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**SOCIALISATION TACTICS TO FACILITATE THE
ADJUSTMENTS OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES**

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PREFACE

We explored the strategies self-initiated expatriates of a global consulting firm within the Netherlands drawing from the expatriation literature. Although expatriate assignments are well established both in practice and theory, self-expatriate strategies are less clearly outlined despite the global mobility. Particularly in contrast to expatriates, whose redeployment is driven by the employer, self-initiated expatriates are motivated either by their curiosity, affective, or personal economic rational, cognitive. Furthermore, whilst the former may expect organisational support, the latter, due to their agency, are largely self-supported especially when socialising with their work and living environments. For organisations expatriation can provide valuable talent development yet equally perilous for losing talent who fail to socialise. Developing onboarding for both affective and cognitive self-initiated expatriates to socialise with their environments can thus be crucial for retaining talent. Accordingly, we identified socialisation tactics through interviews with both affective and cognitive self-initiated expatriates of a global consulting company, to inform their onboarding practices.

Key Words: Socialisation tactics, Self-Initiated Expatriates, Onboarding, Talent Management and Global Multinationals



INTRODUCTIONS

Accenture, founded in 1989, a global consultancy delivering technological enhancements for partners including Microsoft and Oracle. They outsource service solutions covering strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations which resulted in US\$41 billion revenue for 2018's financial year, placing them amongst the global elite (Accenture, 2019a; Kamat, 2018). Their growth from 177,000 employees in 2009 to 477,000 people in over 50 countries (Statista, 2019; Accenture, 2019a) reflects their strategic HRM approach leveraging their human capital (Abraham, 2017). By centralising their marketing, internal communications, legal and finance functions they support their wide organisation as '*the engine that powers Accenture*'.

Human Resources (HR) is also one of the departments of corporate functions and consists of approximately 65 employees in the Netherlands. These employees interact with all 2500 Accenture NL's employees, with a view to making an impact on people's needs and wellbeing; furthermore, the mission of the HR department is centred around making Accenture the best employer for the best talent and becoming one of the most inclusive and diverse organisations in the world (Accenture, 2019b, Accenture, 2019c). To remain a relevant employer, Accenture's HR strategy must have the competence to deal with external changes occurring in the HR landscape (Crummenerl, Jacob and Funk, 2018). An analysis of macro-environmental factors enables companies like Accenture to determine a strategy that fits these external changes (Gupta, 2013). From the review of such analysis, it becomes evident that three forces drive a large part of the external changes (de Beer, 2016).



Even though technological developments should no longer be called a new phenomenon, labour market attracted interest in the past years. The destruction and creation of employment and the changes work are significant trends that shape today's workforce (de Beer, 2016). The fact that automation replaces routine functions mainly executed by medium-skilled employees causes a shift in demand towards both lower- and higher educated employees. Additionally, since technological developments increase the demand for IT practitioners, tight labour market conditions, and thus significant recruitment issues for this specific segment, are the results. (Bastiaans, ter Weijden and Huttinga, 2017). According to HR-professionals, about 50 per cent of all Dutch ICT-vacancies are hard to fill, and with an estimated 13 per cent IT job growth by 2026 this percentage will likely grow (Kalkhoven, 2018; Lippman, 2019). The increased demand for both highly educated employees and ICT practitioners' forces ICT and management consulting companies like Accenture to commit to creative structural solutions such as re-education and recruitment of employees from abroad (Kalkhoven, 2018).

Whereas technological enhancements drive most trends on the demand-side, supply-side trends are shaped by the growing power of the individual. This growth in power is the causal effect of two factors; firstly, these labour scarcity of highly-educated employees leading individuals are able to become much more demanding regarding employment conditions (Deloitte, 2017); secondly, the generations shaping today's and tomorrow's workforce are the first to believe that they have a more negative future outlook than their parents' generation. As a result, core principles of corporate behaviour and their underlying beliefs are being continuously questioned (Kaji, 2018). This critical attitude forces organisations into creating working conditions that are mutually beneficial to both the employer and employee; consequentially, trends such as the increased need for working-hour flexibility arise. The Netherlands is currently top of the list regarding this matter, being the only European country in which more than 50 per cent of all jobs are part-time (de Beer, 2016).



As a consequence, this driver forces organisations like Accenture to shift towards a model that empowers employees to seek for experiences instead of jobs, and where the individual has the possibility to continually reinvent and develop him/herself (Kaji, 2018). Seeking new experiences is not limited by national borders, as trends such as global migration are more frequently initiated by employees themselves (Howe-walsh and Schyns, 2010; InterNations, 2018). Finally, approaching the environment from a political and economic viewpoint, the fact that the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union involves a tangle of trends (Lammersen, 2017). Even though the House of Commons supported the decision “Brexit”, with both Dutch and international corporations (NOS, 2019). Since the UK accounts for 3.3 per cent of Dutch employment, the Netherlands is highly vulnerable to the economic consequences of Brexit (Lammersen, 2017).

Besides severe revenue implications for those companies with a British market, HR departments of international firms like Accenture must understand and act upon the fact that Brexit will have influence on the rights and laws of British immigrants (Poley, 2019). However, Brexit does not limit itself to solely negative consequences for the Dutch economy. In 2018, 42 firms have moved to the Netherlands, and forecasts expect 250 more companies to undertake the same transition (Van Unen, 2019). As a result, employment will increase greatly, and Dutch cities are starting to function as technical and financial centres. This ensures both a magnetic attraction and a necessity for expatriates, who were already attracted by the favourable labour conditions described in the previous force (Kneefel, 2019; van Velzen, 2019).



From the previously mentioned, influences one can draw the conclusion that, from an HR perspective, the right actions have to be taken to cope with threats such as the relatively low workforce supply, especially highly-educated employees and ICT practitioners, and their critical thinking behaviour. Solutions frequently point towards the re-education of the existing workforce, or to attracting a workforce from outside the country borders, whilst compromising with giving the workforce the flexibility to make these decisions themselves. However, opportunities arise from the fact the country becomes more attractive to the global workforce due to employment possibilities and a larger expatriate population. This reflects the demand for ICT innovation and many international firms moving to the Netherlands due to Brexit.

Accenture NL responds to the previously mentioned forces by the implementation of two pivots into their 2019 HR strategy: one, the cultivation of 'new habits' along with Accenture NL's values and, two, just-in-time skilling. By cultivating new habits Accenture NL desires to nurture its culture of cultures. When encouraging its employees to set priorities and to reflect on oneself on a frequent basis, a sense of belonging should be created (Accenture, 2018a). Just-in-time skilling is centred on the fact that employees to acquire new skills right when they need to apply them. By offering both internal learning and talent programs before hiring, Accenture NL partly builds upon the solution of re-education to fill the ICT skill gap occurring in the external environment (Accenture the Netherlands, 2019).



Similarly, two of Accenture's core values are one, having a global network and two, having respect for the individual. It is therefore unsurprising that Accenture believes in diverse teams since they claim that such teams are more effective, creative, and innovative (Accenture, 2019d). As a result, they are encouraged to also utilise the solution of attracting talent from abroad and encourage employees to undertake this action themselves. To ensure that diverse teams actually exist and function, the organisation formally established an Inclusion and Diversity (I andD) corporate function in 2003, which provides strategic guidance for diversity programs in Accenture offices around the world (Dixit and Bajpai, 2015). With these programs, Accenture's goal is that every employee has a full sense of belonging within the organisation. They desire to achieve this by continuously practicing their belief that: "No one should be discriminated against because of age, gender, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity difference" (Accenture, 2019c). Amongst these initiatives is the participation of Accenture NL in the 'Alliantie Culturele Diversiteit in de Top', an initiative of the Social-Economical Board, in which several organisations aim to increase cultural diversity in top-management positions (Consultancy.nl, 2019). As Accenture stimulates and consequently copes with a growing variety of ethnicities themselves, the importance of the existence of and provision in I andD programs, "both internally and externally" grows (Accenture, 2019d).

Nonetheless, despite these initiatives, exit interviews establish that there are still various employees from non-Dutch cultural backgrounds who do not have this sense of belonging, nor do they recognize Accenture NL's attempts to create this for them. An example statement is: *'Because I have already worked for Accenture, they expect me to already know everything, whereas I am actually just as new as everyone else'* (Accenture, 2018c).



