# EXPLORATION OF THE ADJUSTMENT METHODS AND COPING STYLES EMPLOYED BY EXPATRIATES IN KENYA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, GENDER AND AFRICAN STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

# Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree at any other university.


Signature: _____        Date: _____9/11/2015_____

*Taylor Gabourie – N50/80918/2012*




This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.


Signature: _____        Date: _____

*Dr. Owuor Olungah*

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# Abbreviations

GDP        Gross Domestic Product

HCNs       Host Country Nationals

KES         Kenyan Shilling

NGO        Non-governmental Organization

SCT         Social Cognitive Theory

SLT         Social Learning Theory

# Abstract

A conceptualized exploration study was applied to the examination of expatriates' behaviors to identify adjustment methods and coping styles. The research addressed difficulties expatriates experience, and coping styles used, in the adjustment to professional and socio-cultural aspects of living abroad in Kenya. Therefore, data was randomly collected from 20 expatriates permanently living and working in Kenya for a time period of at least four (4) weeks, among informants aged 18 years of age and above. The participants were recruited from expatriate specific social media outlets, and voluntarily provided open-ended responses to questionnaires addressing specific professional and socio-cultural aspects such as communication, safety, relationships and environment.

Participants reported using the professional adjustment method of separation with passive coping, and socio-cultural adjustment method of integration with active coping, in preference to other adjustment methods. A content analysis was used to analyze data with a predetermined template of conceptualized themes. Open-ended responses where coded, organized and analyzed based on the themes of professional adjustment, socio-cultural adjustment, and coping styles. The findings indicate increased adjustment difficulties that negatively affect behavior when participants employed marginalization and separation adjustment methods, and fewer difficulties when employing integration or assimilation adjustment methods. Actively seeking external support from others, engaging in community based activities, and merging cultural norms are predictors of satisfactory adjustment for expatriates in Kenya.

# 1. Background to the Study

## 1.1. Introduction

The migration of people to new countries around the globe is not a new phenomenon. However, the concept of expatriation is a more recent phenomenon. The first recorded use of the word expatriate appeared in 1812 (Merrian-Webster, 2005), being used to describe an individual who is living in a foreign land. But expatriation is unique and different from immigration due its lack of permanence. Expatriate implies the intention of the individual to return to their home country when their assignment expires, whereas immigration implies the intention to permanently integrate into the host country. Expatriate's "past and present cannot be so neatly severed" (Green, 2009, p. 309) as they have a tendency to hold on to the cultural norms of their home country, while also attempting to integrate simultaneously with the host culture. Recent trends have increased the number of expatriates living and working abroad, however, the study of expatriation has yet to garner large-scale, interdisciplinary attention.

International opportunities for expatriate assignment continue to increase annually. According to the Mercer 2012 Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices (2012), international short-term and long-term assignments have seen an increase of 53% and 52 % respectively, with a greater expectation for international assignments in the future. However, institutions often lack adequate assessment and training of individuals for potential assignment, and there is a concerning knowledge gap in an institution's ability to understand the reasons why an expatriate may voluntarily terminate their position early. It is estimated that 26% of institutions do not know why expatriates voluntarily terminate their positions early (KPMG, 2012), leaving reservations regarding poor professional or personal adjustment to the host country.

Nevertheless, many institutions and individuals believe that an international assignment is beneficial to the development of the individual, promoting positive cross-cultural relationships and an increased comprehension of business on a global scale. Understanding how these short-term and long-term international assignments affect the professional and socio-cultural well-being of the expatriates is, therefore, vital to

ensuring that the expatriates and the institution benefit from the investment in international assignment.

It is becoming increasingly more important for institutions to invest in the understanding of how individuals adjust and cope with moving to a host country to ensure a successful completion of their assignment (Breiden et al., 2004). Potential detrimental effects of expatriates' poor professional and socio-cultural adjustment to the host country can result in: (1) the premature termination of assignments, (2) damage to self-confidence and an expatriates' professional relationships, and (3) the reduction of institutional commitment and job performance (Aycan, 1997, pp. 434-435).

However, the determining factors as to whether an individual will be successful in an international assignment encompass not just professional areas, but personal areas as well. Personal adjustment to socio-cultural areas such as language, food, social situations and relationships, safety issues, and living conditions are just as significant as the integration to professional norms of the host country. Therefore, the adjustment of an expatriate to the host country is a complex and multidimensional process between multifaceted professional and socio-cultural aspects that determine whether an expatriate is able to function effectively in the host country (Haslberger, 2005).

Adjustment can be conceptualized as a managed state of homeostasis, in which individual changes occur to reduce conflict or differences between environmental and internal factors (Aycan, 2005). There is a strong connection between areas of professional and socio-cultural aspects of adjustment, and the success or failure of adjustment to one area is strongly connected to the success or failure in the other area of adjustment (Shaffer et al., 1999). Therefore, the overall adjustment of an expatriate hinges on the successful adjustment in both professional and socio-cultural aspects.

Successful professional adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment requires an understanding of the adjustment methods; these adjustment methods are (1) integration, (2) separation, (3) assimilation, and (4) marginalization (Mendenhall et al., 2001; Black, 1988). Berry (1992) describes how specific adjustment methods are generated based on the expatriates' perspectives towards the host culture in comparison to their desire to maintain their cultural identity as seen in Figure 1.1 (Berry, 1992).

| | | Expatriates' Perspective Toward Maintaining Cultural Identity | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Positive** | **Negative** |
| Expatriates' Perspective Toward Learning Host Culture | **Positive** | Integration | Assimilation |
| | **Negative** | Separation | Marginalization |

**Figure 1.1:** Adjustment Methods Based on Expatriate Perspectives (Berry, 1992)

The use of adjustment methods, in combination with coping styles, aid expatriates in adapting to their new professional and socio-cultural environments, and transition smoothly into the host country. Expatriates' ability to use different coping styles, involving the cognitive and behavioral appraisal and modification of a situation, to reduce environmental or internal stressors can significantly impact their adjustment to the host country (Fugate et al., 2008). Coping can therefore be classified as an adaption behavior, with specific coping styles emerging to effectively navigate environmental challenges and stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Individuals develop and apply both passive and active coping styles. Active coping styles involve altering the external environment to reduce stressors (Aycan, 1997); this can include altering the professional environment or seeking social support. While in comparison, passive coping styles involve internal self-modification of perspectives and behaviors (Diaz-Guerrero, 1979). Expatriates may apply different coping styles to deal with real-life stressors encountered abroad.

