaction	2.49 <sub>4</sub>	2.92 <sub>4</sub>	2.86 <sub>4</sub>	5.40 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	154.97***
Subjective wellbeing	2.92 <sub>4</sub>	2.95 <sub>4</sub>	3.03 <sub>4</sub>	3.36 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	41.81***
Affective commitment	3.10 <sub>4</sub>	2.88 <sub>3,4</sub>	3.63 <sub>2,4</sub>	5.21 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	135.37***
Continuance commitment	2.55 <sub>3,4</sub>	3.06 <sub>4</sub>	3.35 <sub>1,4</sub>	4.95 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	107.74***
Normative commitment	2.55 <sub>3,4</sub>	2.83 <sub>4</sub>	3.40 <sub>1,4</sub>	5.02 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	146.62***

Note. NOT READJ = not readjusted profile; SOC READJ = socially readjusted profile; PRO READJ = professionally readjusted profile; FUL READJ = fully readjusted profile. Subscripts indicate profiles that are significantly different at  $p = .05$ . \*\*\* $P < .001$

Figure 6.6 provides a graphical representation of the mean scores associated with the distal outcomes across the four repatriation adjustment profiles.



Note. ITL = Intention to Leave; SU = Skill Utilisation; JS = Job Satisfaction; AC = Affective Commitment; CC= Continuance Commitment; SWB = Subjective Wellbeing.

Figure 6.6 Means Associated with Distal Outcomes.

The results demonstrate that repatriates within the not readjusted profile had the highest scores for the intention to leave the organisation variable ( $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ), but were not significantly different from the mean scores of repatriates in

the socially and professionally readjusted profiles. This result indicates that repatriates within the not readjusted profile had the highest tendency to leave their working organisations upon repatriation compared with repatriates in the other profiles. In addition, the results reveal that repatriates within the not readjusted profile had the lowest mean scores in the skill utilisation ( $M = 2.31, SD = 1.00$ ), job satisfaction ( $M = 2.49, SD = 1.41$ ), subjective wellbeing ( $M = 2.92, SD = .64$ ), continuance commitment ( $M = 2.55, SD = 1.58$ ) and normative commitment variables ( $M = 2.55, SD = 1.36$ ) compared to the other profiles.

Although repatriates within the not readjusted profile had a higher mean score in affective commitment ( $M = 3.10, SD = 1.71$ ) than those in the socially readjusted profile ( $M = 2.88, SD = 1.34$ ), there was no significant difference between the two profiles in the mean scores for the affective commitment outcome, indicating that repatriates in both profiles experienced the lowest level of affective commitment.

In addition, the results reveal that repatriates within the socially readjusted profile had a higher mean score for the intention to leave the organisation variable ( $M = 5.13, SD = 1.20$ ) compared to repatriates within the professionally and fully readjusted profiles. Moreover, repatriates within the socially readjusted profile had lower mean scores in skill utilisation ( $M = 2.93, SD = .95$ ), affective commitment ( $M = 2.88, SD = 1.34$ ), continuance commitment ( $M = 3.06, SD = 1.40$ ) and normative commitment ( $M = 2.83, SD = 1.39$ ) compared to those in the professionally and fully readjusted profiles.

However, repatriates within the socially readjusted profile had similar mean scores for intention to leave ( $M = 5.13, SD = 1.20$ ) and subjective wellbeing ( $M = 2.95, SD = .52$ ) to those in the not readjusted profile ( $(M = 5.18, SD = 1.22)$  and ( $M = 2.92, SD = .64$ ) respectively). Also, repatriates within the socially readjusted



profile had a similar mean score in job satisfaction ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) to repatriates within the professional adjusted profile ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ). This result indicates that repatriates within the socially readjusted profile have a higher tendency to leave their working organisations and a lower chance of utilising their international skills upon repatriation compared with those in the other profiles.

The socially readjusted had a high intention to leave their organisation because of the lack of organisational support they have received upon repatriation. It also might be because that repatriates, within the socially readjusted profile, could not utilised their international skills and thus they were not satisfied at their work as well which led them to leave their workplaces.

Furthermore, the results show that repatriates within the professionally readjusted profile had a higher mean score in the intention to leave the organisation variable ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ) compared to repatriates within the fully readjusted profile, indicating that these repatriates have a higher tendency to leave their organisations. This might be due to the fact that as the repatriates have gained international skills and knowledge during their international assignments, they might perceived better job opportunities elsewhere with more competitive benefits.

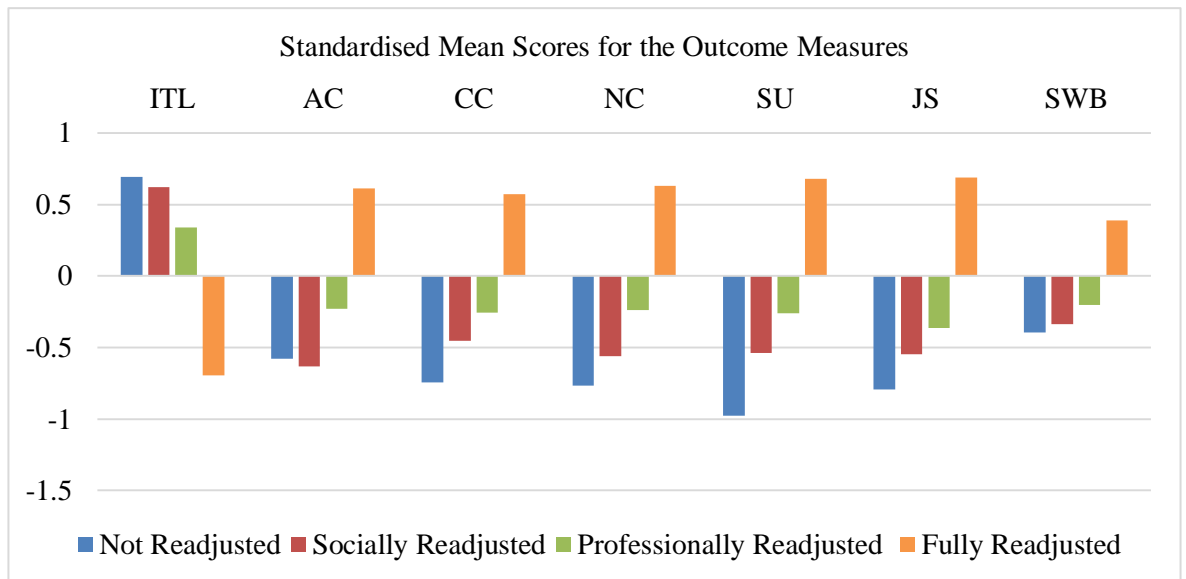
Repatriates within the professionally readjusted profile had higher mean scores in skill utilisation ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ), job satisfaction ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.95$ ), subjective wellbeing ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = .48$ ), affective commitment ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ), continuance commitment ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ) and normative commitment ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) compared to those in the not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles. This result indicates that repatriates within the professionally readjusted profile have a higher tendency to leave their working organisations and a

lower chance of using their international skills upon repatriation compared to repatriates in the other profiles.

Finally, the results demonstrate that repatriates within the fully readjusted profile had the lowest mean score in the intention to leave the organisation variable ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) compared to those in all the other profiles. This result indicates that repatriates within the fully readjusted profile have a lower tendency to leave their employing organisations upon repatriation. In addition, repatriates within the fully readjusted profile had the highest mean scores in skill utilisation ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ), job satisfaction ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ), subjective wellbeing ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = .48$ ), affective commitment ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ), continuance commitment ( $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ) and normative commitment ( $M = 5.02$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ) compared to those in all the other profiles.

According to these results, repatriates who experience a lower level of readjustment to their home culture (i.e., those in the not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles) also exhibit lower levels on the personal and professional outcome measures. In contrast, repatriates who experienced higher levels of readjustment to their home culture (i.e., those in the professionally and fully readjusted profiles) also exhibited higher levels of the personal and professional outcome measures.

Further, a plot of the standardised mean scores associated with the distal outcome variables (i.e., intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) provided further evidence of the differences across the four profile groups (Meyer et al., 2012) (see Figure 6.7).



Note. Standardised scores are reported to support interpretation. ITL = Intention to Leave; AC = Affective Commitment; CC= Continuance Commitment; SU = Skill Utilisation; JS = Job Satisfaction; SWB = Subjective Wellbeing.

Figure 6.7 Characteristics of the Outcome of the Latent Profile.

These results demonstrate that there are differences between the repatriation adjustment profiles across the personal and professional outcomes. For instance, repatriates within the not readjusted profile were found to have the highest intention to leave their working organisations upon repatriation compared to those within the other profiles, which provides insight into the fourth research question: *‘Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction or subjective wellbeing?’*

## 6.5 DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were, first, to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2; and, second, to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – that is, the antecedents (cultural identity [identification with home/host], time spent overseas, and time since returning home) and outcomes (intention to leave,

organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution. To the best of the author’s knowledge, the present study is the first to use a person-centred approach in the context of repatriation adjustment. Thus, the results offer an alternative explanation of the repatriation adjustment construct, which is not easily compared to previous studies on repatriation adjustment, as the earlier studies predominantly focus on the relationships between the variables and not on the subgroups within the repatriate population. The current study revealed three major results.

First, the study identified multiple (four) repatriation adjustment profile groups (not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted), using the combination of the six facets of repatriation adjustment: work task performance, workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms, local social interactions and general readjustment. The presence of the four profiles among the Saudi sample was further supported by the significant differences between the four profiles in relation to the six facets of repatriation adjustment.

This result extends the current understanding of repatriation adjustment by exploring the outcomes of the interactions between the combined repatriation adjustment facets. For instance, previous studies primarily focus on examining variables that predict different facets of repatriation adjustment (i.e., work, general and interaction readjustments) and variables that contribute to ensuring effective repatriation adjustment among repatriates (i.e., Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007; Paik et al., 2002; Sánchez et al., 2008). However, the current study provides empirical evidence that supports the interaction between repatriation adjustment facets or dimensions, forming four distinct profiles.

This first major finding responds to the third research question, ‘*Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*’ by demonstrating the presence of four quantitatively distinct repatriation adjustment profiles: not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted.