Despite the fact that Accenture's mission, vision and values are being globally determined, the organisational culture, defined as *a common way of being, thinking, decision-making and drawing conclusions*, is still very different in each country (Accenture, 2019d; Solomon, 2018). For individual employees, working in a new culture this can therefore be perceived as an unpleasant surprise, since one's expectations do not accord with the reality (Naeem, Nadeem and Kahn, 2015). The reaction of not being able to understand, control or predict the behavior of other people defines the so-called "*culture-shock*" (Brock, 1970). Unwanted effects, such as anxiety, frustration, isolation or even depression are related to this phenomenon, have also surfaced at Accenture NL according to these exit interviews. Healthy recovery of a "*culture-shock*" is achieved once the expatriate adjusts to his/her new circumstances (Naeem et al, 2015). This adjustment, from a cultural or professional perspective, relates to job performance as well as happiness (Grinstein and Wathieu, 2008).

It is therefore no wonder, as Naeem et al (2015) state, that a culture-shock could eventually lead to the employee leaving the company. This functions as a reason for why unmanaged attrition occurs regularly amongst the approximately 30 employees that voluntarily transfer to the Netherlands from another Accenture country each year (Accenture, 2019e). Other than this being inconceivably expensive, turnover of expatriates also negatively impacts the corporate effectiveness due to the loss of an employee with valuable overseas experiences (Stroh, 1995). This is considered a significant loss as the increase of organisational success is being stimulated by cultural diversity.



McKinsey and Co claim organisations employing diverse backgrounds are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors (Earley, 2017). This is because a diverse workforce is proven to lead to more creativity, flexibility, and successful adjustment to trade fluctuations (Thomas and Ely, 1996), and thus the confidence of Accenture in the power of diverse teams is actually true. Furthermore, the impact of diversity is proven to be highest on the performance of companies like Accenture, with an emphasis on digital innovation and significant operations in multiple countries. This is not surprising, as these companies can avail themselves of the possibility (Lorenzo and Reeves, 2018). As Accenture NL also acknowledges, *the goal of the client is to gain understanding on how to facilitate adjustment of self-initiated expatriates, to guarantee a sense of belonging for every employee and consequently increase organisational success.*

Accenture NL states, that, due to the pressure of hiring new employees, the cultural match of those employees transferring from an Accenture branch abroad to its Dutch brand, is not considered. Therefore, the HR advisors and the I andD department are obliged to deal with the adjustment of these specific groups of employees. However, due to the small scale and time limitations, there is no clear plan on how to handle this and what should be considered. Therefore, this research focuses on the cultural inclusivity aspects of the HR strategy.



HR departments employ on-boarding (also referred to as socialisation processes), during which a newcomer receives the right tools and knowledge to integrate into the organisation (Wlosinska and Dillner, 2013). This is underpinned by the fact that the lack of personal support and socialisation opportunities are the two main reasons for unhappiness amongst expatriates; consequently, providing these aspects could consequently lead to a competitive advantage when filling positions (Hafner, 2018). Therefore, *the goal of this research is to understand how a self-initiated expatriate adjusts and how Accenture NL can influence this adjustment using socialisation processes. Accordingly leading to how Human Resources can develop its onboarding socialisation tactics to facilitate the adjustment of Self-Initiated Expatriates.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expatriate adjustment

In his research into expatriate adjustment, Black (1988) defines adjustment as *the person's psychological comfort with respect to the environmental demands*. This comfort occurs when one's individual abilities and skills match the demand of the environment, and when the uncertainty of the individual is reduced to such an extent that their work environment becomes predictable, understandable, and controllable. As socialisation programs are installed to influence the uncertainty of the individual, adjustment is the ultimate outcome of such work transition programs (Swid Ahmed, 2011; Saks and Ashforth, 1997).



Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, and Tucker (2007) developed three proximal indicators of newcomer adjustment, adapted from Feldman (1981). The first indicator, *role clarity*, refers to the employee's understanding of job tasks, the understanding of priorities and the ability to allocate appropriate time to these tasks. Secondly, *self-efficacy* discusses the employee's learning of tasks and the gaining of confidence in the role. Also, it relates to the consistent maintenance of positive performance levels. Lastly, *social acceptance* represents the extent to which an employee feels liked and trusted by the group, but also making satisfactory contributions to the group culture (Feldman, 1981).

Bauer et al's (2007) framework is extended for self-initiated expatriates by including *cultural adjustment*. Cultural adjustment refers to the degree to which expatriates are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of a foreign culture (Peltokorpi and Froese, 2009). Black (1988) further defined three facets of cultural adjustment, as being work adjustment, psychological adjustment, and general adjustment. As work adjustment and psychological adjustment show strong similarities with the previously mentioned indicators of newcomer adjustment (role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance), these two categories are already being measured (Bauer et al, 2007). General adjustment, on the other hand, refers to the degree of psychological comfort regarding various non-work aspects of the host culture, such as food and housing conditions, and therefore adds to the definition and measurement of the newcomer adjustment variable (Black, 1988).



Given that adjustment is the ultimate outcome of a work transition (or socialisation) program, *socialisation tactics* are adjustment's antecedent. Nonetheless, as expatriates also proactively seek information to reduce uncertainty and consequently reach comfort themselves, proactivity, also referred to as 'self-socialising', can be considered as the second antecedent of adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007; Ashforth et al 2007). In their article on newcomer adjustment during organisational socialisation, Bauer et al (2007) elaborate on the antecedent of information seeking in terms of *what* information is sought, although they fail to elaborate on *how* this information is sought. This article stating, an understanding of *forms of information-seeking* which are proven to be effective in reducing uncertainty, might be outstandingly valuable when developing socialisation tactics (Miller and Jablin, 1991). From this, one can conclude that expatriate adjustment consists of four proximal indicators, role-clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance and general adjustment and two antecedents, which function as mediators which will be elaborated on later in this literature review.

Self-initiated expatriates

A self-initiated expatriate (SIE) is defined as '*an individual who undertakes his/hers international work experience with little or no organisational sponsorship, often leading to a less favorable contract*' (Andresen, Al Ariss, and Walther 2013). Although SIEs are easily distinguishable from assigned expatriates (AE's), mainly by analysing the source of the initiative and the source of funding (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, and Barry 1997), the isolated group should not be considered homogenous. An obvious example of division is the distinction in gender. Research shows that males and females differ regarding their autonomy of the expatriation decision and the types of assignments acquired (Myers and Pringle, 2005).



Furthermore, another categorisation for sub-divisions is the motivation behind expatriation of a SIE (Suutari and Brewster, 2000). Motivation can be defined as *the inner state that energizes and directs human decisions* (Bright, 2008). These human decisions can be made either to reach a certain outcome, but can also be made as an outcome in itself; when applying this theory to the decision to expatriate, one can consider expatriation as a manner to reach a certain goal (cognitive-driven expatriation), or as a way of joy, thus being the goal (affective-driven expatriation) (Selmer and Luring, 2013). Because affective-driven decisions are generally influenced by feelings and cognitive reasoning is often influenced by rationale and cultural knowledge; one can separate affective-driven decisions by the fact that they are often more extreme, less effortful and more myopic (Pham and Avnet, 2009).

Selmer and Luring (2013), have further divided the cognitive-driven expatriates into two types, namely those who decide to expatriate to promote one's future career (*architect reasons*), or those who are motivated by the option to earn or save money (*mercenary reasons*). Furthermore, affective-driven expatriates can also be divided into those who would like to gain deeper experiences with other cultures (*explorer reasons*) or those who seek escapism of their current situation at home (*Refugee reasons*).

Selmer and Luring (2013) concluded that architect, mercenary and explorer reasons behind expatriation seemed to have a positive impact on work adjustment, whereas refugee reasons negatively impacted on work adjustment. This aligns with psychological decision-making literature, which explains that affective decisions are more likely to have a negative effect on intended outcomes due to less consideration (Kobbeltvedt and Wolff, 2009). With reference to this research, SIEs are thus considered as a homogenous group, and hence, discovering the differences between cognitive-driven SIEs and affective-driven SIEs in relation to expatriate adjustment could lead to interesting insights developing socialisation tactics.