The intentions of this study were to explore the adjustment methods and coping styles employed by expatriates living in Kenya through the examination of their perspectives and behaviors. Through the exploration of the written word, the goal of the study was to extrapolate the most widely applied adjustment methods and coping styles used by expatriates while managing new professional and socio-cultural environments abroad.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

There is insufficient academic research on how expatriates adjust and cope with living in Kenya. Expatriates face specific difficulties in adjusting and coping with the new environment, social interactions with host country nationals (HCNs), and living conditions in Kenya. An additional exploratory research study that intends to examine the expatriate adjustments in Kenya, which addressed the lack of understanding of the methods and coping styles that are employed by expatriates, would be beneficial to understanding the gap in knowledge about the complex transition process that expatriates face during their assignment in Kenya. Therefore, the goal of this research study was to qualitatively evaluate the adjustment methods and coping styles used by expatriates living in Kenya.

It is imperative that an expatriate has a successful transition period in which they are able to seamlessly adapt to new professional and socio-cultural aspects of a host country. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the knowledge of how expatriates adjust to cultural differences experienced in Kenya (Shay & Baack, 2004). Cultural differences in professional and socio-cultural areas present a myriad of internal stressors that can impede the adjustment of expatriates to Kenya. Therefore, there is a need in academic research to explore areas in which expatriates experience difficulties, and the most advantageous adjustment methods and coping styles used to overcome these stressors. This knowledge is important in the process of preparing and mitigating a more successful transition to living and working abroad in Kenya. The benefits meeting this need can result in positive work performance, successful completion of assignment, and successful social integration into Kenya.

## 1.3. Research Questions

This study was concerned with addressing the following research questions:

a. What are the difficulties expatriates experience while adjusting to living in Kenya?
b. What are the coping styles expatriates use to assist in their adjustment to living in Kenya?
c. How are adjustment methods and coping styles together in intercultural interactions by expatriates living in Kenya?

## 1.4. Research Objectives

The research objectives addressed expatriate adjustment difficulties in Kenya through the exploration of provided professional and socio-cultural experiences.

### 1.4.1. Overall Objective

To explore the adjustment methods and coping styles used by expatriates in Kenya.

### 1.4.2. Specific Objectives

a. To examine the adjustment methods employed by expatriates in response to professional and socio-cultural difficulties they encounter in Kenya;

b. To examine the coping styles expatriates use to overcome adjustment difficulties; and

c. To document the most widespread adjustment methods and coping styles for promoting strong intercultural interactions in professional and socio-cultural settings.

## 1.5. Justification of the Study

As a connection hub for international business to East Africa, Kenya has attracted private businesses, non-governmental organizations, government organizations and entrepreneurs, and as a result, expatriates from countries all over the world. However, the adjustment of expatriates to Kenya is not always straightforward. Difficulties arise in adapting to new professional and socio-cultural norms and situations. The failure to adapt to new norms can have a negative impact on the success of the international assignment. The examination of expatriates perspectives and experiences while working abroad, and the successful adjustment methods and coping styles used, in Kenya can provide beneficial insight into how international assignments affect the expatriates' professional and socio-cultural well-being.

The results of this study can benefit future and current expatriates in the preparation and implementation of more successful adjustment methods and coping styles. The research findings can aid in the more successful transition into the host country's professional and socio-cultural atmosphere. Ultimately, the information can be of use and beneficial to

private and public institutions employing expatriates to increase successful and low stress adjustment to a new host country.

## 1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was inclusive of expatriates, both male and female, that are permanently living and working in Kenya. For the purpose of examining expatriates only, Kenyan citizens were excluded. Due to cultural distance the expatriates that were citizens of Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and Ethiopia were also excluded (Shenkar, 2001). A sample size of 20 was selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria noted in chapter 3.3.

During data collection, threats to internal reliability and validity of the study lies in the participants' responses, specifically the tendency for participants to produce socially desirable responses to placate the researcher, or portray themselves and their organization in a more positive light (King & Bruner, 2000). The use of rigorous confidentiality and response anonymity practices were implemented to reduce the anxiety of participants and reduce potential response biases.

The results of the study were specific to the geographical region of Kenya. The results are only applicable to the challenges and difficulties faced by expatriates living and working in Kenya because the social norms and cultural identity of the area is specific to Kenya. Nevertheless, while the methodology and justification behind the study are applicable to other geographical regions, the results are not relevant to other geographical regions with different social norms and cultural identities.

## 1.7. Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made regarding the research:

a. Expatriates experience difficulties in adjusting to new professional and socio-cultural environments;
b. Expatriates will employ certain coping styles more readily; and
c. Expatriates who are more successful in intercultural interactions will employ coping styles and adjustment methods.

**1.8. Definitions of Key Terms**

1.8.1. Adjustment Methods

Attitudinal and behavioral changes that an individual uses to reduce external environmental stressors and create a state of internal homeostasis, or psychological balance, to promote effective functioning.

a. Socio-cultural Adjustment Methods

Addressing the challenges that expatriates face in adjusting to new personal settings: food, leisure activities, crime/safety, living conditions, personal relationships, and social norms.

o Assimilation

The adoption and complete incorporation of perspectives and behaviors of the cultural identity and social norms of the host culture.

o Separation

The maintenance of one's own cultural identity, social norms and living standards, and rejecting the host culture.

o Marginalization

Vacillation between the social norms of the expatriate's culture and the norms of the host culture—without fully committing to one culture.

o Integration

The incorporation of the social norms of the expatriate with the social norms of the host culture.

b. Professional Adjustment Methods

Cultural differences that expatriates may encounter in a professional setting: language/communication, nonverbal communication, professional relationships, and professional norms.

o Assimilation

The adoption and complete incorporation of the perspectives and behaviors of the professional norms of the institution.

o Separation

The maintenances of one's perspectives and behaviors, rejecting or altering professional norms of the institution.

- o Marginalization

  Maintaining one's perspectives and behaviors, as well as the professional norms of the institution.

- o Integration

  The expatriate modifies and fuses both their perspectives and behaviors, and the professional norms of the institution.

1.8.2. Coping Styles

The engagement of appraisal, emotions and behaviors to "reduce negative stressors and facilitate positive emotions" (Fugate et al., 2008, p. 6) and regulate external and internal demands and stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

a. Active

Altering the external environment that is causing internal distress.

b. Passive

Engaging in internal self-modification to reduce external conflict.

1.8.3. Cultural Distance

Refers to the underlying differences of cultural identities and social norms between two nation states—hypothesizing that the greater the physical distance, the greater the cultural difference.

1.8.4. Expatriate

An individual who is living and working in a foreign land, or host country, for a designated period of time.

1.8.5. International Assignment

The placement of an expatriate into a professional or volunteer position in a host country, most commonly for a fixed period of time.

1.8.6. Institution

Any corporation, government organization, non-government organization, academic body, or foundation that recruits and employs individuals.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review contains detailed review of available information that relates to the issues of expatriate adjustment, globalization, cross-cultural interactions and adjustment.