The second major finding relates to the association between the four profiles and repatriation adjustment antecedents. The results of this study demonstrate that the antecedents of repatriation adjustment – cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas and time since repatriation – differentiate the four profiles of repatriation adjustment. For instance, higher levels of home cultural identification separate those profiles with high (professionally readjusted and fully readjusted profiles) and low (not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles) levels of repatriation adjustment. Similarly, higher levels of host cultural identification separate those profiles with high (not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles) and low (professionally readjusted and fully readjusted profiles) levels of repatriation adjustment. This means that the strength of an individual’s identification with the home or the host culture plays a crucial role in determining the level of readjustment experienced by a repatriate.

This result is partially consistent with earlier studies. For instance, Cox (2004) found that high levels of home cultural identity (labelled as home cultural identity type) were associated with better psychological health and functional fitness in US repatriates. This finding also advances the existing repatriation adjustment literature by exploring the association between cultural identity identification and the latent repatriation adjustment profiles resulting from the nuanced combinations of the six facets of repatriation adjustment, while previous research (i.e., Sussman, 2001, 2002)

only emphasises the linear relationship between cultural identity and repatriation adjustment.

The second major finding provides insight into the fourth research question, *‘Do cultural identity identification (home and host) predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?’*, by demonstrating that the theoretical antecedents of cultural identity (home and host identification, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) differentiate the four profiles of repatriation adjustment.

The third major finding relates to the association between the four profiles and repatriation adjustment outcome variables. The finding of this study demonstrates the difference between the four repatriation adjustment profiles (not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted) across the repatriate’s personal and professional outcomes: intention to leave, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing. This finding addresses the fifth research question, *‘Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction or subjective wellbeing?’*, by demonstrating that different repatriation adjustment profiles relate to different levels of personal and professional outcomes of repatriation adjustment. Detailed discussions of these findings are presented in chapter seven.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reported the findings of Study 3, which involved a three-step LPA utilised to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates who returned home upon completing international assignments in Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. The results demonstrate the existence of four repatriation profiles (not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted

profiles) among Saudi repatriates, which are statistically distinct from each other across the six facets of repatriation adjustment and repatriates' personal and professional outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing).

Chapter 7 presents a general discussion of the major findings of this research in the context of the existing repatriation adjustment literature and concludes the thesis by highlighting the major limitations, the theoretical and practical contributions, and suggesting directions for future study.

# Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was twofold. First, the research aimed to develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures. Second, the research aimed to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles for these same repatriates. The utilisation of a person-centred approach extended the pre-dominantly variable centric repatriation adjustment research by investigating the existence of distinct subgroups of repatriation adjustment that differentially combine work, interaction, general, and socio-cultural readjustment. The critical review of previous repatriation adjustment literature revealed four major gaps in the current literature on repatriation adjustment: a lack of attention given to the topic of repatriation adjustment (Chiang et al., 2015); the inadequate measurement of repatriation adjustment; the predominant focus on the relationships between the variables (i.e., the relationship between work readjustment and job satisfaction) and the absence of studies that explore the subgroups who share similar levels of repatriation adjustment; the primary focus on the expatriation–repatriation between relatively similar cultures, with much less being known about the experience of expatriation–repatriation between novel cultures (see Chapter 2, Section 2.8 for fuller discussion).

The purpose of the current chapter is to discuss the major findings and results of this research in conjunction with the previous repatriation adjustment literature to present the main theoretical, practical and methodological contributions of this research project.



Chapter 7 is organised as follows. First, the chapter, presents a brief introductory overview of this research project. Second, the chapter provides an overview of, and discusses the major findings and results of, Studies 1, 2 and 3 respectively. This is followed by a discussion on the theoretical, practical and methodological contributions of the current research. Fourth, the chapter details the limitations of the current research and suggests directions for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the current research.

The purpose of the thesis was achieved, and the major gaps were addressed through conducting three studies that answered the five research questions (see table 7.1).

Table 7.1

*Overview of the Research Project*

Research Design	Mixed-Method Design Utilising a Sequential Exploratory Strategy		
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Aims	To gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.	To validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed from the results of Study 1.	First, to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles for Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. Second, to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – antecedents (the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution.
Addressed Gaps	Gaps 1 and 4	Gap 3	Gap 2
Research Questions	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3, RQ4 and RQ5
Data Collection Method	Exploratory semi-structured interviews	Online survey	Online survey

The following sections provide an overview of the three studies and discuss the major findings and results of each study to further establish a base for the research contributions.

## **7.2 STUDY 1: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **7.2.1 Overview**

Study 1 addressed the first research question:

**RQ1:** *How do repatriates returning from novel cultures describe their repatriation adjustment?*

The question was addressed by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews. The purpose of Study 1 was to gain a better understanding of repatriation adjustment as experienced by repatriates, and develop a content-valid measure of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.

A total of 19 participants were approached through the use of a snowball sampling strategy. All participants were (at the time of conducting the interviews) working within Saudi public sector departments and had temporarily expatriated for at least two years to a novel culture; that is, either Australia (six participants), the UK (four participants) or the US (9 participants). They had participated in an international job assignment as part of their work commitments.

The data were analysed utilising inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using QSR NVivo11. The deductive analysis tested and verified the repatriation adjustment facets, which emerged from prior repatriation adjustment literature and included the psychological (work, interaction and general) and socio-cultural readjustment of Saudi repatriates who returned home upon

completing international assignments in novel cultures. The inductive analysis explored how Saudi repatriates perceive repatriation adjustment after completing an international assignment in a novel culture.

The inductive thematic analysis resulted in the emergence of the core facets and elements as per Black et al.'s (1992) definition, but included additional insights, such as the socio-cultural readjustment facet and the personal readjustment facet which were derived from the data. Thus, the preliminary readjustment facets were relabelled as professional readjustment, personal readjustment, socio-cultural readjustment and general readjustment to better reflect and explain repatriation adjustment as perceived by repatriates returning from novel cultures. A 51-item repatriation adjustment scale was developed to measure the four preliminary facets.

The following section discusses these findings further in conjunction with previous repatriation adjustment literature.

### **7.2.2 Discussion**

The overall findings from Study 1 demonstrate that the readjustment experience of repatriates returning home following the completion of international assignments in novel cultures is explained by four readjustment components or facets: professional, personal, socio-cultural and general readjustment.

In comparing the findings of Study 1 with the pre-existing literature on repatriation adjustment, including Black et al.'s (1992) original study, the current study both replicates and extends Black et al.'s research. In particular, Black et al.'s study did not consider the socio-cultural and personal facets of repatriation adjustment. Findings of Study 1 confirm that repatriation adjustment, for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures, was

largely as Black et al. (1992) envisaged it; that is, repatriation adjustment is a complex psychological construct. However, the study identified additional socio-cultural and personal readjustment facets. Thus, the conceptual definition of repatriation adjustment was revised as *the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture*. The following sections discuss each of the four qualitative readjustment facets.

### **7.2.2.1 Professional Readjustment**

The first major finding from the current study concerns the professional readjustment facet. Within the current study, professional readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their workplace after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. It is explained by three sub-factors: readjustment to the local work environment, readjustment to the interactions with authority figures in the workplace, and readjustment to interactions with colleagues in the workplace.

However, the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) as well as previous empirical studies (i.e., Black, 1994; Yan, 2015) investigate the concept of ‘work readjustment’, which refers to the repatriate’s psychological comfort with new job tasks upon returning home. Within this stream of inquiry, work readjustment is described as a unidimensional construct. Thus, unlike repatriation adjustment from novel cultural contexts, within previous repatriation studies there is no rationale for the readjustment to interactions with authority figures and colleagues in the workplace. This is primarily because extant repatriation adjustment literature focuses on investigating repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning from relatively similar cultural contexts (i.e., Kimber, 2012). For instance, in Suutari and Valimaa’s

(2002) study, Finnish repatriates returned home upon completing international assignments in Europe, including the UK which shares similar cultural values to Finland (Hofstede, 2016); thus, in this instance, interactions with workplace authority figures and colleagues between the home and the host cultures were comparable, indicating the redundancy of workplace interaction readjustment in this context.

#### **7.2.2.2 Personal Readjustment**

The second major finding from the current study is the identification of the personal readjustment facet. It refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their personal life after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. This particular finding diverges from the extant repatriation adjustment literature. Personal readjustment is not well addressed in the previous literature on repatriation adjustment; however, some previous evidence suggests that exposure of individuals to novel cultures is associated with experiencing a period of profound personal growth in the host culture (Kohonen, 2008). Thus, this interpersonal changes might create more difficulties upon repatriation as what were acceptable in the host cultures, at a personal level, might no longer fit with the common local norms at the home culture.

This divergence from the current literature is due either to the absence of scales measuring personal readjustment or because most repatriation adjustment literature and theories were investigated and developed based on repatriates returning from relatively similar cultural contexts, emphasising fewer changes at the personal level.

#### **7.2.2.3 Socio-cultural Readjustment**

The third major finding from this study relates to the socio-cultural readjustment facet, which refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to

their social norms and values after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. In this qualitative study, socio-cultural readjustment is explained by one facet, capturing the experience of readjusting to the local social norms and interactions.

This finding diverges from Black et al.'s (1992) original study of repatriation adjustment. However, it is consistent with, and was drawn from, other previous repatriation adjustment research. Within the previous studies, socio-cultural readjustment is conceptualised as the “component-ability to ‘fit in’ and negotiate interactive aspects of the new culture” (Ward & Kennedy, 1994, p. 450). It is reflected in the ability to interact with a person's native culture (Ward, 1996), as well as the changes in an individual's behaviours and social skills in their attempt to meet the social and behavioural values of their new cultural setting (Ward, 1996). For instance, 101 US repatriates returning from 44 countries were found to experience social difficulties in their readjustment to the US (Cox, 2004).