Proactivity (Self-socialisation)

Pro-activity is the first antecedent of adjustment and refers to the undertaking of action to regain control of one's new environmental expectations (Kim, Cable and Kim, 2005). Ashford and Black (1996) enlarge the scope of proactivity, by suggesting three types of proactivity of which information-seeking, mentioned by Bauer et al (2007). The first type of proactivity, *positive framing*, concerns the interpretation of events in the organisation as supportive rather than opposed (Kim et al, 2005). Positive framing is considered a problem-focused coping mechanism, which creates certainty and allows expatriates to feel confident and motivated to succeed in their new environments. This will eventually activate more energy and effort to get embedded in surroundings (Ren, Shaffer, Harrison, Fu, and Fodchuk., 2014) *sence -making*, the second type of proactivity, refers to the extent of information-seeking and feedback-seeking behaviour (Kim et al., 2005). Whilst gaining information about work settings and the expectations, uncertainty can be reduced. The third type of proactivity is *relationship-building and* refers to generally socialising and networking This networking includes, building relationships with supervisors and general socialising (Kim et al., 2005). Relationship-building has expressive benefits which should lead to a heightened sence of control, as the social support that is necessary for responding to the environment is obtained (Ashford and Black, 1996).

Empirical evidence confirms that proactivity in these forms is contributing to the proximal outcomes of effective adjustment of Bauer et al (2007). *sence -making*, for example, positively relates to role clarity and self-efficacy, and relationship building positively relates to social acceptance/role clarity (Fang et al., 2011). The differences between how cognitive-driven SIEs self-socialise and how affective-driven SIEs self-socialise are discovered:

Sub question 1: How do cognitive-driven self-initiated expatriates self-socialise to adjust?

Subquestion: How do affective-driven self-initiated expatriates self-socialise to adjust?



Socialisation tactics

Socialisation is concerned with the learning content and process by which an individual adjusts (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner, 1994). The socialisation tactics are the organisational approaches to the information distribution to facilitate this adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007). In their multi-level process model of organisational socialisation, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) divide socialisation into three types, namely *organisational* socialisation, *group* socialisation and *individual* socialisation. The first type, organisational socialisation, refers to tactics arranged on an organisation-wide scale, such as orientation-, training- or mentoring programs. Group socialisation, on other hand, includes all learning within the group of the organisation in which the SIE will operate, thus concerning social support and social learning processes. Ultimately, individual socialisation factors are described as the individual's proactive strategies and behaviour. However, since this corresponds to proactivity or self-socialisation, which is already described in antecedent 1 and comes from the individual him/herself, individual socialisation factors are not considered amongst socialisation tactics. It must be noted, however, that all these types are likely to mutually affect each other and should therefore not be considered independent.



Van Maanen and Schein (1979) claim that the approaches to the tactics of socialisation have six dimensions. A diagonal line through these six dimensions composes an overarching dimension: The institutionalized vs individualized dimension (Jones, 1986). In this dimension, institutionalized socialisation tactics (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture) refer to a more structured socialisation program, whereas individualized socialisation is characterized by the absence of such structure (Ashforth and Saks, 2007). It is claimed that certain organisational socialisation tactics can supplement proactivity to reach the proximal outcomes of adjustment. Saks and Ashforth (1997a) state that institutionalized organisational socialisation tactics, for example, relating to feedback and information sought, thus sense-making (Kim et al., 2005; Gruman, Saks and Zweig., 2006). Accordingly organisational socialisation tactics exactly supplement cognitive- and affective-driven SIEs:

Sub question 3: How can Accenture NL adapt its organisational socialisation tactics to stimulate the adjustment of cognitive-driven self-initiated expatriates?

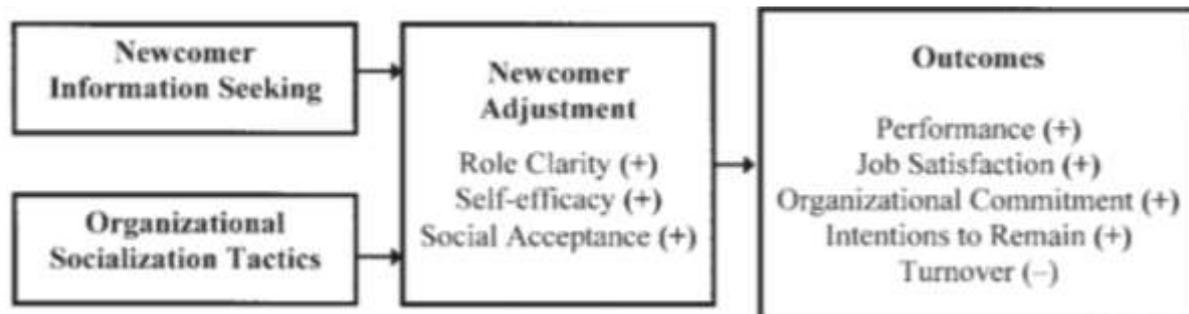
Sub question 4: How can Accenture NL adapt its organisational socialisation tactics to stimulate the adjustment of affective- driven self-initiated expatriates?

Furthermore, it is claimed that the proximal work group of the SIE is the focal point for the transmission of the culture of the organisation. Therefore, it is argued that work group socialisation is equally, or even more important than organisational socialisation (Saks and Ashforth, 1997a). To understand how group socialisation tactics can supplement the self-socialisation and organisational socialisation of cognitive-driven and affective-driven SIEs

Sub question 5: How can Accenture NL adapt its group socialisation tactics to stimulate the adjustment of cognitive-driven self-initiated expatriates?

Sub question 6: How can Accenture NL adapt its group socialisation tactics to stimulate the adjustment of affective- driven self-initiated expatriates?

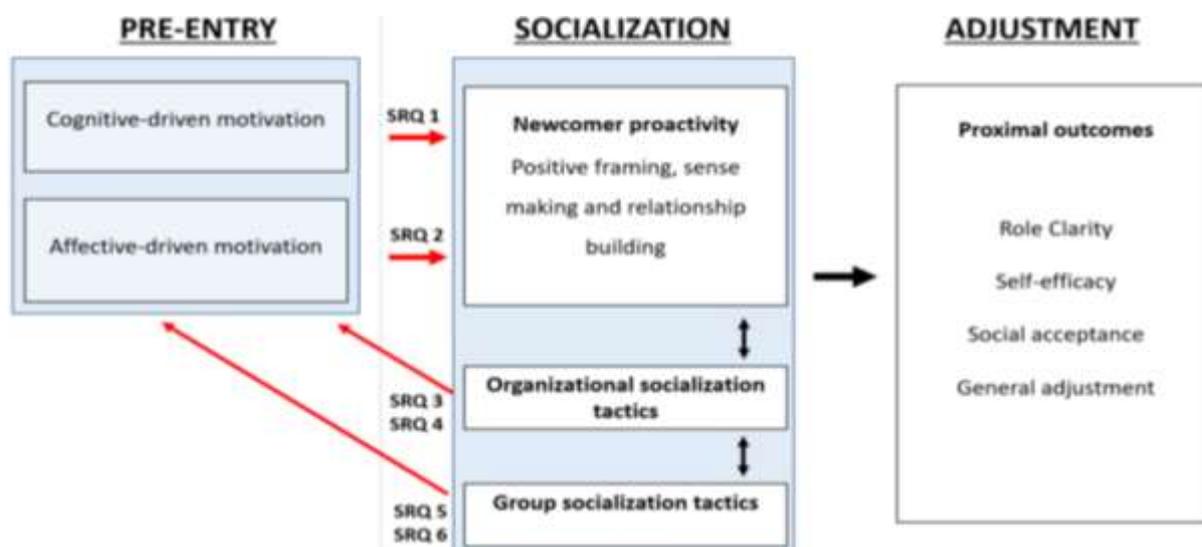
Bauer et al's (2007) framework (figure 1.3.1) functioned as the foundation of the conducted literature review; but, throughout the literature review, important aspects surfaced that had not been taken into consideration in framework 1.3.1., yet do matter for further conduction of this study. Therefore, figure 1.3.2 depicts a temporary theoretical framework (hereafter referred to as framework 1.3.2), to be used for further research.