### 2.1. Introduction

Learning models have dominated a large sphere of research in expatriate adjustment, relying heavily on the assumption that adjustment implies learning new cultural norms and behaviors. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars and researchers placed a great deal of concentration on the concept of culture shock that drew attention to the tribulations experienced by expatriates during their time in a host country (Befus, 1988; Adler, 1975; Zaharna, 1989), applying psychological learning theories as the foundation for their work (Mendenhall et al., 2001).

Culture shock is described as the emotional, intellectual, behavioral and psychological reactions expatriates faced while adapting to the cultural differences of a host country (Befus, 1988). This was seen as an illness that included emotional reactions such as anxiety, depression, irritability, and panic, and was treated by decreasing misinterpretations of social interactions (Adler, 1975). The expatriates who failed to adapt to the host culture and experienced negative psychological symptoms were therefore, seen as being socially "unskilled" and unable to learn the social and cultural norms of the host country. For this reason, behaviorism and social learning theory were strongly favored to describe the process in which expatriates learn and acquire new behavioral patterns during their time abroad (Bandura, 1977a). Therefore, research served a more practical purpose of promoting strategies for reducing stress and encouraging new learned behaviors of the host country.

The 1990s saw the emergence of theoretical learning models to explain expatriate adjustment and learning processes. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) recognized that there was minimal research devoted to the development of a theory to describe the multidimensional aspects of adjustment (Black et al., 1991). Their international adjustment model incorporates Black's (1988) three facets of international adjustment: (1) adjustment to work, (2) adjustment to interacting with host nationals, and (3) adjustment to general environment (Berry, 1988). The model proposed that anticipatory

adjustments are made with available information prior to going abroad, and once abroad adjustment occurs to "discover what behaviors and attitudes are appropriate or inappropriate" (Black et al., 1991, p. 302) to reduce stressors and facilitate adjustment. Alternately, the social information-processing model (Nicholson et al., 1990) was developed simultaneously and argued that expatriates require information on the cognitive structural framework of the host culture in order to learn what to do in certain situations while abroad (Mendenhall et al., 2001). Expatriates cognitively interpret social situations and learn and adapt behaviors accordingly. This early research focused on using behaviorism's social learning theory, as well as the international adjustment model and social information-processing model, demonstrating that expatriate adjustment can be facilitated through appropriate training.

Concurrent to the development and use of learning models to expatriate adjustment, the application of psychological models to address the long-term exposure and effect of stress on expatriates gained attention. Stress-coping models began to be used to evaluate how individual expatriates subjectively interpret and respond to situations in the host country (Mendenhall et al., 2001).

Briefly, Critical Life Events approach (Barna, 1983) and role-theory approach (Yun, 1973) have been applied to the study of expatriates, and focused on role conflicts and measuring the long-term exposure to stress that expatriates accumulated during their time abroad. Barna (1983) additionally applied the state model of the General Adaptation Syndrome (Barna, 1983), the alarm reaction stage, stage of resistance, and stage of exhaustion (Selye, 1936, 1973), to strengthen his hypothesis that long-term exposure to stress can hinder adjustment and cause culture shock. The negative consequences of continued social and environmental stress can manifest into psychological withdrawal, poor work performance, low self-esteem and poor job satisfaction (Breiden et al., 2004).

In the 1980s, the work of Richard S. Lazarus (1980) stimulated expatriate research on coping by conceptualizing coping as actions taken to reduce external environmental and internal psychological stressors (Lazarus, 1980). Coping requires effort to manage the internal and external stressors, with no strategy being perceived as being more effective than another (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The research of the coping styles used by expatriates while abroad became important because they facilitated in the reduction of stress and aided in the adjustment of the expatriate. The work of Lazarus paved the way for coping models by Aycan (1997), Kühlmann (1995) and Ward (1996), which incorporated coping styles as determinants of expatriates' acculturation and adjustment outcome (Aycan, 1997; Kühlman, 1995; Ward, 1996). Coping styles altered the stressful situation and were generally placed in three categories: (1) problem-focused, (2) emotion-focused, (3) or seeking social support (Aycan, 1997). Coping styles provided additional tools for expatriates to increase the success of their adjustment to a host country, and are commonly examined in combination to adjustment methods in order to develop a more comprehensive view of the transition period expatriates experience.

While extensive research on expatriate adjustment and coping mechanisms has taken place over the past few decades, there is a lack of consistency. Research covers multiple disciplines, however, it fails to reach interdisciplinary study. As a result, there are gaps and redundancy in much of expatriate adjustment and coping research (Osland et al., 2006). Additionally, research has geographically neglected African countries. Therefore, the goal of this study was to incorporate adjustment and coping models to examine the challenges faced by expatriates in Kenya.

2.1.1. Expatriation and Globalization

"Perhaps the single most important event in generating the study of overseas adjustment was the advent of the Peace Corps in the United States in 1961" (Thomas & Lazarova, 2006, p. 247). The Peace Corps is a large, non-military, organization that manages the human resources and mobilizes thousands of expatriates across the globe every year. Many other institutions have been added to the ranks of international organizations, whether it is government organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations, private corporations or volunteer organizations. These institutions mobilize millions of expatriates yearly, and understanding adjustment difficulties and providing adequate transition materials requires an understanding of the tribulations that expatriates face in a specific geographic area.

Globalization continues to perpetuate the increasing number of expatriates living and working abroad. As the global market place increases in size, more expatriates are faced with the challenges of adapting their perspectives and behaviors to the new social and cultural norms of the host country (Peltokorpi, 2008). According to Mercer's 2012 Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices, approximately 79% of international placements were expatriates, with 11% as short-term placements and 10% global nomads (Price et al., 2012). This translates into a large number of expatriates living abroad for less than three years before repatriation or movement to another host country. However, with the growing importance and placement of expatriates, the failure rate falls between 16-70% depending on the cultural distance between the home country and host country (Sims & Schraeder, 2004). Ultimately, globalization has increased expatriation as well as increased the number of individuals coping with the difficulties of adjusting to the new professional and socio-cultural norms of the host country, and the need to resolve these issues through appropriate training and education.

### 2.1.2. Cross-cultural Interactions and Cultural Distance

Cross-cultural interactions between expatriates and host country nationals (HCNs) are a necessity when living and working abroad. Expatriates experience professional and socio-cultural interactions with HCNs in various ways throughout each day. Adjusting to the norms, the geographically established social roles and behaviors (Shiraev & Levy, 2001) can pose challenges that hinder successful transition into a host culture. The degree to which an expatriate is comfortable with the cross-cultural interactions with HCNs describes their ability to adapt and adjust to the host culture (Peltokorpi, 2008). The level of difficulty often corresponds with the general cultural differences between the expatriates' home country and host country.

Cultural distance poses additional difficulties for expatriates adjusting to a host culture that consists of more differences than similarities due to greater conflict between internal and external factors. There is a positive correlation between the greater degree of cultural differences and the home culture and host culture, and the degree of adjustment difficulties expatriates face (Zhou & Qin, 2009). Therefore, expatriates experience greater difficulties in adjusting to cross-cultural interactions in

professional and socio-cultural situations, and norms that are more dissimilar to the home cultural and host culture.