However, the previous literature investigates socio-cultural readjustment as a distinct construct that is related to re-entry adjustment, rather than considering it as a component or a facet of repatriation adjustment. According to Black (1994), factors that contribute to reducing uncertainty levels would facilitate repatriation adjustment, whereas factors that increase uncertainty would hinder repatriation adjustment (Black, 1994). Thus, the socio-cultural readjustment facet was found to influence repatriation adjustment and its inclusion provides a more complete coverage of the repatriation experience.

#### **7.2.2.4 General Readjustment**

The last major finding from the current study relates to the general readjustment facet. Within the current study, general readjustment refers to the

extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their day-to-day living in their home country after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture.

The previous literature covers a wide range of general readjustment concepts, such as: healthcare facilities; entertainment/recreation opportunities; the cost of living, shopping and food; housing conditions; and living conditions in general (Black et al., 1992; Black, 1994; Yan, 2015).

The finding, from the current study, demonstrates that repatriates returning home upon completing an assignment in a novel culture experience general readjustment difficulties beyond what the literature has discussed, for instance readjustment to local transportation systems and resettlement prior to resuming work.

The new concepts that emerged, which were experienced by repatriates in this study, are explained by their exposure to a novel culture. This means that repatriates were exposed to host cultures which are more developed and reliable, for example in terms of their transportation systems; they then grow familiar with the system while they are abroad and when they returned home they have to deal with a less developed system which creates frustrations and, thus, requires readjustment.

## **7.3 STUDY 2: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **7.3.1 Overview**

Study 2 was conducted to validate the 51-item repatriation adjustment scale developed from the results of Study 1. The second study responded to the second research question:



**RQ2:** *What are the key dimensions of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon the completion of their international assignments in novel cultures?*

The preceding research question was addressed by conducting a scale-validation study guided by Churchill's (1979) scale development approach, as well as the recommendations of other scale development scholars (i.e., DeVellis, 2012). The development of a revised repatriation adjustment measure using a well-established scale development approach was to address Hippler et al.'s (2014) critique of Black et al.'s RAS, that it was not developed in accordance with standard scale development conventions.

A total of 305 respondents participated in this study. The sample comprised Saudi public sector employees who were working within Saudi public sector departments at the time of the study and who had recently participated in a long-term international assignment, in either Australia, Canada, the UK or the US. The total sample size was randomly split into two subsamples using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Sample A comprised 153 participants, while sample B had 152 participants. The primary purpose of splitting the sample into two subsamples was to use sample A as a model-building sample, and sample B as model-confirmation sample. A strength of this thesis was the comparatively large sample size which enabled the advanced analysis techniques employed in study 2 and 3. The challenge of accessing and obtaining adequate sample size is a well-acknowledged issue across repatriation studies (Sussman, 2001). Repatriates are considered as "a challenging research population to assess and there is an increasing reluctance on the part of international corporations to provide access to their employees" (Sussman, 2001, p. 121).

The main data analytical strategies utilised were EFA and CFA. The scale development study resulted in the newly developed measurement tool for repatriation adjustment that targets repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. In particular, the study found support for repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct comprising six sub-facets: work task performance (measured by two items), workplace interactions (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), local social norms (measured by seven items), local social interactions (measured by five items) and general readjustment (measured by eight items). The final scale had 34 items. These results are further explained in the following sections in relation to the existing literature on repatriation adjustment.

### **7.3.2 Discussion**

Study 2 operationalised repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. The study found support for repatriation adjustment as a multidimensional construct comprising six sub-facets: task performance (measured by two items), workplace interactions (measured by seven items), personal readjustment (measured by five items), local social norms (measured by seven items), local social interactions (measured by seven items) and general readjustment (measured by eight items). The final scale had 34 items. The new scale demonstrated construct validity and good internal consistency.

Similar to Study 1, the results of Study 2 replicated and extended Black et al.'s (1992) original research. Unlike the current study, Black et al.'s study did not operationalise the socio-cultural, personal and workplace interaction facets of repatriation adjustment. Black et al. operationalised repatriation adjustment using a psychological facet, which measured readjustment as three interrelated facets: work,

interaction and general readjustment. The measure has 13 items: three items assessing work readjustment, three items assessing interaction readjustment and seven items assessing general readjustment (Black et al., 1992).

The work adjustment facet, in previous studies (i.e., Black et al., 1992), was operationalised in terms of adjustment to specific job responsibilities, adjustment to performance standards/expectations and adjustment to supervisory responsibilities. The key components of the interaction adjustment include: interacting with fellow nationals in general, interacting with friends and family outside of work, and speaking with fellow nationals. The general adjustment facet covers a wide range of concepts such as: healthcare facilities; entertainment/recreation opportunities; the cost of living, shopping and food; housing conditions; and living conditions in general.

The operationalisation of the new facets and concepts of repatriation adjustment – the socio-cultural, personal and workplace interaction facets of repatriation adjustment – in addition to Black’s scale is important, as a repatriate’s exposure to novel cultures for a significant period of time implies development change, not only at a personal level but also at a professional level. This is explained by Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions theory. Hofstede describes the culture construct in terms of five domains: the power distance index (PDI), individual index (IDV), masculinity index (MAS), uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) and the long-term orientation index (LTO). The PDI captures “perceptions of the superior’s style of decision-making and of colleagues’ fear to disagree with superiors, and with the type of decision-making which subordinates prefer in their boss” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 65). It measures how well a society accepts unequal distribution of power. High

power distance cultures are more accepting of inequality than cultures with low power distance scores (Hofstede, 2001).

Thus, at the personal level, the cultural differences between the home and host cultures in relation to power distance, as an example, emphasise the need to consider cultures that have a high power distance when conceptualising or operationalising the professional facet of repatriation adjustment. This is because, within a high power distance culture such as the Saudi culture, subordinates accept titles, ranks, privileges and status, and have an unquestioning acceptance of their leaders (Madlock, 2012). Therefore, high power distance cultures, such as the Saudi context, legitimise differences in decision-making power between leaders and followers, whereas the difference between people in low power distance cultures is reduced, as people in authority are more willing to share their power with others (Madlock, 2012).

At the organisation level, the unequal distribution of power is inevitable, and this inequality in power is typically formalised in hierarchical leader–follower relationships (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, studies on cultural value frameworks often consider cultures with high power distance as ‘hierarchical’ and cultures with low power distance as ‘egalitarian’ (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen & Lowe, 2009). Thus, the Saudi culture is characterised as a hierarchical culture that employs a top-down management system.

This discussion suggests that repatriates who temporarily expatriate to novel cultures and embrace the host culture’s values or style of decision-making, as an example, would face greater work readjustment challenges than individuals who return to their home cultures following the completion of an international assignment in a relatively similar culture. Therefore, the operationalisation of the professional

readjustment facet, for instance, by utilising previous scales, such as Black et al.'s (1992) RAS which was developed for expatriation adjustment, may present content validity issues as little attention has been given to other work readjustment facets experienced by repatriates returning from novel cultures, such as workplace interactions.

## **7.4 STUDY 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **7.4.1 Overview**

Study 3 was designed to respond to the third, fourth and fifth research questions:

**RQ3:** *Are there quantitatively distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment?*

**RQ4:** *Do cultural identity identification (home and host), time spent overseas and time since returning home predict repatriation adjustment profile membership?*

**RQ5:** *Do repatriation adjustment profiles exhibit different levels of intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction or subjective wellbeing?*

These questions were addressed by conducting a three-step LPA. The three-step LPA was conducted with two main aims. The first aim was to explore the repatriation adjustment profiles of Saudi repatriates using the six facets of repatriation adjustment resulting from Study 2. The second aim was to examine the effect of the auxiliary variables – the antecedents (the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation) and outcomes (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing) – on the obtained profile membership solution.

The three-step LPA approach led to three major results. The following section discusses each of the three results in conjunction with previous literature of repatriation adjustment.

#### **7.4.2 Discussion**

Study 3 utilised “a modern person-centred” approach (Bergman & Andersson, 2010, p. 157), which was the three-step LPA approach (Gabriel et al., 2015). To the best of the author’s knowledge, the present study is the first to use a person-centred approach in the context of repatriation adjustment. Thus, the results offer an alternative, complementary explanation of the repatriation adjustment experience to traditional variable-centric studies. The utilisation of the person-centred, three-step LPA approach resulted in three major findings. The following sections discuss these findings in conjunction with the previous repatriation adjustment literature.

The first major result is the identification of multiple (four) distinct profiles of repatriation adjustment (not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted), using a combination of the six facets of repatriation adjustment: task performance, workplace interactions, personal readjustment, local social norms, local social interactions and general readjustment.

Previous studies have examined the relationships between the facets (i.e., work, interaction, and general readjustments) of repatriation (i.e., Black et al., 1992; Van Heuveln, 2017; Yan, 2015) which reflects the variable-centred approach (Craig & Smith, 2000) in which the unique and independent relations of each facet of repatriation with other facets and variables are revealed. While the variable-centred approach strategies have contributed significantly to the current understanding of the relationships between the facets of repatriation adjustment, they have not considered the ways in which individuals might adjust differently in the various facets. For

example, some repatriates may adjust well to work and interactions but experience difficulties in the general and socio-cultural facets, while others may adjust well to all four facets. Gray and Savicki (2015) reported that some repatriates in their study experienced high socio-cultural difficulties, while others experienced less socio-cultural challenges, suggesting that distinct types of repatriation adjustment might exist even within a unique facet of repatriation adjustment.

Thus, utilising “a modern person-centred” (Bergman & Andersson, 2010, p. 157) approach, specifically the three-step approach of LPA (Gabriel et al., 2015), the current study found evidence of the existence of four distinct repatriation adjustment profiles and thus, offer an alternative explanations to the associations between repatriation adjustment facets.

The second major finding of Study 3 is the associations between the four repatriation adjustment profiles, and three repatriation adjustment antecedents: cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas, and time since returning home. This findings reveal that the four repatriation adjustment profiles are statistically differentiated by the three repatriation adjustment antecedents.