Framework (1.3.1.): The antecedent and outcome model of newcomer adjustment during organisational socialisation (Bauer et al., 2007)

Framework 1.3.2 was proposed, based on the fact that the role of the newcomer is fulfilled by SIEs in this research, hence general adjustment to a culture is also stated amongst the proximal outcomes (Black, 1988). Furthermore, Ashford and Black (1996) explain that sense-making through information-seeking (one antecedent of adjustment mentioned in framework 1.3.1.) is not entirely representative of the techniques used by the SIE themselves to adjust. They claim that self-socialisation, also referred to as pro-activity, consists of three expressions, of which sense-making by means of information-seeking is only one; for that reason, the framework 1.3.2 depicts all three expressions of pro-activity.

Thirdly, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) state that organisational socialisation tactics, referring to tactics arranged on an organisational scale, differ from group socialisation tactics, which refer to learning within a team. Also, since various sources prove that group and organisational socialisation tactics, and proactivity, influence one another, its interdependence is considered in the development of framework 1.3.2. Ultimately, this in-depth research aims to discover whether differing types of motivation influence self-socialisation, and as a result aims to discover what the organisation could do to facilitate adjustment of SIEs with different types of motivation. Therefore, the red arrows represent to-be explored hypotheses.



Framework (1.3.2): Theorized antecedent and outcome model of newcomer adjustment during organisational socialisation for SIEs



METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Flick (2011) describes qualitative research as ‘discovering aspects in the situation under study, and to develop hypotheses or a theory from these discoveries’, rather than testing what is known. Since this research is being conducted to discover how SIEs with different drivers (cognitive and affective) self- socialise in the organisational context of Accenture, and to possibly develop a theory from it, this research can be categorised as a socio-anthropological study and therefore *qualitative research* is being used. Advantages, that this approach produces, are a detailed description of the participants’ feelings, experiences, and opinions (Rahman, 2016). An *inductive approach* is used, implying that observations, as a qualitative data collection method sought through literature review and data collection (Ang, 2014).

The population is described as the full set of cases from which a sample could be taken (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). For this research, the population consists of all self-initiated expatriates who have already worked for an Accenture branch abroad; recorded as approximately 30 employees last year (Accenture, 2018b). As proximal outcomes of newcomer adjustment tend to be measured early in the adjustment process (maximum of a year), the population for this research was limited to these 30 SIEs (Wanberg, 2012).



Desirably, the sample is representative for the entire population. Yet, since it was unknown how many, and which of the SIEs in the population were expatriating for cognitive or affective reasons, quota sampling was not possible. For the exploratory purposes of this research and taking limited time schedules of the SIEs (the possible participants) into account, a combination of *self-selection sampling and snowball sampling* was used (Saunders et al., 2009). An individual e-mail was sent to all SIEs in the system, and those willing to participate were included in this research. However, since SRQ 1, 3 and 5 focus on a different group of SIEs than SRQ 2, 4 and 6 it was a necessity that representatives of both groups were included. If all the voluntary participants were either cognitive- or affective driven, the snowball sampling technique would be used as a solution. Each of the participants were asked whether they knew a fellow SIE with different reasons to expatriate, and, in turn, these SIEs were asked if they knew SIEs with similar reasons to expatriate. This technique was used following suggestions of the research book of Saunders et al (2009), who argues that with populations difficult to identify, snowball sampling is a feasible solution.

One issue of this sampling method, for the researcher, is that it is challenging to determine the eventual sample size. Oppong (2013) claims that the rule of thumb for qualitative research is to have the researcher start with a small sample size and after completion of the study on this restricted sample, he/she may include additional cases until data saturation is reached, which implies that additional interviews lead to no, or no more than a few, new insights (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006). However, due to the limited number of participants who were available, only eleven SIEs participated in this research.



This implies that at a certain point, data saturation was reached, though not by the nonexistence of new insights, but by the absence of participants able to provide new insights (Fusch and Ness, 2015). Therefore, the eventually eleven SIEs that participated in this research should function as the restricted sample according to the previously mentioned rule of thumb of Oppong (2013), and additional cases can possibly be included subsequent to this research, to reach data saturation through actual nonexistence of new insights. Furthermore, this functioning is even further underpinned by the high variety of personal profiles within the sample. Though all SIEs have transferred during the past year (except for one SIE, who the researcher personally knew and specifically wanted to participate), they vary in the amount of Accenture experience they have. Also, the eventual sample depicts a high variety of cultural background and career levels.

The traditional methods of data collection of qualitative research include participatory observations, focus groups and in-depth interviews (Boeijs, 2005). Due to the limited availability of the participants, focus groups were not feasible; also, the execution of participatory observations was not achievable, since the participants are all members of different departments within the main organisation. For that reason, the in-depth interviewing method was used to collect data. The participants that were introduced because of the self-selection and snowball sampling were interviewed face-to-face. This has the advantages of an immediate response and the possibility to observe and investigate feelings (Ang, 2014).



These interviews were semi-structured, implying that certain themes with possible questions were determined before-hand, however, the exact order and formulation of these questions would depend, partly on the course of the interview (Boeije, 2005). The advantage of this method is that as well as helping to seek new insights, it also enables understanding of what is currently happening (Saunders et al., 2009). To allow room for the interviewees' explanation of their personal views, without influencing them, open questions were used (Flick, 2011). These questions also allowed the participants to highlight those aspects they themselves found important. Follow-up questions were used to further discover relevant details (Boeije, 2005). The semi-structured interviews covered six themes; one theme corresponded to the motivation of the SIE, four corresponded to the proximal outcomes of newcomer adjustment and the ultimate theme covered current and desired socialisation tactics.

Questions regarding motivational reasons to expatriate were inspired by the 7-point scale developed by Selmer and Luring (2013, p. 14), to measure the type of motivation, and were turned into open, non-suggestive questions (*e.g. Why did you decide to leave your home-country?*). For those themes related to the proximal outcomes, questions were based on information sought for each outcome (Miller and Jablin, 1991, p. 99). (*e.g. 'What is expected from you when you want to get a promotion?'*). However, since Miller and Jablin (1991) focused on newcomer adjustment, general adjustment was not included in the information sought consequently explored using Black's (1988) scale. The developed questions were inspired by items on this scale such as housing conditions, health care, cost of living, etc. (*e.g. 'What is your opinion about the living conditions in the Netherlands?'*).



The measurement of pro-activity was inspired by the 24-item scale of Ashford and Black (1996). This 24-item scale measured to what extent participants used certain methods to acquire information. In order to fit this 24-item scale to a qualitative research approach, these items were translated into a simple follow-up question after each question regarding the proximal outcomes of newcomer adjustment: (e.g. '*How did you acquire this information?*')

Data analysis

Often, those researchers unfamiliar with any of the traditional approaches of data analysis have found qualitative data analysis difficult to understand or use, due to the lack of knowledge of the underlying philosophy (Thomas, 2006). Therefore, after transcribing the eleven interviews and grouping them based on the interviewee's motivation, (either cognitive or affective), thought was put into identifying the most suitable content analysis approach. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) distinguish three approaches to data analysis based on the desired outcome: conventional content analysis; directed content analysis; and summative content analysis. Since this research aims to conceptually extend a theoretical framework, rather than to describe a phenomenon (conventional) or to understand the contextual use of certain words (summative), the directed content analysis approach is being used.

Directed content analysis is often paired with the deductive analysis approach. This implies using existing theory to formulate research questions is also used to devise a framework which assists in the organisation of the data (Saunders et al., 2015). Advantages of the deductive approach are that it provides one with an initial analytical framework and that the link with the researcher's existing knowledge is easier to identify. However, limitations of the deductive approach, in contrast to the inductive approach, are that the researcher will likely over-structure the data as a result of any prior preconceptions and thus omit any emerging themes which do not match any of these preconceptions. Ultimately, this possibly leads to limited findings and biased conclusions being drawn from the results (Altinay, Paraskevas, and Jang, 2016).