## 2.2. Expatriate Adjustment

Adjustment began to garner attention in the 1970s, particularly in areas of human resource management and organizational behavior. Initially centering on the conceptualization and organization of variables that were empirically connected with facets of expatriate adjustment (Mendenhall et al., 2001).

Academic research has increased over the past twenty years. This research is critical to understanding the behaviors and methods expatriates use to manipulate their environment to reduce stressors and increase homeostasis between internal and external factors (Zimmerman et al., 2003). Since the 1970s, research on expatriate adjustment has begun to break down the different factors of daily life to better examine the complexities of adjustment. Research on expatriate adjustment has been delineated into professional adjustment (Aycan, 1997; Mendenhall et al., 2001) and socio-cultural adjustment (Berry, 1980; Zimmerman et al., 2003) in order to describe the unique factors that expatriates encounter in their daily lives while living abroad (Figure 2.1). Within the areas of professional adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment, expatriates utilize adjustment methods as their tools to aid in transition to a host culture and country (Berry, 1980, 1987; Black et al., 1991).
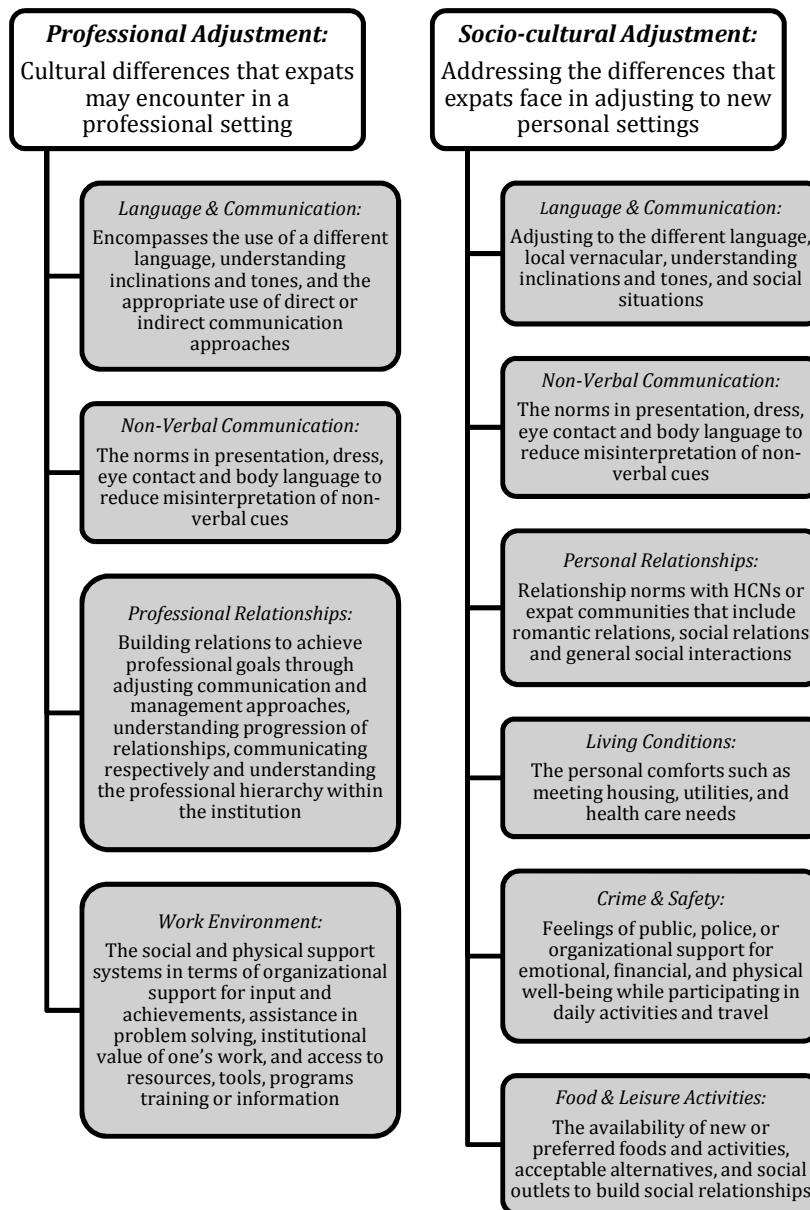
**Figure 2.1:** Factors of Expatriate Adjustment (Aycan, 1997; Mendenhall et al., 2001; Berry, 1980)

## 2.2.1. Professional Adjustment

The primary purpose for expatriation to a host country is to fulfill a professional role or job for an institution. Therefore, professional adjustment is an important component in an expatriate's overall adjustment. Expatriates regularly encounter factors such as differences in language, verbal and non-verbal communication, relationships, and norms in their new professional role (Aycan, 1997; Breiden et al., 2004). The interactions of personal perspectives and behaviors into the norms of the

new professional role may determine the successful transition and outcome of the expatriate.

The use of assimilation, separation, marginalization or integration adjustment methods by expatriates while adjusting to the new professional host culture and role are fundamental methods of transition (Black et al., 1991; Aycan, 1997).

Assimilation and separation are one-sided adjustment methods. Assimilation involves the complete redefining of the expatriate's perspectives and behaviors to fit the professional role, without adjusting the role itself (Black et al., 1991). Conversely, separation involves the maintenance of the expatriate's perspectives and behaviors, while rejecting or adjusting the professional role when necessary (Aycan, 1997; Black et al., 1991). The marginalization method of adjustment indicates that an expatriate has replicated, without alterations, their perspectives and behaviors in the new professional role (Shay & Baack, 2004).

The marginalization method of adjustment does not imply modification of the professional role nor integration, but the maintenance of both without alteration. Lastly, the adjustment method of integration involves modifications of both the perspectives and behaviors of the expatriate, in addition to the professional role, in order to create a cohesive balance (Shay & Baack, 2004). Expatriates may single out one adjustment method, or use a combination of adjustment methods to customize their general adjustment to the multidimensional factors of professional adjustment.

## 2.2.2. Socio-cultural Adjustment

Early research on expatriate adjustment focused on culture shock and psychological difficulties of the individual (Befus, 1988; Alder, 1975; Zaharna, 1989; Mendenhall et al., 2001). With sifting research trends through the 1980s and 1990s to today, we see a balance of focus on the internal and external factors of adjustment. Socio-cultural adjustment addresses the challenges that expatriates face when adjusting to new factors such as personal settings and interactions. This can include new foods, leisure activities, crime and safety, living conditions, personal relationships and new social norms.