This finding is partially consistent with earlier studies. For example, in relation to the cultural identity (identification with home/host), this finding reveal that repatriates, who score higher in the home cultural identification antecedent, are more likely to be in the professionally or fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles, while repatriates, who score higher in host cultural identity are associated with being classified in the not readjusted and socially readjusted profiles. The result suggests that repatriates who maintain higher home cultural values experience better readjustment to their home culture upon their repatriation. In addition, repatriates who rate higher in embracing host cultural

values experience difficult readjustment to their home culture upon their repatriation. This result is consistent with previous studies on repatriation adjustment that have examined the relationships between the facets of repatriation adjustment (i.e., psychological readjustment) and cultural identity. For instance, Cox (2004) found that repatriates with an integrated cultural identity experienced the lowest levels of depression and social adjustment difficulties upon their re-entry. However, repatriates with a disintegrated cultural identity experienced the highest levels of depression upon their re-entry. Further, repatriates with a host-favoured cultural identity experienced the highest levels of social difficulty (Cox, 2004). Though, such findings were generated using variable-centred analyses (i.e., correlation) which only emphasises the linear relationship between cultural identity (home and host) and the unique and independent repatriation adjustment facets.

The other associations, between the four repatriation adjustment profiles, the time spent overseas, and the time since returning home, differ from the prior literature on repatriation adjustment. For instance, findings from the current study, demonstrate associations between the time spent in the host country, the time since returning to the home country, and the professionally and fully readjusted profiles. This suggests that the shorter the time spent in the host country, the high the probability of repatriates being in the professionally or fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles. In addition, this results indicate that the longer the time since the repatriate returned home, the high the probability of repatriates being in the professionally and fully readjusted profiles than in the not readjusted or socially readjusted profiles.

However, the results of prior studies that have examined the relationships between repatriation adjustment facets and time spent overseas, and time since



returning home, were inconclusive. Black and Gregersen (1991) found that the time overseas variable only related to interaction and general adjustment. Hammer et al. (1998) found no relationship between the length of international assignment and repatriation adjustment. In terms of the time since returning home, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found that the time since re-entry to the home culture was only related to work adjustment. Other study found that the time since returning home was correlated only with repatriates' work and general adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Other study found the time since returning home to be related to one facet of repatriation adjustment, the general readjustment (Black, 1994).

This second major finding linked the four repatriation adjustment profiles: not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted to the repatriation adjustment antecedents: cultural identity (identification with home/host), time spent overseas, and time since returning home that were identified in the repatriation literature as being important (i.e., Chiang et al., 2015; Schudey et al., 2012; Szkudlarek, 2010).

The third major finding of Study 3 is the associations between the four repatriation adjustment profiles and repatriation adjustment outcomes: organisational commitment, intention to leave the organisation, job satisfaction, skill utilisation, and subjective wellbeing. This result demonstrate the significant differences between the four repatriation adjustment profiles across the repatriate's personal and professional outcomes, thus, offering "further understanding of the unobserved heterogeneity" in individuals (Wang & Hanges, 2011, p. 26).

This finding diverges from the prior literature on repatriation adjustment. Previous repatriation adjustment studies have identified outcomes commonly associated with repatriation adjustment, including intention to leave (Sánchez et al.,

2008), organisational commitment (Gregersen & Black, 1996; Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012), skill utilisation (Suutari, & Välimaa, 2002; Schudey et al., 2012), job satisfaction (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007) and subjective wellbeing (Selmer et al., 2007). Prior literature on repatriation adjustment has also examined the relationships between repatriation adjustment facets and repatriates' professional and personal outcomes. However, the focus of the previous studies was on the unique and independent relationships of each facets of repatriation with the outcome variables reflecting a variable-centred approaches (i.e., correlation, regression) (Craig & Smith, 2000).

The results of the current analyses provide new insights into the subgroups or conditions under which readjustment may be less or more beneficial for employee wellbeing and performance. Thus, the focus of previous repatriation adjustment studies has mainly been on the relationships between the variables; however, Study 3 advances the current understanding of repatriation adjustment by, first, exploring how individual repatriates experience their readjustment (readjustment levels), and then by linking the profiles to the antecedents and outcomes of repatriation adjustment.

## **7.5 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS**

The current research has made several significant contributions to the repatriation adjustment literature. The following sections discuss the theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions of this research project.

### **7.5.1 Theoretical Contributions**

The findings and results of the current research offer two main theoretical contributions. The first theoretical contribution is the expansion of the current scope of the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) and literature by

investigating the readjustment experience of repatriates returning home following completion of an international assignment in a novel culture.

Despite the lack of attention given to the topic of repatriation adjustment at large (Baruch et al., 2016; Kraimer et al., 2016; Szkudlarek, 2010), the most influential and frequently used theory of repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992) was implicitly developed to explain and measure repatriation adjustment of American managers (Kraimer et al., 2016). The theory was then intensively applied across repatriation literature to describe the readjustment of repatriates returning from relatively similar cultural contexts (Cox, 2004; Kimber, 2012; Suutari & Valimaa, 2002).

As explained in Chapter 2, the theory conceptualises repatriation adjustment as the degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture (Black et al., 1992). According to Black et al. (1992), repatriation adjustment is operationalised in terms of three readjustment sub-facets: work, interaction, and general (Black et al., 1992). Work readjustment refers to the repatriate's psychological comfort with the new job tasks upon returning home and is captured by 3 items (Black et al., 1992). Interaction readjustment refers to the capability of communicating with the home-country nationals and is measured by 3 items (Black et al., 1992). General readjustment refers to the comfort with the general non-work environment, such as living conditions and is measured by 7 items (Black et al., 1992). Thus, Black et al.'s, (1992) study did not conceptualise nor operationalise the socio-cultural, personal and the workplace interactions facets of repatriation adjustment facets of repatriation adjustment, raising questions about the content coverage of the measure.

The intensive utilisation of the theory and its subsequent measures across the international human resource literature in conjunction with the absence of an alternative adequate measurement tool, have led some researchers to utilise Black et al.'s (1992) scale to explain and measure repatriation adjustment beyond the US context. For instance, Yan (2015) investigated the impact of perceived organisational support and proactive personality on re-entry adjustment for 229 Chinese repatriates who had temporarily expatriated to Australia, Canada, the UK or the US, utilising Black et al.'s (1992) theory and instrument tool. While the use of such theory and measurement tool are useful in this case, given the absence of an adequate measurement tool, it does not provide a comprehensive explanation of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures and, thus, can yield biased or flawed results.

In addition, the utilisation of Black et al.'s (1992) theory exclusively resulted in overlooking the other important facet of repatriation adjustment, which is the socio-cultural concept (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) – particularly for repatriation involving novel cultural contexts.

Thus, the current research expands the current scope of repatriation adjustment literature by explaining, developing and validating a measure that targets repatriates returning home following the completion of an international assignment in a novel culture. In particular, within this research context, readjustment was conceptualised as the degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. It was operationalised as a multidimensional construct, comprising four interrelated sub-facets: professional readjustment, personal readjustment, socio-cultural readjustment and general readjustment.

Professional readjustment was conceptualised as the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their workplace after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. It was captured by two factors: work task performance readjustment (measured by two items) and workplace interaction readjustment (measured by seven items). Personal readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their personal life after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. It was captured by five items. Socio-cultural readjustment is defined as the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their social norms and values after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. It has two factors: readjustment to the local social norms (measured by seven items) and readjustment to interactions with social networks (measured by five items). General readjustment refers to the extent to which repatriates feel readjusted to their day-to-day living in Saudi Arabia after they return from their most recent assignment in a foreign novel culture. It was captured by eight items. Table 7.2 provides a comparison of the conceptualisation and operationalisation between Black et al.'s (1992) original research and the findings of the current research project.

Table 7.2

*Comparison between Previous and Current Findings*

	Conceptualisation	Facets	Operationalisation		Conceptualisation	Facets	Operationalisation
Black et al (1992)	The degree to which individuals are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of their home culture.	Work readjustment	3 items	The current Research	The degree of psycho-social comfort repatriates experience during the transition to their home culture upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.	Work task performance	2 items
		Interaction readjustment	3 items			Workplace interaction	7 items
		General readjustment	7 items			Personal readjustment	5 items
		Local social norms	7 items				
			Local social interaction			5 items	
				General readjustment	8 items		

The second theoretical contribution is the expansion of the current understanding of the repatriation adjustment construct by providing alternative explanations of the construct through the use of a person-centred approach. First, the three-step LPA provided empirical support for the idea that the combination of the six facets of repatriation adjustment can form different subgroups within a repatriate population. Identifying four repatriation adjustment profiles – not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted – offers different views of how the repatriation adjustment facets relate to each other.

Second, applying the three-step LPA offers new insights into how the antecedents of repatriation adjustment – the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation – differ and relate to the profile membership. For instance, identification with home was one of the best differentiators of the four profiles, as high levels of identification with home differentiated the highly adjusted profile from the remaining three profiles.

Third, applying the three-step LPA also offers new insights into the particular conditions in which repatriation adjustment might be more desirable or beneficial for employees and their employing organisations. In particular, the LPA revealed that the highly adjusted profile can be desirable and beneficial as it is associated with the highest mean scores for organisational commitment, skill utilisation, job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing, and the lowest for intention to leave.

Therefore, the results from the current thesis advance repatriation adjustment research by providing insight into when and why “different theories [related to repatriation adjustment] may correspond to different subpopulations” (Wang & Hanges, 2011, p. 29).

### **7.5.2 Practical Contributions**

The findings and results of the current research offer two main practical contributions, particularly for Saudi public sector departments, policy makers and, importantly, human resource practitioners.

First, according to the Ministry of Civil Service (2014), Saudi public sector employees are sent on international assignments to improve their efficiency, and to acquire global skills and utilise them on their return to work. However, on the surface, organisations mostly assume that the repatriation of their personnel is a straightforward task (Black & Gregersen, 1998; Szkudlarek, 2010); thus, the achievement of such goals is expected to align accordingly.

The findings from this research, however, empirically demonstrate that repatriation adjustment of Saudi public sector employees to their home, after spending a significant period of time in novel cultures, is associated with challenges experienced at work and in non-work environments. Thus, in order for Saudi public sector departments to achieve their international assignment program goals, it is recommended that they assess the readjustment of returning personnel and provide them with assistance to smoothen the readjustment experience and, thus, be ready to employ the acquired global skills.