Hsieh and Shannon (2005) propose a strategy for the deductive approach of analysis, which still aims to identify all instances of a particular phenomenon when analysing content. The strategy describes first, highlighting all text that on first impression appears to represent an antecedent of adjustment, and afterwards using the predetermined categories to code the highlighted passages. The predetermined categories were *motivation, self-socialisation, organisational socialisation, and group socialisation*. All passages that did not match any category of the original coding scheme would be given a new code and were, if possible, grouped; which as a result, has led to the category of *Antecedents of self-socialisation* and *Needs for general adjustment* (factors which an organisation possibly, but not necessarily, can influence). Furthermore, having created a mind-map on self-socialisation, it became evident that the category was broad. Hence, they were categorised *mind-set towards adjustment, and, actions towards adjustment*, clarity was reached

It should be noted that full consent was obtained for the interviewee's participation. That is, the interviewee had adequate comprehension of the information that was asked from him/her and had the freedom to decide whether to participate or decline at any time. Also, all participants were asked for approval before recording, and were informed that their anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved by not revealing their identity in data reporting and analysis (Arifin, 2018). Regrettably, one of the participants has withdrawn their consent, meaning that the data deriving from their interviews which will not be included in this research.



RESULTS

Self-Socialisation: Mind-set Towards Adjustment

After content coding, it was decided that the interviewees' mind-sets could be divided amongst four different categories; (1) a resisting mind-set, (2) a self-blaming mind-set, (3) an accepting mind-set and (4) an enthusiastic mind-set. Furthermore, it was determined that the mind-set of the SIE towards adjustment is not necessarily consistent for all four pillars of his/her adjustment. This implies that one could have an accepting mind-set towards role clarity, whilst this same SIE could resist adjustment towards social acceptance. Those with a resisting mind-set (resistors) are to be recognized by their disagreement with Accenture NL's way of working and the Dutch way of relationship-building. Hence, resistors refuse understanding a (work) culture or adjusting to it. These employees often do not see themselves staying for a long time in the Netherlands. This is clarified by something one of the SIEs mentioned: *"I kind of reached the point that I don't speak Dutch and I'm not going to try, it's okay. Also, since I do not consider this as a permanent move, I have just accepted this."* (interview ADS 6, 2019).

A self-blaming mind-set puts the blame on the organisation, or on external factors, for not (yet) being able to adjust his/her own personal traits (self-) blamers are recognized by their insecurities, their feeling of being misunderstood and the inability to understand why things happen the way they do. A particular risk for a company is that these employees tend to disassociate from work. As an example, one of the SIEs stated: *"I didn't really have a burn-out by definition, but I just couldn't work there anymore."* Shortly thereafter, this same SIE mentioned: *"Me leaving the department, I think of it as it was like a break-up, we never really had closure, and now I don't care about them anymore"* (interview ADS 1, 2019). This underpins if one does not anticipate the needs of these employees appropriately, they could turn into resistors. Furthermore, these two mind-sets both showed significantly more intentions to quit or to repatriate. Four of them even reported no intention of remaining in their positions.



SIEs with an accepting mind-set acknowledge and make sense out of Accenture NL's work culture and thus realize that one needs to adjust to succeed. They can positively envisage Dutch working habits and perceive them as encouraging. Thus, they can practice one of the aspects of proactivity. In the long run, the enthusiasts praise the Dutch way of working and relationship building and desire nothing more than to be part of the Dutch culture.

Self-Socialisation: Actions Towards Adjustment

The analysis of the interviews shows that the actions undertaken by the SIEs are supported by the previously discussed mind-sets, and by the perception of what a SIE thinks, or knows, the environment requires of him/her. Nonetheless, working and living in a different culture leads to uncertainties, on which one to act. These actions could be split into two types: (1) actions to reduce uncertainty and (2) actions based on own rationale. Some of the SIEs interviewed kept the same role whilst transferring; because they have little to no uncertainty regarding role clarity, these actions have not been considered. The "taken actions to reduce uncertainty" SIEs express themselves in forms of feedback or information-seeking behaviour, but also socialising with other people. These two actions are in line with the two aspects of proactivity of Ashford and Black (1996). The willingness to act: *"When you really need something, you just want to figure it out. So you are going to try to do it however you can"* (interview Ana, 2019).

Another way to react to uncertainty is to follow own reasoning and intuition. The following statement functions as an example: *"I knew a bit of what my manager did in India so I used that to set deadlines for my team"* (interview ADS 3, 2019). The uncertainty of what the effect of their actions will be, often leads to using own rationale. Also, several interviewees stated that this is a reason to postpone actions or, to remain silent. Once aligning this with the SIEs mind-set, from the conducted interviews it is understandable that actions based on personal rationale are frequently executed by those resisting or self-blaming, whereas actions to reduce uncertainty are often performed by those SIEs with an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set.



Self-Socialisation Alignment With Motivation

By aligning coded segments of data regarding self-socialisation with the motivation of the individual SIEs, differences were discovered between mind-sets and actions towards adjustment. Of the six interviewees with an affective-driven motivation, four expressed a self-blaming mind-set towards self-efficacy. These employees lacked confidence in the execution of their role, and/or are heavily dependent on what others think. Furthermore, their actions regarding self-efficacy are mainly taken on their personal rationale. On the other hand, all of the interviewed SIEs with cognitive motivation show either an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set towards self-efficacy, by already expressing confidence or, knowing what actions to take, to be confident in their role. This could be because two of the five SIEs executed the same role, therefore being familiar with what is expected of them.

A distinction can also be made between cognitive and affective-driven SIEs in relation to social acceptance, though this is less significant. All SIEs with a cognitive motivation again demonstrate an enthusiastic or accepting mind-set towards this pillar, acknowledging, and even praising Dutch characteristics and expressing the feeling of fitting into the team. Hereby, 50% of the affective-driven SIEs do accept the Dutch way of behaving, and are able to turn the daunting feeling they had initially, to the ability to positively imagine Dutch behaviours (*“And from that day, I came to understand that Dutch people are really free” (interview ADS 5, 2019)*). However, the other 50% of the affective-behaviour group do not express this feeling of belonging in their team, and even disagree with the Dutch social behaviour.

In general, actions towards adjustments are much more based on rationale for the affective-driven SIEs. Regarding the mind-set towards, and the undertaken actions to adjusting, in relation to both role-clarity and general adjustment, the interviews do not show enough evidence to believe that there is a difference between cognitive- and affective-driven SIEs.



Other Antecedents of Self-socialisation

Motivation appears to not be the only antecedent of self-socialisation; the actions to adjust which SIEs undertake, and the mind-sets towards adjustment that SIEs have, seem to also be influenced by other factors. Seven of the SIEs interviewed mentioned that the extent to which the working culture in their home country differs from the Dutch working culture, is one of those influences. One of the interviewees states the following: *“I think like similarity wise, on a scale from 1-5, Accenture NL and Accenture South Africa are maybe a 2 in similarity. This means that I have to get used to the way things work here again.”* (Interview ADS 4, 2019).

From this, one can conclude that many interviewees use the cultural novelty as a reason for having difficulties in adjusting to and undertaking certain actions, to the extent that they feel that they have to learn everything all over again. Furthermore, almost all the SIEs mentioned knowing Dutch would have eased integration, thus underpinning the barrier of cultural novelty.

Family situations also seem to influence mind-sets towards adjustment and the actions taken to adjust. This is primarily because the SIEs feel that the extent to which his/her family become adjusted to the Dutch culture, determines his/her future plans and how he/she will act to achieve these future plans; e.g. one of the interviewees expressed the feeling of being put at ease because his wife and kids like the place (Interview CDS 3, 2019). Four of the eleven SIEs moved to the Netherlands individually, however they are divided in opinions regarding whether this is beneficial to their adjustment or not. One of the interviewees felt that “the luxury” of going home and thus going back to their own culture and language does not stimulate adjustment, whereas others felt like it is harder to adjust when you are facing the battle alone (Interview CDS 1, 2019 ; Interview ADS 2, 2019).



Moreover, seven of the eleven SIEs had already gained work and life experience outside of their place of birth. Four of them explicitly mentioned that this has helped them to adjust to any culture more easily, and that it has added to their adaptable character. However, when analysing the actions and mind-set of these SIEs, they were not necessarily all aligned with an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set. Several interviewed SIEs stated that they have previously worked with the Dutch and had already gained some understanding of the culture, which had helped them in adjusting. However, the fact that those SIEs had already worked with the Dutch is often related to their reason for coming here in the first place, thus adding to their motivation.