Conflict and stress occurs when an expatriate develops positive or negative perspectives towards learning a host culture, or maintaining their cultural identity (Balls Organista et al., 2010). Berry (1980) proposed a model of acculturation attitudes in which the adjustment methods; assimilation, separation, marginalization or integration are used by expatriates to overcome the socio-cultural differences of the host country (Berry, 1980). Expatriates that maintain their cultural identity through separation method, or completely adopt the host culture through assimilation method have the tendency to be moderately successful in reducing stress and maintaining internal homeostasis (Berry et al., 1987). Whereas, the alternation between adhering to the host culture and home culture in certain situations as seen in marginalization has the greatest tendency to create high stress (Aycan, 1997). Using marginalization, the expatriate fails to completely settle into one culture, and adheres to both cultural norms in different situations that can create a significant amount of internal stress. Finally, integration, the incorporation of both cultural norms of the host country and home country, has been shown to create the greatest internal harmony for expatriates (Zimmerman et al., 2003). Each of the methods in socio-cultural adjustment corresponds with the methods of professional adjustment, and can be used in combination to develop a personally successful adjustment.

## 2.3. Coping Styles

The use of coping styles by expatriates is important in order to facilitate adjustment (Aycan, 1997). Individuals employ coping styles to respond to professional and socio-cultural demands in an emotionally competent way that manages and maintains a proactive regulation of stressors (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Coping can be defined as the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). These regulatory efforts develop connections between psychological, physiological and environmental events, which may include emotion, behavior, and relationships (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Deficiencies in the capabilities and coping styles of expatriates in professional and socio-cultural areas in the host country often result in the individuals' inability to successfully adjust (Breiden et al., 2004).

An active-passive coping style delineates the different approaches individuals take to manage internal and external stressors and events. Active coping styles refer to the direct alteration of an external environmental situation to reduce internal distress (Aycan, 1997), whereas the passive coping style approach involves the internal self-modification in order to reduce the conflict with the external environment (Diaz-Guerrero, 1979; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Diaz-Guerrero (1979) acknowledged that active coping styles were more successful in aiding in adjustment to a host country in comparison to passive coping styles. Active coping styles such as seeking social support or opposition have been shown to be more effective at reducing psychological stress compared to passive coping styles such as accommodation or self-reliance.

The engagement of active-passive coping styles use appraisal, emotions and behaviors to "reduce negative stressors and facilitate positive emotions" (Fugate et al., 2008, p. 6) and regulate external and internal demands and stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Therefore, coping styles work on a continuum in which the polar ends of active-passive coping styles are quite distinct, with intermediate coping styles encompassing various degrees of active or passive coping style characteristics. As seen in Figure 2.2, active-passive coping styles correspond with adjustment methods of professional and socio-cultural adjustment, and can be applied to the transition of expatriates.

| Active Coping Style | | | Passive Coping Style |
|---|---|---|---|
| Separation | Integration | Marginalization | Assimilation |
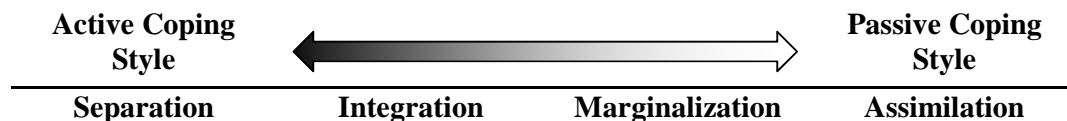
**Figure 2.2:** Coping Style Continuum in Correlation with Adjustment Methods (adapted from Aycan, 1997)

## 2.4. Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory was selected for this study to assist in, and give power to, the exploration of adjustment methods and coping styles of expatriates living in Kenya.

2.4.1. Summary of Theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) evolved seamlessly from social learning theory (SLT) and the work of Albert Bandura, Neal E. Miller, John Diller and others (McAlister et al., 2008). Therefore, one must cover the development of SLT before SCT. Psychological theories prior to social learning theory and social cognitive theory were

heavily impacted by behaviorist theories of classical conditioning (Pavlov, 1927), operant conditioning (Skinner, 1938), and psychoanalysis (Freud, 1940). However, these theories had a tendency to simplify human behavior to a point in which they were unable to describe many complex human behaviors. Noam Chomsky (1959) criticized the work of B.F. Skinner and other behaviorist theorists for their gross simplification of behavior, often generalized across species, through the use of functional analysis and input-output relations (Chomsky, 1959). Chomsky and others ultimately kicked off what is now known as the cognitive revolution, which chronicles the intellectual movement of the 1950s to the 1970s which mobilized information across various social science disciples (G.A. Miller, 2003). Social learning theory was born in the 1960s during the cognitive revolution from the research of Albert Bandura, and pulling from the concepts of drives, cues, responses and rewards that motivated behavior postulated by Neal E. Miller and John Dillard (N.E. Miller & Dillard, 1941).

Bandura and Walters (1963) acknowledged the shortcomings of previous learning theories as a result of their inability to discredit the influence of social variables and interpersonal interactions. Behavior was not just the product of internal drives or needs; it was a complex interaction of internal drives and external experiences. Behaviors are developed through direct experience and modeling in which individuals learn from reward-punishment systems, as well as the socialization processes (Bandura, 1977b).

According to Bandura, human behavior is a result of the following areas of interaction: (a) observational learning, acquiring information and rules about situations to guide behavior; (b) self-regulation, use of judgment to control and adjust behavior according to the situation; (c) self-efficacy, belief of one's own ability and control to alter a situation; (d) reciprocal determination, the mutual influence between behavior and the environment (Grusec, 1992). Thoroughly integrating that human behavior is a cognitive process that occurs in a social setting.

In 1986, Bandura, his colleagues and students formally proposed the renaming and renovation of social learning theory to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory was unique from the earlier social learning theory due to its greater

focus on the cognitive process that modifies behavior (Bandura, 1989). Building on social learning theory's attention on experience and modeling through observational learning, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determination, SCT inserts cognition as a major contributing factor in behavior. Behavior in social cognitive theory is subsequently broken down into the bidirectional triadic reciprocal determinism of behavior, cognition, and environmental factors seen in Figure 2.3 (Bandura, 1989, 2001), in place of SLT's reciprocal determination between only behavior and environment (Grusec, 1992). Social cognitive theory accepts and places importance on the external environment. However, unlike behaviorists, SCT also places importance on the internal cognitive processes that regulate and modify behavior (Figure 2.3).
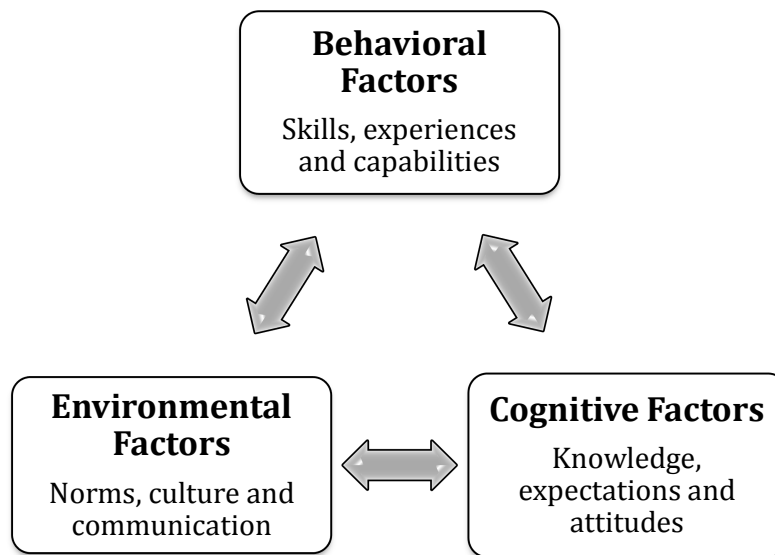