This research project also offers meaningful guidance to Saudi public sector departments, policy makers and human resource practitioners. In particular, the research findings provide a beneficial and rich foundation for designing repatriation training and mentoring programs for repatriates, further accelerating the achievement of the international assignment program goals.



### 7.5.3 Methodological Contributions

The current research offers two central methodological contributions. First, this research has developed and validated a reliable and valid scale of repatriation adjustment that targets repatriates returning from novel cultures. The scale is a useful measurement tool that can be applied to any repatriation study involving repatriation into cultures that are similar to the Saudi cultural context. A number of Arabic nations share similar cultural norms and values. For instance, according to Hofstede, (2015) the Saudi cultural context is relatively similar to the United Arab Emirates cultural context. Thus, this scale will assist researchers to explore the topic of repatriation adjustment from beyond the US context, which was called for by earlier studies (i.e., Kraimer et al., 2016; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007).

The second main methodological contribution of this research is the application of a person-centred approach – the three-step latent profile approach – to better understand the topic of repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. At the time of writing this thesis, the current study is considered to be the first study to apply a person-centred approach in the context of repatriation literature.

Prevailing studies on repatriation adjustment utilise the traditional variables-centred approaches. In this paradigm, the main focus is on investigating the relationship between repatriation adjustment and the variables that are related to the phenomena by utilising linear interactions approaches (Bergman & Andersson, 2010). While this approach has significantly contributed to improving the understanding of the variables that predict repatriation adjustment, what has been less prominent within this approach is the identification of the “unobserved subgroups who share similar levels of, and/or relationships among, a system of

variables”, which is the primary rationale of the person-centred approach (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 195). Thus, using LPA expanded the current understanding of the relationship between repatriation adjustment and cultural identity. This study also provides empirical evidence of the successful application of the three-step LPA approach in order to understand the construct of repatriation adjustment.

## **7.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

It is acknowledged that the current research has several limitations. First, prior repatriation adjustment studies (i.e., Black, 1994) suggest investigating repatriation adjustment using a longitudinal design, due to the nature of the phenomenon. However, due to the timeframe given to complete the current study, the absence of a sophisticated measurement tool and considering that most of the empirical studies on repatriation adjustment have utilised various research designs (i.e., Black et al., 1992; Cox, 2004; Sussman, 2002; Tambyah & Chng, 2006), the current study employed a mixed-method research design.

The second limitation is the failure to meet the minimal ratio of cases (5:1) for the observed items criteria (Gorsuch, 1983) for Studies 2 and 3. However, as explained, in chapter 5 and 6, the challenge of assessing repatriates is a well acknowledged issue across repatriation studies (Sussman, 2001). Thus, the current study provided a preliminary empirical validation evidence of the new developed scale of repatriation adjustment and call for more studies to test and validate the scale.

The third limitation relates to the generalisability of the results. It is acknowledged that the failure to meet the minimal ratio of cases (5:1) and the cultural profile of participants might affect the external validity of the findings of the

current research. Thus, the findings may only be generalised across Saudi repatriates or in Arabic countries that share similar cultural settings.

## **7.7 FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are a number of recommendations and directions for future research. First, the current study validated the new repatriation adjustment scale for repatriates returning home after completing an international assignment in a novel culture using the Saudi repatriate context. Thus, future research studies are needed to test the generalisability of the scale with repatriates returning from novel cultural contexts beyond Saudi repatriates.

Second, this study utilised a sample of repatriates returning to Saudi Arabia from four different nations: Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. However, it was not possible to validate the scale across repatriates returning from each host country separately due to the small sample size. Thus, further studies might utilise a larger sample of repatriates from each host country to further provide additional evidence of generalisability.

As a major finding of Study 3 was the identification of four profile groups of repatriation adjustment, including not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted profiles, it is recommended that future studies qualitatively unpack the characteristics of each profile, as this would provide interesting and in-depth insights into the current understanding of the relationship between repatriation adjustment and cultural identity. In addition, further studies might examine the potential individuals profile changing over time, what might predict the transition between profiles, and whether it occurs for everyone eventually.

Another direction for future research is to test the potential moderation effect of the duration of international assignments, as the longer repatriates were overseas, the longer it took them to become professionally and fully readjusted.

A final recommendation is that, given Study 3 focused on only three antecedents of repatriation adjustment. These were the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation. future studies might include other antecedents of repatriation adjustment, such as organisational support (Kunasegaran et al., 2016; Paik et al., 2002) and repatriation policies (Sánchez et al., 2008), to provide more insights and improve the current understanding of the association between the six facets of repatriation adjustment and its antecedents.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

Despite the growing number of professionals who are willing to relocate worldwide and then return to their home country (Baruch et al., 2016), the topic of repatriation adjustment remains poorly understood (Kraimer et al., 2016; Szkudlarek, 2010) – particularly repatriation from novel cultures.

This research project addressed the issue of repatriates returning to their home culture upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. This research has demonstrated the following. First, repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture is explained and measured using six factors: readjustment to work task performance, readjustment to workplace interactions, personal readjustment, readjustment to local social norms, readjustment to interactions with social networks and general readjustment. Second, four repatriation adjustment profiles – not readjusted, socially readjusted, professionally readjusted and fully readjusted – were identified for

repatriates returning home upon completing an international assignment in a novel culture. Third, the four repatriation adjustment profiles were distinguished by three antecedents: repatriation adjustment, the home cultural identity, the host cultural identity, time spent overseas and time since repatriation. Fourth, the four repatriation adjustment profiles were statistically different in regards to the personal and professional outcomes of repatriation adjustment (intention to leave, organisational commitment, skill utilisation and job satisfaction and subjective wellbeing).

This research makes several significant theoretical, practical and methodological contributions. The first theoretical contribution is the expansion of the current scope of the repatriation adjustment theory (Black et al., 1992) to capture repatriation adjustment following the completion of international assignments in novel cultures. The second theoretical contribution is the expansion of the current understanding of the repatriation adjustment construct by providing three alternative explanations, identifying the four repatriation adjustment profiles, exploring how the repatriation adjustment antecedents differ and relate to the profile membership, and providing new insights into the association between repatriation adjustment and its personal and professional outcomes.

The practical contributions include the insight and meaningful results offered by this research, particularly for Saudi public sector departments, policy makers and, importantly, human resource practitioners. The findings and results of this research project help provide a solid foundation on which to design repatriation training and mentoring programs.

The methodological contributions include the development and validation of a reliable and valid scale of repatriation adjustment that targets repatriates returning from novel cultures, and empirical evidence of the successful application of a person-

centred approach – the three-step LPA approach – to understand repatriation adjustment for repatriates returning home upon completing international assignments in novel cultures.

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# Appendices

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## Appendix A

### Interview protocol for Saudi repatriates

#### Procedure:

1. Introduce myself
2. Thank for participating in the interview.
3. Explain the purpose of this interview and the participant's rights briefly.
4. Give the participant the informed consent form to review and sign.
5. Use probing questions as needed.
6. If an interviewee has difficulty answering a question, provide examples or share my experiences.
7. Sub-questions will be used, as needed, to invite the participant to elaborate more information, as required, during the interview.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to discuss your experience of returning to live and work in Saudi Arabia upon the completion of your international assignment in a novel culture. I want to identify as many of the issues or challenges – both positive and not so positive – you confronted as you made the transition from (*the host country name*) back to Saudi Arabia. I don't want to limit the scope of those issues or challenges. You may want to consider your return to work in Saudi, your return to family, to the broader community and so on. You may also want to consider not just your transition back to Saudi but also, if appropriate, your accompanying (immediate) family's transition and how their reactions to return affected you and your transition.

Before we begin the main part of the interview I would like to get some idea of how easy or difficult it was to return to Saudi from (*the host country name*)? Would you describe your return to Saudi as:

Very easy      Easy      Normal      Difficult      Very difficult

#### Repatriation Overall

- 1- Tell me about your experience of returning to Saudi Arabia from (*the host country name*)
  - What were the most things you were looking forward about coming home to Saudi after your time in (*the host country name*)?
  - What surprised you most about Saudi on your return? Pleasant – unpleasant?
  - What were the most difficult or challenging aspects of returning to Saudi from (*the host country name*)?

## **Personal Change**

- 2- How have you changed as a result of your overseas experience?
  - a. What effect do you expect it would/will have on your adjustment?
  - b. Have your career and personal aspirations changed?
  - c. What about your personal life?
    - What do you miss most about (host country)?
    - What do you like best about being back in Saudi?
    - Has Saudi Arabia changed in the time you were overseas? How? Has this change made readjustment more or less difficult?

## **Adjustment Time Frame**

- 3- How long did it take you to get used to live and work in Saudi Arabia again?
  - Why do you think it took that time to adjust to live and work in Saudi Arabia?

## **Comparison with Partition Process**

- 4- Was there any difference between adjustment to the host culture and readjustment to your home culture?
  - How and why? Can you describe more please?
  - Which one you found more challenging the adjustment to the host culture or the readjustment to your home? Why? Would you provide me with some examples?

## **Predictors of Repatriation Adjustment**

- 5- From your experience, what are the most important factors that facilitate/hinder the process of your readjustment? Can you give me some example?
  - Why do you think (that) might facilitate/hinder the readjustment? How did you cope with it? What could be done better?

*Depending on the above answers – then ask specifically about different realms*

## **Repatriation – Professional**

- 6- How have you found returning to work in Saudi Arabia?
  - Did you have any expectation about work in Saudi? Were your expectations met? In what ways were they met or not met?
  - Have you noticed any changes in how you behave/feel at work since you came back?
  - How were you treated by your organisation after returning from overseas?
  - What type of support did you receive from your organisation upon returning home?
  - How did the support from your organisation affect your adjustment back to work?

### **Repatriation – Family**

- 7- How did your family find the adjustment back into Saudi society?
- Were you concerned about family relocation? (i.e., housing, school, healthcare, spouse job, etc.)
  - What aspect did they find most challenging?