Organisational Socialisation

Initially, it is important to mention that the content analysis demonstrates that socialisation procedures greatly vary between the SIEs interviewed. As a result, both, valued organisational socialisation techniques, as well as, needed socialisation techniques, were coded. Firstly, the structure of socialisation is researched and determined by a balance of time/resources allocated to information transmission and the provided extent of freedom to find information oneself.

Six of the interviewees received information about their team, tasks and/or about the Dutch culture prior to their arrival in the Netherlands. From the fact that the pre-arrival information was not provided to all employees, and, from several statements, such as: “*They tried to explain me how it is in the Netherlands when I asked them*”, one can conclude that this provision is not an institutionalized socialisation technique (interview PDC 2, 2019). All six interviewees mentioned that this information helped them in their adjustment, and two others mention that they would have valued any pre-arrival information. This was because they felt like they could have been prepared by Accenture NL working within the company.



On arrival in the country, only two of the SIEs received a formal introduction into their role and their practice in form of training- or mentoring program, which both praised. Of the others, three explained that this was an aspect that they thought lacking in their current on-boarding experience. Six of them explained that a formal introduction into the role and the practice was not necessary for them, either because as they had held a similar role, they had already received sufficient information prior to their arrival or because they felt that they preferred to learn-by-doing, with the support of others.

Furthermore, interpreting certain statements one can draw the conclusion that Accenture NL threw nine of the eleven SIEs into the deep end when on-boarding them. All of these SIEs then relied on practical exposure and learning-by-doing in this case, although five mentioned that Accenture NL could have helped them in some ways. The other two SIEs, who had a well-arranged on-boarding experience, still reinforce the fact that they put personal effort into adjusting. Two SIEs explicitly mentioned that certain aspects of adjusting, such as gaining role clarity, are the responsibility of the individual him/herself (Interview CDS 2 and ADS 4, 2019).

Group Socialisation

It was mentioned, with social support, many SIEs preferred a learning-by-doing approach. However, from the interviews, it became clear that the social support form and provider determined either its acceptance or rejection. Interviews showed organisational socialisation should be supplemented by the correct kinds of social support. Generally, all SIEs interviewed stated help in the answering of questions was appreciated. However, other than this obvious need, over 70 per cent of the interviewees said that the people around them, especially supervisors and career counsellors, should be aware of where the SIE is coming from, and thus why he/she made certain decisions or reacted in a certain way. One interviewee explained that as a SIE, one already has to deal with so many different people from different cultures, that it would help if the people around you understood you too (Interview ADS 6, 2019).



Furthermore, nine of the interviewees mentioned that the clarification of expectations has helped them or would have helped them to better adjust. As an example, of these nine interviewees, three interviewees were unsure about how their performance was being measured, leading to uncertainty as to whether they were performing correctly or not. This clarifies the third, often stated need of social support, which is that the recognition and acknowledgement of the SIE. One of the interviewees stated: *“People would be like; ‘why are you here?’ and like ‘Who are you?’, no one ever made announcements or made a structure”* (interview ADS 1, 2019). This leads to the unwanted effects of demotivation to perform.

Ultimately, 9 out of the 11 the SIEs explained that they wanted to feel involved in the Dutch culture, but that the Dutch keep their social and professional life completely separated. This has made it hard for them to make friends/social contacts and has led to the feeling of isolation. Social involvement is therefore another form of support that a SIE often desires to have received or appreciated.

Who: Differences of opinions occurred amongst the SIEs about who carries the responsibility to offer such social support? Approximately 35 per cent explained that HR should be responsible for ensuring that SIEs receive the social support needed. This does not imply that HR should execute the previous mentioned types of support, but that they should educate their people to do so. One of the SIEs gave the example of providing cross-cultural training to supervisors/career counsellors, whilst another SIE mentioned the provision of a buddy-system. Other interviewees did not necessarily claim HR to be responsible; instead they were of the opinion that Dutch culture cannot easily be changed, or that they held those who are in direct contact with the SIE accountable, such as the team, the supervisor or career counsellor.



Organisational Socialisation Alignment with Motivation

Due to the fact that all SIEs interviewed went through different socialisation methods, and difficulties were found in aligning the needs of their organisational socialisation with their motivation, a cautious attitude should be adopted when interpreting the following results. By analysing the need for a certain structure, it becomes clear that the need for pre-departure information was significantly higher amongst the affective-driven SIEs; 83 per cent of the affective-driven SIEs would have appreciated any prior information vs. 60 per cent of the cognitive-driven SIEs. Also, one can conclude that cognitive-driven SIEs were more proactive in obtaining any pre-arrival information, by asking for it. Furthermore, 2/3rd of those interviewed SIEs, driven by affective motivation, felt that, on arrival in the Netherlands, some on-boarding procedure into their role/the team would have helped them whilst adjusting. Amongst the cognitive driven SIEs this need was lower; only two SIEs explicitly show their appreciation of the existence of such procedures.

When analysing social support as a part of group adjustment, it becomes clear that knowledge of the cultural heritage of the SIE would have helped both affective and cognitive SIEs to adjust. However, what does show a significant result is the need for acknowledgement and recognition, which is substantially higher amongst affective-driven SIEs (2/3rd of affective driven SIEs vs. 0 of cognitive-driven SIEs). A statement from one interviewee: *“I always want like a backup, just something that will let me know that I’m doing it right, because I’m not a manager. In my culture only managers would take these decisions”* gives the explanation that unfamiliarity with cultural habits needs to be supplemented by acknowledgement (interview ADS 5, 2019). Furthermore, it becomes evident that those with affective-driven motivation significantly more frequently build relationships with other expatriates (four out of the six affective-driven SIEs), due to the fact that they are not involved in the Dutch culture and to avoid isolation or a feeling of loneliness.



Organisational Socialisation: General Adjustment Needs

The interviews provide enough evidence to understand that there is a general need amongst both affective and cognitive SIEs for language courses and housing assistance to decrease uncertainty. Furthermore, Multiple SIEs have stated that the provision of these two aspects would assist in the general adjustment to Dutch culture outside of work, thus providing more certainty and motivation during work.

DISCUSSION

This research provides general support for the suggested framework shown in figure 1.3.2. This implies that, firstly, the type of the SIEs motivation (either cognitive or affective) influences proactivity. The ability to positively imagine the work-environment, one aspect of proactivity, is a characteristic of either an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set towards adjustment. These mind-sets occur when the SIE understands the cultural differences and accepts the need for adjustment or is even enthusiastic about getting adjusted.

These mind-sets more frequently occur amongst SIEs with cognitive reasons to expatriate. Consequently, these SIEs more often use actions to reduce their uncertainty, such as asking for information or feedback. Likewise, the results show that affective-driven SIEs, in fact, find it harder to positively frame their work-environment. These affective-driven SIEs more often do not understand the Dutch cultural way of behaving, which consequently leads either, to the disagreements with their Dutch colleagues, or feeling intimidated, characteristics of a resisting or self-blaming mind-set. Therefore, these SIEs tend to act on personal rationale and emotions, instead of asking others for help. Also, they have a stronger urge to repatriate or quit.



In order to understand how an organisation can fuel this pro-activity towards adjustment and hence facilitate the adjustment, it is important to not only understand which type of motivation influences pro-activity, but also *why* the type of motivation influences pro-activity. The results of this research show that an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set often relates to the understanding and appreciation of Dutch culture. Since these mind-sets are more frequently expressed by cognitive-driven SIEs, it can be concluded that cognitive-reasoning leads to the understanding and appreciation of the Dutch Accenture NL culture.

Cognitive-reasoning is often stimulated by previous work-experience with the Dutch is a positive reason for this. This supports Kobbeltvedt and Wolff (2009) claim that consideration of a decision more likely leads to a positive effect on the intended outcome. In other words, *cognitive reasoning stimulates the pre-arrival appreciation for the Dutch culture, and as these SIEs still decided to expatriate, their desire to adjust is already shaped.* Though the research provides support for the suggested model of figure 1.3.2., its results also give reasons to believe that the model, as it currently is, is incomplete; The mind-set and actions towards adjustment (level of proactivity) are also shaped by other antecedents, such as cultural novelty, family situations and previous life/work-experience abroad. By using findings of similar studies, the validity of the results pointing towards these antecedents is discussed later in this document. Again, emphasis is put on the discovery of the reasoning *why* these antecedents of pro-activity lead towards the SIE being more pro-active.