**Figure 2.3:** Triadic Reciprocal Determinism of Behavior (adapted from Edmondson et al., 2009)

The key concepts of SCT are as follows (McAlister et al., 2008):

a. *Psychological Determinants of Behavior*: social outcome expectations, self-evaluative outcome expectations, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy

b. *Observational Learning*: attention, retention, production, and motivation

c. *Environmental Determinants of Behavior*: incentive motivation and risk reduction

d. *Self-Regulation*: internal judgment and behavior modification

e. *Moral Disengagement*: euphemistic labeling of behavior, dehumanization, attribution of blame, diffusion and displacement of responsibility, perceived moral justification for behaviors

Social learning theory is noteworthy because it places emphasis not only in social influences, but external and internal reinforcements, which SCT uses in combination with the key concepts listed above to acquire, maintain and adjust behavioral patterns. Thus, SCT provides a model for examining human behavior in a multitude of environmental settings.

2.4.2. Relevance of the Theory

The regulation and management of stressors for expatriates using adjustment methods and coping styles encompass a complex system that engages emotional [cognitive], behavioral and environmental processes to maintain internal homeostasis (Haggerty et al. 1994). Therefore, the examination of adjustment methods and coping styles correspond suitably to the postulations of social cognitive theory, and SCT's focus on the triadic reciprocal determination of behavior (Bandura, 1989, 2001).

Social cognitive theory is also applicable to the study of expatriates due to the theory's postulation on an individual's flexible capacity of personal agency, and the universal human capacity for observational learning and modeling (Bandura, 2002). Individuals exercise personal agency through internal self-regulation and behaviors (Lent et al., 1994) in order to manage the interaction between internal and external processes that create distress. Therefore, SCT's application of personal agency to navigate behavioral factors, cognitive factors, and environmental factors in the triadic reciprocal determination paradigm correspond to the complex interaction of factors expatriates encounter while adjusting to and coping with the professional and socio-cultural aspects of a host culture (Bandura, 1989, 2001, 2002; Diaz-Guerrero, 1979; Shay & Baack, 2004). When expatriates use personal agency to alter and learn from their internal and external surroundings by exercising the observational learning skills of attention, retention, production, and motivation, the successful adjustment of the expatriate is enhanced (Rehany, 1994).

This research is congruent with SCT because it aims at examine the expatriates' personal capacity to manage professional and socio-cultural stressors using internal and external resources. Adjustment methods and active-passive strategies involve the employment of SCT's personal agency, observational learning and other key concepts to interact and adjust to the host culture and HCNs. Therefore, the appropriateness is derived from the fact that humans are innately capable of adapting to diverse environments (Bandura, 2002).

# 3. Methodology

The Methodology chapter contains details on the selection of research sites and participants, and data analysis methods.

## 3.1. Research Site

The research site was inclusive of all cities within the Republic of Kenya as seen in Figure 3.1. Kenya is located on the eastern coast of Africa, and is a sovereign Republic with a multi-party democratic State that includes an elected President, Deputy President, and the two chambers of Parliament and the Senate (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The territory includes 47 counties, with the most populous cities being the Capital of Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2012). The official languages of Kenya are Kiswahili and English, in addition to approximately 65 additional languages spoken (Fitzpatrick et al., 2009). Kenya has a population of 43.18 million citizens (Randa et al., 2012). The Kenyan national currency is the Kenya Shilling (KES).

Kenya supports East Africa's largest economy based on gross domestic product (GDP) at KES 3,440 billion in 2012 (Randa et al., 2013), with an increasing GDP growth rate in 2012 at 4.4% (KNBS, 2012), and 2013 at 4.7% (Randa et al., 2013). Due to economic expansion, particularly in areas such as tourism, telecommunication, agriculture, and development aid organizations, Kenya has become the hub connecting international companies and organizations with eastern African countries. Additionally, being home to several United Nations' organization headquarters and many international embassies, high commissions and trade councils, Kenya attracts expatriates from countries all over the world.

Kenya is home to thousands of expatriates who have made Kenya their home for short-term and long-term employment, volunteer and entrepreneurial endeavors. The majority of expatriates reside in the capitol city of Nairobi. However, several other cities throughout Kenya are growing in the number of expatriates inhabiting them. This study was therefore inclusive of all expatriates who are permanently living within Kenya.

**Figure 3.1:** Map of Kenya (Source: United Nations, 2011)

**3.2. Research Design**

This study was exploratory in nature and covered ethnographic information of expatriates. It utilized the qualitative method of open-ended questionnaires. The study explored the adjustment methods and coping mechanisms of expatriates in Kenya. The utilization of qualitative methods was beneficial in exploratory research as it allowed for each individual to provide responses that were unexpected, and illustrative in nature. More importantly, the research crossed cultural boundaries; therefore open-ended questions provided the respondents with the ability to make culturally appropriate responses (Mack et al., 2005). Ultimately, open-ended questionnaires intended to produce comprehensive information on the adjustment methods and coping mechanisms expatriates use to adjust to living and working in Kenya.

**3.3. Study Population**

The study population consisted of all expatriates in Kenya. Kenya is home to thousands of expatriates from countries all over the globe. For the purpose of this study, an expatriate was defined as a person who lives outside of their home country, and has settled in the current host country of Kenya. The expatriates in Kenya were employed in various sectors such as public, private, NGO, entrepreneurship, or consultancy. These positions may be paid or unpaid positions.

**3.4. Sample Population**

The sample population was selected based on availability and included expatriates that are actively involved in social media outlets that are targeted for expatriates in Kenya and meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Not all expatriates that live and work in Kenya are members of these social media groups (e.g. Facebook, Expat Blog) Therefore, expatriates that are not members of the targeted social media groups were not actively recruited for participation.

Due to close geographical proximity, the citizens of countries that border Kenya, and who are expatriates within Kenya, were excluded. This ensured a greater cultural distance. Cultural distance makes the assumption that the greater the physical distance between an expatriate's home country and host country, the greater the discrepancies between cultural norms and values (Tihanyi et al., 2005). The citizens of the bordering

countries of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda were therefore excluded due to close cultural distance that estimates that the cultural similarities promote easy adjustment, and few stressors (Shenkar, 2001).