### **Repatriation – Social**

- 8- How have other people reacted to you since your return to Saudi Arabia?
- Have you noticed any changes in how you behave in your social/personal interactions since you came back?
  - How about other's behaviours? Any nonverbal behaviour, like time orientation?
  - How were you treated by family and friends after returning from overseas?
  - What type of support did you receive from your social network (friends, family, and colleagues) upon returning home?
  - How did the support from social/family affect your adjustment back to the Saudi social and work environments?

### **Closure of the Interview**

- 9- What are your plans for the future with regard to your living and working in Saudi Arabia?
- What advice would you have for employees who are repatriating?
  - What advice do you have for Saudi public sector organisations with regards to repatriation?
  - Anything else you want to talk about your repatriation experience?

## Appendix B

### Survey

#### Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to improve our understanding of how Saudi public sector repatriates readjust to living and working in Saudi Arabia after spending at least one year in a different culture. We are particularly interested in Saudi public sector employees who have been temporarily expatriated, for a period of time between 1-4 years, to different cultures within countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, or the United States, and then returned to live and work in Saudi Arabia.

The results of this survey will make a positive contribution to the development of a Saudi repatriation process in two main ways:

1. The results will highlight critical issues confronting Saudi repatriates, both at work and outside of work, and
2. The results may also assist Saudi public sector departments to facilitate repatriates' readjustment and make better use of their international experience.

#### General Instructions

For the purposes of this survey, repatriation adjustment refers to the level of psychological comfort that you felt during your transition to home after your time in a foreign culture.

The survey consists of six (6) sections. It is expected that this survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

The survey includes questions about your professional, personal, socio-cultural, overall readjustment and, where applicable, your family's readjustment to Saudi Arabia after your most recent overseas experience. Some key points about the survey:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- We encourage you to be open about your readjustment experience.
- Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous.
- No individual respondent will be identified to any other person verbally or in writing.
- The name of your employer will NOT be publicly released.

This study has been approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number 1600000384).



## Section # 1: Professional Readjustment

### Instructions:

The questions in this section refer to how comfortable you felt when you returned to your workplace after your return from your most recent long-term international experience in a foreign culture.

Please respond to each question by clicking on the number that best reflects your opinion about your level of comfort during your readjustment to your workplace.

### Section 1 questions begin here:

Using the following 1-7 scale, please indicate the extent to which you feel re-adjusted since returning home.

#### 1.1 In readjusting to your work environment, to what extent did you feel readjusted to;

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Your specific job responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Performance expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The work tasks you performed before you went overseas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The work tasks assigned to you after your return from overseas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Participating in decision-making processes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organisation's rules, procedures, and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Being able to fully express your opinions on work related matters. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

**1.2 In readjusting to interactions with authority figures at your workplace,** to what extent did you feel readjusted to;

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

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Supervisory responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being able to questions your managers' decisions' when you perceive a better option.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Initiating new strategies for organisational improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reporting your job related concerns and issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interacting with your managers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sharing ideas and strategies acquired overseas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

**1.3 In readjusting to interactions with colleagues in your work group,** to what extent did you feel readjusted to;

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Discussing work related issues with your colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collaborating with your colleagues to make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communicating with your colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sharing ideas and strategies acquired overseas with your colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

Please add any further comments or observations you may have about your professional readjustment.

## Section # 2: Personal Readjustment

### Instructions:

The questions in this section refer to how comfortable you felt when you returned to your personal life after your return from your most recent long-term international experience in a foreign culture.

Please respond to each question by clicking on the number that best reflects your opinion about your level of comfort during your readjustment to your personal life.

### Section 2 questions begin here:

**2.1 In readjusting to the local norms of punctuality,** to what extent did you feel readjusted to;

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Saudi norms of punctuality for events or other commitments.							

Running meetings (i.e., events, gatherings) on time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

---

**2.2 In readjusting to the local daily life, to what extent did you feel readjusted to;**

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Your daily life routine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enjoying the lifestyle of Saudi Arabia.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Practicing mannerisms or customs learnt from your host country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Seeing things from a local perspective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

**2.3 In readjusting to the local norms, to what extent did you feel readjusted to;**

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Expressing your feelings (positive or negative) about local norms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

---

Coping with resistance to your opinions or perspectives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Disagreeing with unfavourable opinions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Please add any further comments or observations you may have about your personal readjustment.

### Section # 3: Socio-cultural Readjustment

#### Instructions:

The questions in this section refer to how comfortable you felt readjusting to Saudi social norms and values after your return from your most recent long-term international experience in a foreign culture. Please respond to each question by clicking on the number that best reflects your opinion about your level of comfort during your readjustment to your personal life.

#### Section 3 questions begin here:

**3.1 In readjusting to the local social life, to what extent did you feel readjusted to;**

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Previous relationships with your social network (i.e., friends, relatives).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Making new social relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Making yourself understood.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The pace of social life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The norms and etiquette of social events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Talking about yourself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Persuading or convincing somebody about new social ideas acquired overseas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The local etiquette.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Talking with local people about your overseas experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interacting with other repatriates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interacting with foreigners/expatriates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interacting with fellow nationals in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interacting with friends outside of work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Speaking with fellow nationals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

Please add any further comments or observations you may have about your socio-cultural readjustment.



## Section # 4: General Readjustment

### Instructions:

The questions in this section refer to how comfortable you felt readjusting to day-to-day living in Saudi after your return from your most recent long-term overseas experience in a foreign culture.

Please respond to each question by clicking on the number that best reflects your opinion about your level of comfort during your readjustment to your personal life.

### Section 4 questions begin here:

#### 4.1 In readjusting to local life, to what extent did you feel readjusted to;

1 = Not readjusted at all;

2 = Slightly readjusted;

3 = Somewhat readjusted;

4 = Fairly readjusted;

5 = Well readjusted;

6 = Highly readjusted;

7 = Completely readjusted.

---

Living conditions in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Housing conditions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Food.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shopping.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cost of living.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Entertainment/recreation opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Healthcare facilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Coping with financial matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Settling in at home before returning to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The local transportation system and driving behaviours.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

Please add any further comments or observations you may have about your general readjustment.

**Section # 5 questions begin here:**

**Instructions:**

This section of the survey focuses on your background, and the place where you work.

Your answers to these questions will help the research team see if there are individual differences in how comfortable people are with their repatriate experience.

Your answers **will NOT** identify you as an individual.

Please respond to the questions by clicking on the response number that best describes you.

**Section 5 questions begin here:**

5.1 What is your age in years?

- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60 or over

5.2 What is your gender?

- Male.
- Female.

5.3 What is your current marital status?

- Single.
- Married.
- Married and have children.

5.4 What is your highest level of education?

- Diploma Certificate.
- Bachelor's Degree.
- Master's Degree.
- Doctoral Degree.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.5 At what province or administrative area is the geographical location of your organisation?

- Al-Baha.
- Al-Jouf.
- Almadinah Al-Munawarah.
- Asir.
- Eastern Province.

- Hail.
- Jizan.
- Makkah Al-Mukarramah.
- Najran.
- Northern Borders.
- Qassim.
- Riyadh.
- Tabouk.

5.6 What was your position at your organisation before your most recent long-term overseas experience?

- Staff Member.
- Assistant Manager.
- Manager.
- Senior Manager.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.7 What is your current position at your organisation after returning from your most recent long-term overseas experience?

- Staff Member.
- Assistant Manager.
- Manager.
- Senior Manager.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.8 What is the name of your organisation?

- Communication and Information Technology Commission.
- King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology.
- Ministry of Civil Service.
- Ministry of Health.
- Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency.
- Saudi Food and Drug Authority.
- Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.9 In which country was your most recent long-term overseas experience?

- Australia.
- Canada.
- The United Kingdom.
- The United States of America.

- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.10 Why did your organisation send you overseas?

- To complete a Diploma.
- To complete a Bachelor's degree.
- To complete a Master's degree.
- To complete a Doctoral degree.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.11 In your most recent long-term overseas experience, how long did you stay in the host country?

- 1 year or less.
- 2-3 years.
- 4-5 years.
- 6-7 years.

5.12 How long have you been in Saudi Arabia since you returned from your most recent long-term overseas experience?

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.13 How many times did you visit Saudi Arabia during your most recent long-term overseas experience?

- None.
- Once.
- Twice.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.14 How many times have you been to different foreign countries in a long-term base (including the most recent one)?

- Once.
- Twice.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

5.15 During your time abroad, how often did you contact home?

- Never.
- Fortnightly.
- Weekly.
- Daily.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

## Cultural Identity

Please indicate how similar are your personal characteristics or preferences to the other Saudis and the people of your host country (i.e., Americans, Australians, Canadians, or English people). On any given item, you may score high similarity with one of the two cultures, both of the cultures, or neither of the cultures.

Saudi People								Your Host Country People						
Not similar			><	Extremely				Not similar			><	Extremely		
at all				similar				at all				similar		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pace of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	General knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Material comfort/standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Recreational activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Self-identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Accommodations/residence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Communication styles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cultural activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Perceptions of Saudi citizens.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Perceptions of host country citizens.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Political ideology.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Worldview.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Social customs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Employment activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Intention to Leave

Please indicate your agreement with each item by clicking on the appropriate number.

1 = Strongly Disagree;

2 = Disagree;

3 = Slightly Disagree;

4 = Neutral;

5 = Slightly Agree;

6 = Agree;

7 = Strongly Agree.

---

I do not intend to leave my organisation in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe I will be working for my department in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am often thinking about quitting my job at my work organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am not actively looking for a job outside my work organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
As soon as I find a better job, I will leave this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

## Organisational Commitment

Please indicate your agreement with each item by clicking on the appropriate number.

1 = Strongly Disagree;

2 = Disagree;

3 = Slightly Disagree;

4 = Neutral;

5 = Slightly Agree;

6 = Agree;

7 = Strongly Agree.

---

I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This organisation deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---



## Job Satisfaction

Please indicate your agreement with each item by clicking on the appropriate number.

1 = Strongly Disagree;

2 = Disagree;

3 = Slightly Disagree;

4 = Neutral;

5 = Slightly Agree;

6 = Agree;

7 = Strongly Agree.