Family Adjustment

Findings show partner's and children's adjustment to Dutch culture is vital for adjusting mind-set. A possible reason might be their family's satisfaction about the Netherlands assures SIE. Studies in this field manage to provide theoretical support for why this could be true. Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, and Bross, (1998) conducted research and provided empirical evidence for the truth of the family systems theory (Minuchin, 1974). This theory states that each individual family member can affect the psychological state of other family members. Therefore, the theory suggests that pressures within the family can affect the equilibrium in the family (Caligiuri et al., 1998). This is in accordance with the Lee and Kartika (2014), who have concluded that family adaptability has a positive influence on adjustment, since those family members with good adjustment capabilities do not pressure the SIE. To conclude, the reason why family adjustment influences self-socialisation of the SIE is because *the SIE feels free to concentrate on their job and thus adjust more easily to their new environment.*

Previous (Work) Experience Abroad

This research explored the premise that previous (work) experience abroad aids SIEs with them positively changing their mind-set and/or actions towards adjustment. This is consistent with Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), who claim that previous overseas experience facilitates the socialisation process. This research depicts that, with their previous experience, SIEs know cultures can be different in the host country. Further studies were consulted, from which it became evident that the impact of previous (work) experience is explicable by linking it to the phenomena of cultural intelligence (CQ). Ang et al (2007) defines cultural intelligence as “an individual's competence to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings”. Lee and Sukoco (2010) prove that cultural intelligence has a direct and significant effect on expatriate adjustment. Furthermore, Malik, Cooper-Thomas, and Zikic (2014) proved that this effect is facilitated by the mediating role of pro-activity.



Consequently, Koo Moon, Kwon Choi, and Shik Jung (2012) conducted research into the impact previous (work) experience has had on CQ. The results of this research state that previous work-experience contributes to two dimensions of CQ, which are, (1), the knowledge of cultures and, (2), the level of conscious cultural awareness. This is compatible with the answers given by the SIEs of Accenture. Furthermore, lack of work experience contributes to all four dimensions of CQ, which are, other than the previously mentioned dimensions (1 and 2), (3) the motivation to learn about different cultures and (4) the capability to present appropriate non-verbal behaviors. To conclude, previous work experience influences CQ, which in turn, stimulates self- socialisation *by the fact that the SIE is aware of the need for adjustment, and in case of non-work experience, has the desire to adjust.*

Cultural Novelty

Cultural novelty is defined as: the cultural distance between the host culture and the culture of the expatriate him/herself (Church, 1982). Given that a majority of interviewed SIEs state that the differences in culture influence their mind-set and actions towards adjustment, believing cultural novelty influences SIE's pro-activity consistent with Palthe (2004), which concludes that cultural similarities predict adjustment. This is underpinned with the claim that when the differences between cultures that the expatriate perceives are greater than expected, uncertainty intensifying their personal behaviour.

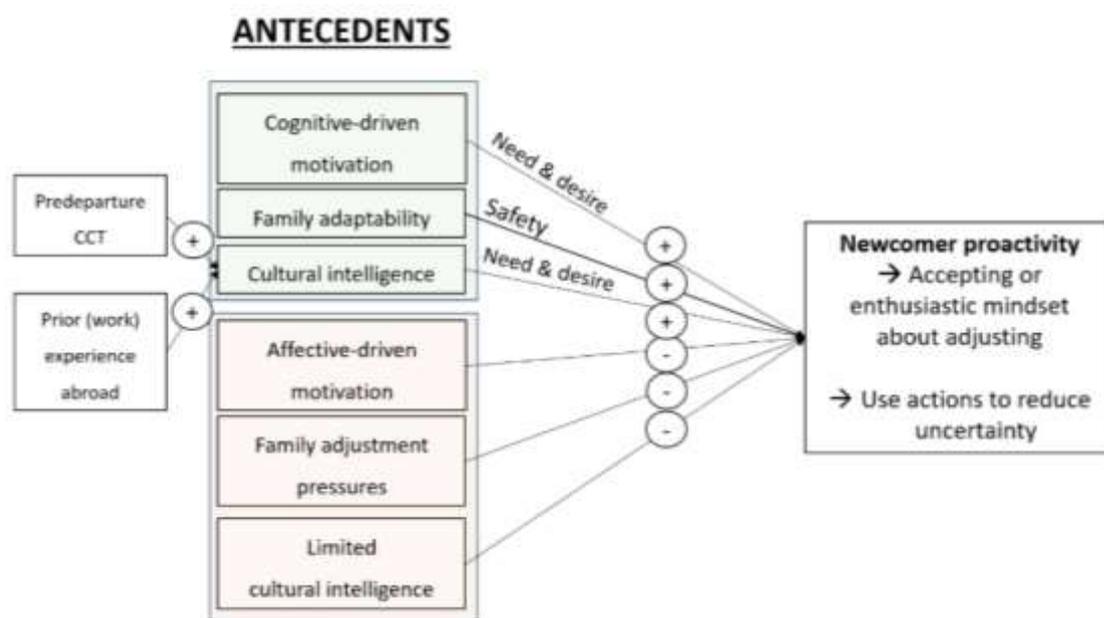
However, even though the interviewed SIEs believe that cultural novelty influenced their adjustment, the results of this current research show no significant relationship between those who claim that cultural novelty has influenced their adjustment and their actual mind-set towards adjustment or the demonstrated actions to adjust. Therefore, the validity of this antecedent is questioned. Brewster (1995) also questions its influence and claims that expatriates on assignment to a similar culture can be just as sensitive as an assignment to a completely different country.



This is underpinned by the reasoning that those expatriates with a low cultural novelty, often cannot identify with the existing differences, hence do not feel the need or desire to adjust. This results in blaming subordinates, or themselves, whereas culture clashes explain such situations. Selmer (2002) even argues that a shorter cultural distance could lead to less adjustment due to earlier frustration if one does not adjust, and on the other hand, worse treatment of host countries' employees due to underestimation. Selmer's (2006) empirical findings underpin this reasoning, by showing that there is no significant relationship between cultural novelty and any proximal outcome of adjustment. Therefore, one can fundamentally state that expatriates find it equally hard to adjust when cultural novelty is low as when it is high, and it is not considered as an antecedent of self-socialisation.

An unexpected finding arose from the results and the discussion of these results via the use of secondary literature, namely the suggestion of applying a change model on socialisation. Lee and Larwood (1983) and Selmer (2002) could be considered unique in thinking of the process of self-socialisation as a change process, thus applying Cummings, Bridgman and Brown (2016)'s unfreeze/change-freeze model. Schein and Bennis (1965), which states that (1) unfreezing only occurs when behavioural attitudes are disconfirmed, (2) when this disconfirmation results in motivation to change and (3) when one feels psychologically safe to change (Selmer, 2002). One changes by scanning the interpersonal environment and identifying with a model of behaviour, and one refreezes as soon as the integration into personality and into new relationships takes place (Cummings et al., 2016). Therefore, Selmer (2002) concludes neither socialisation tactics nor proactivity influence their archetypal conditions during the unfreezing stage. Kim et al., (2005) and Gruman et al., (2006) suggest urgency for institutionalized socialisation tactics whilst limited proactivity for newcomers.

As multiple aspects of the results of this research confirm to this, reason to accept this theory is provided. Primarily, the first fundamental preconditions for the stage of “unfreezing”, disconfirmation of behaviour/perceived need for adjustment, is underpinned by the fact that CQ and cognitive reasoning to expatriate lead to increased pro-activity. Additionally, the fact that the type of motivation influences the pro-activity of the SIE, whilst adjusting, conforms with the second fundamental precondition for unfreezing namely, the desire to change. Ultimately, the third antecedent of pro-activity, namely family adaptability, provides the SIE with the third fundamental precondition; the perceived safety to adjust. Also, when applying this theory to the previously discussed mind-set towards adjustment, those with a resisting or self-blaming mind-set explain that they either did not feel safe to change or did not feel the need to change. Only those with an accepting or enthusiastic mind-set were able to unfreeze and change and will be subsequently able to refreeze.