For the purpose of this research, the following inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria were used to determine whether an individual is eligible for participation:

### 3.4.1. Inclusion Criteria

a. Both Males and Females;
b. Individuals 18 years of age or older;
c. Individuals who have permanently lived in Kenya for greater than one (1) month;
d. Individuals who are living in Kenya for employment, volunteer or entrepreneurial purposes; and
e. Individuals who hold citizenship in countries other than Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda.

### 3.4.2. Exclusion Criteria

a. Individuals under the age of 18 years;
b. Individuals who hold Kenyan, Tanzanian, Ethiopian, Somali, Sudanese, and Ugandan citizenship;
c. Individuals who have permanently lived in Kenya for less than one (1) month; and
d. Individuals who are touring, vacationing, or otherwise traveling through Kenya.

### 3.5. Sampling Procedure

This study used purposive sampling procedures to meet a fixed sample size of 20 participants to generate and explore data on professional and socio-cultural factors (Kothari, 2004; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). The sample was based on availability and included individuals that met the inclusion criteria, and were not excluded by the exclusion criteria (Section 3.3).

The sampling procedures for the open-ended questionnaires included convenience sampling of individuals who were willing to participate. The sample included individuals recruited from electronic expatriate social networking groups within Kenya. These social networks are inclusive of expatriates who actively seek out and join

electronic social networks specific for expatriates living in Kenya. The networks may be a sub-group of a larger social networking website (e.g., Facebook® or LinkedIn), or independent online organizations (e.g., InterNations or Expat Blog).

## 3.6. Data Collection Methods

Open-ended questionnaires were used to collect comprehensive data that encompasses cross culturally appropriate responses (Mack et al., 2005). The open-ended questionnaires included fixed questions that were intended to provoke reflective and thoughtful responses to specific areas of professional and socio-cultural areas of adjustment (Appendix B).

The open-ended questionnaires were formatted electronically for distribution, data collection, and data management. The study used the electronic questionnaire software SurveyMonkey®. This electronic database provides tools to distribute and monitor the completion of questionnaires. Daily quality control assessments were made to ensure proper functioning of the database and questionnaire completion.

## 3.7. Data Analysis and Presentation

The open-ended questionnaire responses were coded and analyzed using a template analysis approach. The template analysis was selected as the method of analysis due to its ability to use conceptual themes within the responses (King, 2004). The conceptualized themes were defined as codes, which were used to represent the adjustment mechanisms and coping styles reported by the participants. The development and use of conceptualized coding was done prior to the collection of data separates template analysis from other forms of analysis such as Grounded Theory and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Waring & Wainwright, 2008), and it was critical in reducing the potential interference of cultural and personal biases of the researcher during analysis (Matsumoto, 2000).

3.7.1. Data Analysis Procedures

The primary researcher electronically managed and transcribed all electronically reported responses to the open-ended questionnaires. Once all responses had been appropriately transcribed, the data was evaluated, coded and organized by the researcher. The codes corresponded with the conceptualized themes developed prior

to the collection of data. The predetermined conceptualized codes may be referenced in Appendix C.

The coded and organized data was evaluated to identify any patterns or connections that occur between or within conceptualized themes. A content-analysis of patterns and connections using a template analysis approach was applied to systematically summarize the manifest and latent content from the data (Shiraev & Levy, 2001). The goal of the template analysis approach was to identify patterns and connections that summarized the data by illustrating the similarities and differences of participants' responses (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003).

Data Collection and Management

Transcribing and Preparing Data

Coding and Organizing Data

Connecting and Interrelating Data

Interpretation and Creating Explanatory Accounts
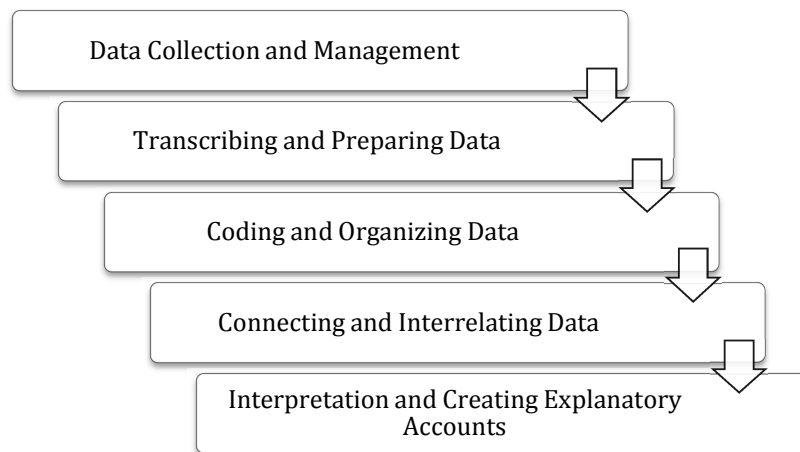
**Figure 3.2:** Data Analysis Steps and Procedures (Barnes & de Hoyos, 2012)

## 3.8. Ethical Considerations

This research presented low identifiable risk to the participants' health or well-being, however, an informed consent was required prior to completion of the open-ended questionnaire. The informed consent (Appendix A) was used to provide the potential participants with the basic premise of the research study, their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. All steps were taken by the researcher to ensure that the responses provided by participants were securely stored, and participants' rights were up-held.

### 3.8.1. Confidentiality and Anonymity

All personal identifying information is considered confidential. Only pertinent personal identifying information was collected. Additionally, all surveys and other

responses are considered anonymous to protect the participants. Only the primary researcher responsible for data management and organization has access to personal identifying formation, of which is stored securely. Upon request, individual results will only be relinquished directly to the participant.

### 3.8.2. Role of the Primary Researcher

The primary researcher was responsible for ensuring the protection of all parties involved and information disclosure. To protect and honor the trust of participants, through the reduction of potential harm, undue intrusion, confidentiality, and anonymity, due diligence was observed.

# 4. Results and Discussion

The Results and Discussion chapter includes detailed information on participant demographics and results of the content analysis for professional and socio-cultural adjustment methods in correlation with copying styles.

## 4.1. Introduction

The general objective of the study was to explore adjustment methods and coping styles used by expatriates to overcome adjustment difficulties. The content analysis was selected to analyze open-ended responses using predetermined conceptualized categories. Professional and socio-cultural adjustment methods were also organized into assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration categories with additional categorization of active and passive coping styles being included. Collected responses were analyzed, coded and organized based on the conceptualized categories, from which patterns were derived from connections based on organized categories and interrelating data.

The data analysis used the content analysis to explore the following objectives to describe methods used by expatriates to overcome adjustment difficulties.

o To examine the adjustment methods employed in response to difficulties expatriates encounter in Kenya.
o To examine the coping styles expatriates use to overcome adjustment difficulties.
o To document the most effective adjustment method and coping style for promoting strong intercultural interactions.