---

In general, I am satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My job provides me with a sense of accomplishment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

## Skill Utilisation

Please indicate your agreement with each item by clicking on the appropriate number.

1 = Strongly Disagree;

2 = Disagree;

3 = Slightly Disagree;

4 = Neutral;

5 = Slightly Agree;

6 = Agree;

7 = Strongly Agree.

---

I have sufficient time in my workplace to use my new knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What I learnt overseas is easily transferable to my work environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am motivated to apply my new knowledge and skills in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My work environment provides me with opportunities to use my new knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is no resistance to using new skills in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The equipment and facilities at my workplace are adequate for applying my new knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

## Subjective Wellbeing

Please indicate how you have been feeling since you returned from your recent overseas experience.

1 = Much higher than usual;

2 = Higher than usual;

3 = About the same;

4 = Lower than usual;

5 = Much lower than usual;


---

Able to concentrate.	1	2	3	4	5
Capable of making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
Face up to problems.	1	2	3	4	5
Lose sleep over worry.	1	2	3	4	5
Constantly under strain.	1	2	3	4	5
Cannot overcome difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
Unhappy or depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of confidence in self.	1	2	3	4	5
Thinking of self as worthless.	1	2	3	4	5

---

Please add any further comments or observations you may have about your repatriation adjustment.

**Appendix C**  
**Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form**

	<b>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT</b> – Interview –
<b>Repatriation Adjustment: Empirical Evidence from Saudi Corporate Repatriates</b> <b>QUT Ethics Approval Number 1400001013</b>	

**RESEARCH TEAM**

<b>Principal Researcher:</b>	Abdulrahman Al Shimai	QUT PhD Student	[+61 7] 3138 6638
	<a href="mailto:a.alshimai@hdr.qut.edu.au">a.alshimai@hdr.qut.edu.au</a>		
<b>Associate Researchers:</b>	Robert Thompson	QUT Principal Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 5082
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	Bernd Irmer	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 2654
	<a href="mailto:b.irmer@qut.edu.au">b.irmer@qut.edu.au</a>		
	Caroline Hatcher	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 7734
	<a href="mailto:c.hatcher@qut.edu.au">c.hatcher@qut.edu.au</a>		

**DESCRIPTION**

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD study for Abdulrhman AL Shimai. The purpose of this research is to identify distinct profiles of Saudi public sector employees who have temporarily expatriated to novel cultures such as Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada based on their levels of the re-adjustment to their home culture. You are invited to participate in this project because you are identified as a Saudi public sector employee who has been temporarily expatriated to novel cultures within countries such as Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada then returned to work and live in Saudi Arabia.

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation will involve an audio recorded face-to-face interview to be held in a location and at a time convenient to you that will take approximately 60-90 minutes of your time. You will be asked questions similar to those below:

1. Tell me about your experience of returning to Saudi Arabia from (*the host country name*)
2. From your experience, what are the most important factors that facilitate/hinder the process of readjustment? Can you give me some example?

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project at any time during the interview or within three weeks after the interview without comment or penalty. Any identifiable information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with any other associated external organisations.

**EXPECTED BENEFITS**

It is expected that this research will not directly benefit you. However, it may benefit the knowledge field and practice of repatriation. It also, may benefit the Saudi public organisations in regards to repatriation adjustment practices and policies. If you are interested in the results of this study, you can email the principal researcher in March 2015.

**RISKS**

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

**PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. The names of individual persons and identifiable markers will be removed from the data before dissemination.

With permission, your interviews will be audio recorded. Please note that;

- It is not possible to participate on this study without being audio recording.
- You will have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion.
- The audio recordings will be transcribed and will be retained until the project is completed.
- The recordings and transcriptions will only be available to the research team.
- The non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects or stored on an open access database for secondary analysis.

Any data collected as part of this project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of research data policy.

The project is funded by King Abdullah Program and will be conducted through the Saudi public sector organisations. However, the funding body and the associated organisations will not have access to the data obtained during the project.

#### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

#### **QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT**

If have any questions or require further information please contact one of the research team members below.

<b>Principal Researcher:</b>	Abdulrahman Al Shimai	QUT PhD Student	[+61 7] 3138 6638
	<a href="mailto:a.alshimai@hdr.qut.edu.au">a.alshimai@hdr.qut.edu.au</a>		
<b>Associate Researchers:</b>	Robert Thompson	QUT Principal Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 5082
	<a href="mailto:r.thompson@qut.edu.au">r.thompson@qut.edu.au</a>		
	Bernd Irmer	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 2654
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	Caroline Hatcher	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 7734
	<a href="mailto:c.hatcher@qut.edu.au">c.hatcher@qut.edu.au</a>		

#### **CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT**

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on [+61 7] 3138 5123 or email [ethicscontact@qut.edu.au](mailto:ethicscontact@qut.edu.au). The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

*Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.*



**Repatriation Adjustment: Empirical Evidence from Saudi Corporate Repatriates**

**QUT Ethics Approval Number 1400001013**

**RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS**

<b>Principal Researcher:</b>	Abdulrahman Al Shimai	QUT PhD Student	[+61 7] 3138 6638
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<b>Associate Researchers:</b>	Robert Thompson	QUT Principal Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 5082
	<a href="mailto:r.thompson@qut.edu.au">r.thompson@qut.edu.au</a>		
	Bernd Irmer	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 2654
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	Caroline Hatcher	QUT Associate Supervisor	[+61 7] 3138 7734
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**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

**By signing below, you are indicating that you:**

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time during the interview or within three weeks after the interview without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on [+61 7] 3138 5123 or email [ethicscontact@qut.edu.au](mailto:ethicscontact@qut.edu.au) if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that it is not possible to participate on this study without being audio recording
- Understand that the funding body and the associated Saudi public sector organisations will not have access to the data and will not be informed of any information that employees would provide during the interview.
- Understand that the completed thesis might be available for the public and the results will be reported in aggregate and non-identifiable form.
- Understand that the de-identified data might be used for future researches.
- Agree to participate in the project.

**Name** .....

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....

*Please return this sheet to the investigator.*

## Appendix D

### Interview Code Book

Major Theme	Supporting Theme	Codded Text	Participant
Professional Readjustment	Readjustment to the local work environment	<p>‘They still ask me to do some of the tasks that I did before I went abroad.’</p> <p>‘I returned to the same department, the same colleagues and the same office.’</p> <p>‘Sometimes, my colleagues think that, because I hold a Master’s degree, I am capable of any task at my work, which is far from [the] truth. I told them that I really need some time to learn how to do everything again. Also, I need to learn how to apply what I have learnt abroad.’</p>	<p>P_18, Repatriated from US</p> <p>P_13, Repatriated from Australia</p> <p>P_5, Repatriated from US</p>
	Readjustment to the interactions with workplace authority figures	<p>‘I had to reintroduce myself to the organisation, which was really difficult, especially when my colleagues seemed [to] feel that there was some kind of competition. Therefore, it took me more time to figure out everything.’</p>	<p>P_10, Repatriated from Australia</p>
	Readjustment to the interactions with workplace colleagues	<p>‘Well, while I was over there, lots of things changed here in my workplace. For example, they moved to a new building and recruited new employees. Before going overseas, I worked with a small team. Now, we are a much larger team. I don’t even know</p>	<p>P_4, Repatriated from Australia</p>

some of my colleagues because they were hired to work here while I was abroad.’

Personal Readjustment	Readjustment to the local norms of punctuality	‘I remember that, before I went to the United States, I hated meetings because they were time-consuming; people usually came late and unprepared. Because of my meetings with my US supervisors, I learnt to be on time, well prepared and to organise my documents in advance. I am really looking forward to applying that mindset in my work.’	P_8, Repatriated from the US
	Readjustment to the local daily life	‘Before I returned to Saudi Arabia I spent around two months asking myself if I should leave the USA. I hated the routine of my previous life and did not want to return to my job and lifestyle.’	P_16, Repatriated from the US
	Readjustment to the local norms	‘I learnt how to respect others’ opinions, even if [I] disagree with them. I also learnt to respect the system and the law. Many ideas have changed, such as the local view of foreign workers. Before I went to Australia, I gave foreign workers little notice; when I returned, I had a greater appreciation of the role they play in the local economy.’	P_4, Repatriated from Australia
Social Readjustment		‘I think some of them wanted me to be the same person that I was three years ago. So, sometimes I have to fight for what I believe in, and sometimes I have to behave	P_8, Repatriated from the US



	<p>as people want me to; I do not want to live like an outsider or a stranger.’</p> <p>‘I would say that my lack of social activity can be related to both living overseas and the age factor. Now, I like to spend more time on my own watching TV, reading books or just going to the cafe to enjoy a cup of coffee. Before going to the US, I used to be out all the time with my friends socially. Now, I might see them for a day or a few hours, and that is it.’</p>	<p>P_6, Repatriated from the US</p>
<p>General Readjustment</p>	<p>‘As I mentioned, it took me 35 days to find a house. I wanted to move as soon as possible, and that was the soonest date; it was really difficult. Even if you find a house to rent here in Saudi Arabia, you have to work on it. Renting a house here is challenging, unlike in the US. In the US, when you rent an apartment, it comes ready. You only need some kind of bed and a sofa; that is it. Everything is there in the kitchen, such as the fridge, and it is in good working order. When there is an issue, you call the manager, and they come on the same day or within the next day and fix it; here in Saudi Arabia, it is different story. You have to do everything yourself,</p>	<p>P_9, Repatriated from the US</p>

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and sometimes you have to fix things at your own expense. If you try to call the manager or the owner, they might give you a difficult time. There is no comparison between housing in the US and here in Saudi Arabia, and my 35 days working on my place is a good example.'

'At the beginning, we did not have a house or a unit to live in. I had to live with my family, and my wife had to live with her family. This was a problem for almost a year until we found a place to live. It was very tough, but this has happened to everyone who left for a period of time. It is a common problem.'

P\_2,  
Repatriated  
from  
Australia

'I would say that it is not easy to find a house here in Saudi Arabia. It is not like in Australia, where you go online, search through websites, make an appointment for inspection and apply if you are interested. Here, you have to go in person to the real estate offices and ask each one if they have an apartment or a house available. Sometimes, you find things quickly; sometimes, the process takes a month and half.'