Framework (1.3.3): Revised antecedent and outcome model of newcomer adjustment during organisational socialisation for SIEs



Pre-departure Cross-cultural Orientation Programs

Cross-cultural training (CCT) can be defined as an educative process, designed to encourage intercultural learning through development of the right capabilities needed for effective interactions across cultures and can thus be categorised as an institutionalized socialisation tactic (Koo Moon et al., 2012). The results of this research explain that such formal processes are currently non-existent at Accenture, even though the SIEs declare that they would have benefitted from any information received about the culture and working environment prior to their arrival. With this information, they would have been prepared for the differences they might expect to have to get used to. This agrees with Koo Moon et al (2012) who state that pre-departure CCT is important for the development of cultural intelligence (CQ), hence providing the need and desire to be pro-active when adjusting.

Furthermore, the results of this research show that, if not received prior to arrival, mainly the affective-driven SIEs require information transmission through formal orientation/on-boarding programs, after their arrival. This would help them to make sense of their surrounding and thus to acknowledge the need for adjustment. The findings of Gruman et al., (2006) support this, as their results show that newcomers are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors when their socialisation is structured and formalized. These results provide evidence to believe that institutionalized socialisation tactics can supplement and encourage pro-active behavior of SIEs, either directly, or indirectly through CQ.



Ultimately, the results show that all SIEs agree that solely using organisational socialisation tactics, whilst facilitating adjustment, would not be sufficient, therefore social support is a necessity in the socialisation process. It even appears that the need for organisational socialisation is lower if group socialisation tactics, in the form of social support, are facilitated. This extends the truth of the interdependence of organisational socialisation, group socialisation and individual proactivity (Saks and Ashforth, 1997a). Furthermore, the vast majority of the SIEs agrees that additional forms of social support, other than those mentioned by van Maanen and Schein (1979) (assistance of superiors and the provision of feedback), such as acknowledgement contributed to their adjustment.

Group Socialisation

The results of this research, that all the proximal indicators of adjustment of both affective-driven and cognitive-driven SIEs, would have benefitted from co-worker and supervisor support in terms of information provision. Furthermore, this research provides reasons to believe that affective-driven SIEs require more recognition and acknowledgement, as a part of their group socialisation, than cognitive-driven SIEs. As these SIEs also happen to show a resisting, or self-blaming, mind-set towards adjustment and act more based on personal rationale, a relationship between the need for social support and limited proactivity is plausible. A given explanation for this could be social support which provides the safety to adjust.



Surprisingly, the research into this relationship is limited, and those studies available contradict one-another. Research, by Major, Kozlowski, Chao, and Gardner (1995) stress the importance of organisational insiders should not be disregarded. The proactivity of supervisors and co-workers to provide information about the work-environment impacts the socialisation of the newcomer and his/her proactivity. This is underpins Jannesari, Wang, McCall and Zheng (2017), findings for the relationship between supervisor support and newcomer proactivity. However, Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubenstein, and Song (2013), contradict these two researchers, as their results suggest that undermining a newcomer, by not acknowledging or recognizing him/her, does not actually negatively correlate with proactivity. One theory of an anonymous reviewer suggests that these undermined individuals may engage in more proactive socialisation behaviour to overcome their undermining, thus fuelling the need for adjustment. Based on the results of the current research and its discussion, an adaption to the previously projected model in figure 1.3.3 is proposed. The following, socialisation model as a mediating role to facilitate the adjustment of different types of SIEs is offered for consideration.

Generalizability

Future studies that will replicate this study will likely end up with different results. This is because certain factors, such as organisational context, will differ. Every organisation has its own unique working-environment, which is dependent on aspects such as the country in which the organisation is located, the size of the organisation, and the nature of work executed in the organisation. The organisational context leads to different approaches of socialisation and different adjustment needs. Also, the results of this research are dependent on the SIEs interviewed: Every SIE has their approaches to adjusting and responding to socialisation.



Furthermore, the answers to the interview questions may be dependent on the emotional state of the SIE on the day of the interview, the length of their employment in the Netherlands, and on demographic data such as gender, age, ethnicity, etc. Ultimately, the collected results might be interpreted differently by different researchers, because of factors such as the researcher's personal background and prior knowledge. Nonetheless, it is likely that these results will also point towards the influences of motivation, cultural intelligence and family adaptability in the way a SIE self-socialises, and most likely they will also highlight the importance of timing and accurate socialisation tactics for adjustment.

Contributions

Since this research is written as bachelor thesis, due to the qualitative nature of this research, and due to the previously mentioned limited likeliness of results replication, the generalizability of this research is limited. However, certain relationships were discovered, which have not been previously researched, such as the difference between cognitive and affective motivation in relation to a SIE's proactivity. This study also gives a better understanding of the role of socialisation in the adjustment of different types of SIEs. Therefore, the previous presented model 4.1 could be used as a framework for further exploratory, or empirical, studies.

Additionally, through the translation of the outcome of this research into practical implications using a strategic change of plan, Accenture can ensure more effective socialisation of SIEs. This strategic change plan is described in PP2. Additionally, as this research is written for an internationally operating consultancy company, similar consultancy companies who also stimulate self-initiated expatriation, benefitting from this research.



Limitations

Even though new relationships have been discovered, it is important to understand that this research was not conducted without any limitations. After reading several anthropological studies and their corresponding research methods, the qualitative approach already presented a few restrictions, which should be taken into consideration when interpreting results and conclusions. Qualitative approaches, in themselves, already entail the disadvantage of the impossibility to extend, with the same certainty as quantitative analysis can, their findings to a wider population. This is because the findings are not tested on statistical significance, and therefore qualitative research does not preclude results based on coincidence (Atieno, 2009). Furthermore, the sampling technique used for this research involves many possibilities, since self-selection sampling is quite unlikely to be representative, and the control over the sample contents is low (Saunders et al., 2009). Consequently, this study relies on a limited sample size for both cognitive and affective-driven SIEs. Additionally, since there is no available data on the number of cases of each type of motivation to expatriate for all SIEs, there is uncertainty whether the self-selected samples represent the population (Oppong, 2013).

In-depth interviews as a data collection method should also be used with caution. Firstly, in-depth interviews are prone to bias in both the interviewer's questions/interpretations and the interviewee's answers. Possible reasons for this are the desire for a significant result from the interviewer's side or the interviewee's distrust in how the researcher will treat the outcomes (Boyce and Neale, 2006). Secondly, described experiences often leave out any imperative contextual influences, resulting in a possibly distorted view of the situation (Rahman, 2016).



As an example, it became evident that all SIEs had undertaken different methods of group socialisation, since they were employed throughout Accenture. Also, several SIEs spend a reasonable amount at Accenture offices before starting on a client project, and therefore were given a certain time to understand the working-environment. Therefore, challenges were caused in analyzing results and difficulties were caused in determining whether pro-activity was a result of certain socialisation techniques or of antecedents such as motivation, CQ or family adaptability. This can lead to uncertainty behind the explored relations.

Ultimately, for certain SIEs, it was rather difficult to determine whether their motivation was affective-, or cognitive-, driven. This is because affective-driven SIEs also expatriate with a certain amount of cognitive consideration, and cognitive-driven SIEs also use their emotions and gut-feeling to make decisions. Consequently, these SIEs were categorised based on whether they mostly conformed to cognitive- or affective-driven motivation. These considerations could again lead to increased uncertainty behind the explored relations.

Future research directions

To make a meaningful contribution to current studies on the socialisation procedure of SIEs, one should quantitatively test the relations discovered in this research, which provides evidence of the relationships' significance. Specifically, the relationship between motivation and pro-activity is one not statistically tested before and could be pioneering in the field of SIE socialisation. Furthermore, it is recommended to conduct further exploratory research into the application of change models on expatriate socialisation. Research such as this, on whether antecedents such as motivation, CQ or family adjustment have an influence in the progression of the process of change, could lead to the belief that cognitive-driven SIEs are able to unfreeze more easily. Further research could provide insights on how to further socialise expatriates through socialisation techniques when meeting the pre- conditions.



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