P\_13,  
Repatriated  
from  
Australia

'Before I went to the USA, my wife had a job in Saudi Arabia. She decided to stop working and go with me. Upon our return

P\_16,  
Repatriated  
from the US

home, she had to find a job, which is usually accompanied with stress and frustration. Additionally, social commitments here are very strong regarding extended family. While we were in the USA, we were able to have 100 per cent commitment to our immediate family. So, from these angles, adjustment was difficult.’

‘Well, I would say the adjustment to changes, the lifestyle here—it’s not all about work—and everything outside too. I like the way we drive, do our banking, and do things online that we used to do manually.’

P\_2,

Repatriated

from

Australia

‘I was in the United Kingdom, and it’s a bit expensive there. So, coming back here from an expensive region and readjusting to a new life was a bit stressful. Financially, we had to find accommodations, buy a car and rent a house; so, there is a financial impact with all of that.’

P\_1,

Repatriated

from the

UK

‘I would say that, here, the congestion in the streets and the driving behaviours are different. I faced certain challenges when driving. Also, I was surprised by the new projects and development taking a place in the capital city of Riyadh.’

P\_7,

Repatriated

from

Australia

‘Well, I would say that the one factor that made my adjustment

P\_9,

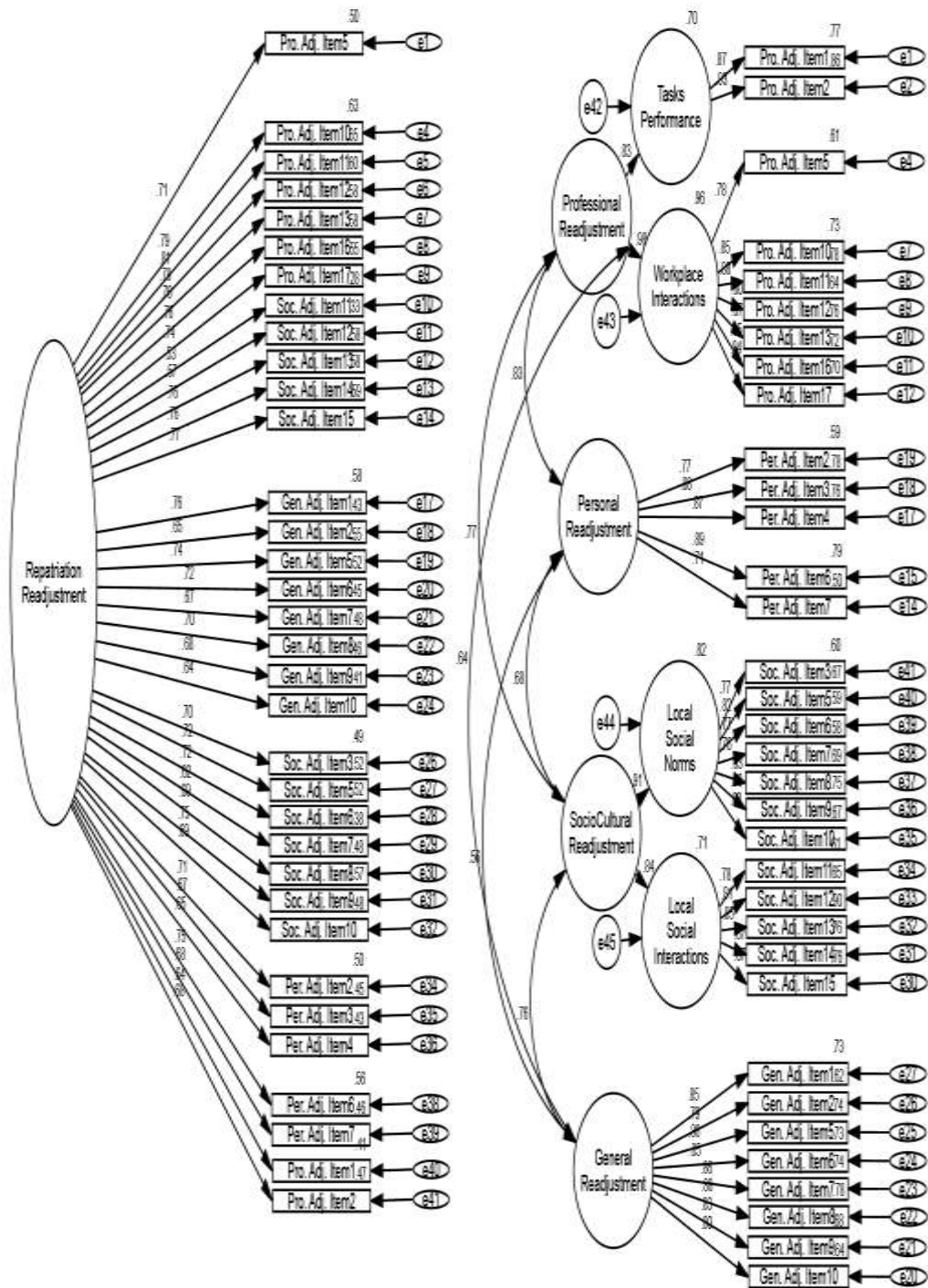
Repatriated

harder was the outside from the US environment. For example, the driving behaviour here in Saudi Arabia and the need to go personally to submit paperwork is a challenge. I used to do that online while I was in the US.’

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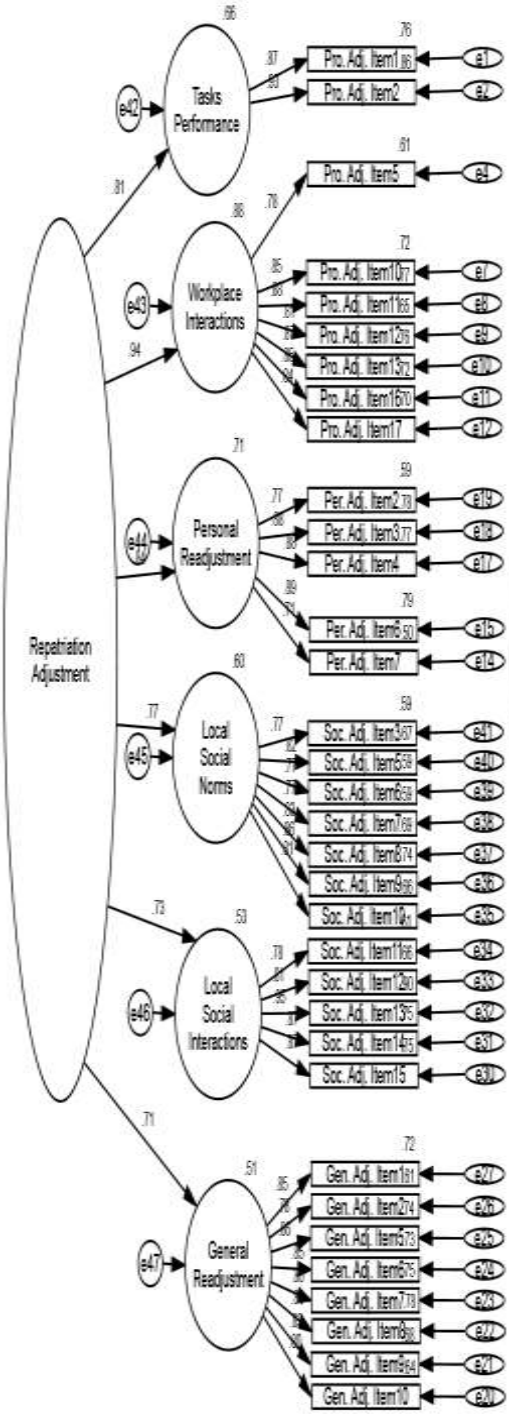
## Appendix E

### Presentation of Comparative Models

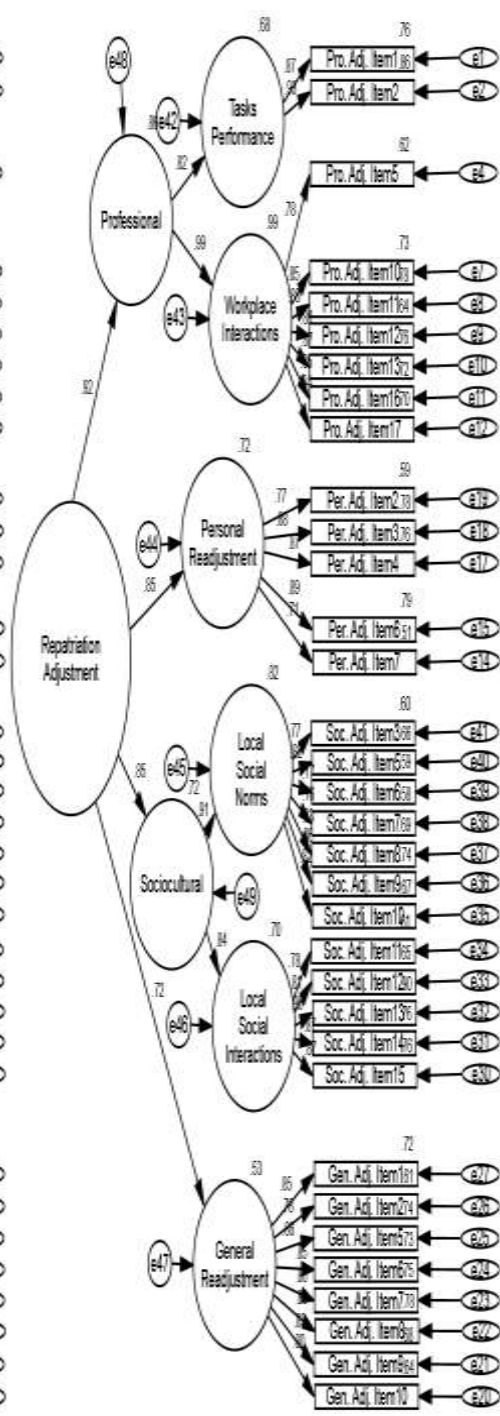


Model B

Model C



Model D



Model E