## 4.2. Sample Characteristics

The study sample size was 20, which consisted of five (5) males and 15 females. Half of the participants fell within the 31-40 year age range, with five (5) participants 30 years or younger, and five (5) participants aged 40 years of age and above (Table 4.1). Participants' primary citizenship included the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, and Finland. Private sector and non-profit organization employment were the most frequently occurring purpose for living in Kenya.

| Gender: | Age Range: | Length of Residence in Kenya: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males (*n*=5) | 31-40 years (*n*=5) | 1-12 months (*n*=2) | | |
| | | 3-5 years (*n*=2) | | |
| | | 10+ years (*n*=1) | | |

| Gender: | Age Range: | Length of Residence in Kenya: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Females (*n*=15) | 23-30 years (*n*=5) | 1-12 months (*n*=2) | | |
| | | 1-3 years (*n*=3) | | |
| | 31-40 years (*n*=6) | 1-12 months (*n*=2) | | |
| | | 1-3 years (*n*=1) | | |
| | | 3-5 years (*n*=2) | | |
| | | 5-10 years (*n*=1) | | |
| | 41-50 years (*n*=3) | 3-5 years (*n*=1) | | |
| | | 5-10 years (*n*=2) | | |
| | 60+ years (*n*=1) | 1-12 months (*n*=1) | | |

**Table 4.1:** Participant Demographics
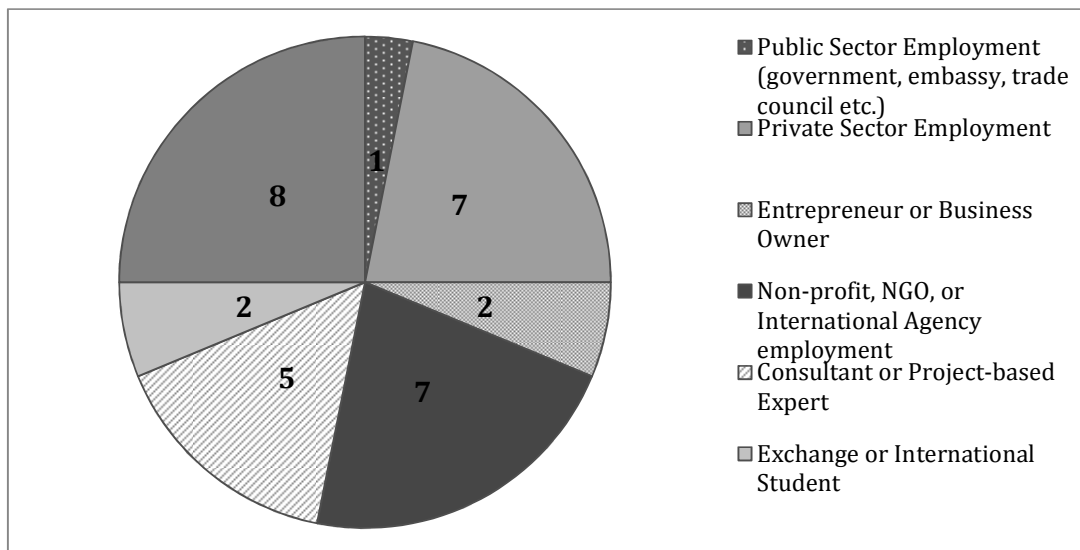


**Figure 4.1:** Participants' Professional Demographics

## 4.3. Results of Adjustment Methods Employed by Expatriates

An analysis the participants' attitudes and behaviors while adjusting to the cultural differences that expatriates encounter in a professional and socio-cultural setting was conducted.

### 4.3.1. Assimilation Method

Participants reported modifying their behavior through communication techniques by consciously rephrasing statements to adjust to the understanding of those they are speaking with, being more precise, and asking clarifying questions. Being conscious and directly adjusting communication methods that are direct or may be construed as offensive, such as curbing constructive criticism.

Participants personally adjust their work timelines and standards based on the norms of the work environment. They negatively reported accepting increased duration for task completion, tardiness, spelling errors, and lax employee supervision as commonly occurring. Conversely, some participants noted "extremely high standards and expectations" in which they flourish in their professional setting.

Participants incorporated local cuisine, language, relationships and environment as their own. This included seeking out the local fruits, vegetables, and meats to include in their daily meals. As well as actively learning Kiswahili through lessons or absorbing though interactions. It was reported that learning Kiswahili was beneficial to "better understand the culture and to contribute to conversations", and build relationships.

Social and romantic relationships between Kenyans and expatriates were common, and participants who use assimilation methods reported a higher frequency of having relationships primarily with Kenyans. Participants were drawn to friendships and romances with individuals that were similar to them, so it can be noted that participants who adjust to the Kenyan social and cultural norms would also find similarities with other Kenyans. And no difficulties "fitting in" were reported.

Assimilation responses by participants accounted for the majority of the total professional adjustment responses. Participants responses used a passive coping style, indicating that participants who employed the assimilation method of adjustment were more likely to use passive coping to internal adjust their actions, behaviors and thoughts to the professional norms of their organization. Likewise, socio-cultural responses employed a passive coping style. This indicates that participants were more

likely to internally adjust to perspectives and behaviors to adopt the social and cultural norms of Kenya.

| Question: | Participant Responses: | Coded Category: |
|---|---|---|
| Have you experienced different performance standards or expectations while working in Kenya (e.g. meeting deadlines, or work quality)? Please provide a few examples: | "I learned very quickly to expect a different perception of what being on time meant, and that sometimes thing[s] take more time, especially when bureaucracy is involved." | Professional Assimilation Adjustment Method |
| Have you experienced any embarrassing situations in which you felt you were not dressed or behaving appropriately? Please provide a few examples: | "I used to run in shorts, until I learned it was uncommon to show leg. It also received a lot of attention from men, which I didn't feel comfortable." "I usually dress to Kenyan standards" | Socio-cultural Assimilation Adjustment Method |

**Table 4.2:** Assimilation examples from participants responses

### 4.3.2. Separation Method

The professional adjustment method of separation was the most commonly applied adjustment method. Participants responded in a greater frequency that they were unable to adjust to the organizational culture and felt like a "task horse" or the only one with "western business value". In several situations, the organizational culture was based off of a western business model and they were promoting their home country's professional organizational culture.

Participants frequently rejected local professional behaviors, while maintaining their own professional behaviors. They reported difficulties in communication in which

they felt that they were not understood, and unable to facilitate understanding through communication. Rejecting an indirect communication style through the delegation of detailed requirements to meet their expectations and excluding others input was common. Expatriates described maintaining strict work standards that favored their professional perspective, or "stick to their own rules". Additionally, differences in work ethic were seen as a negative. Participants reported issues with colleagues that used local vernacular, napping, extended breaks, and an inability to accomplish tasks as areas that require change.

It was acknowledged that expatriates have the mentality that their behavior and standards are correct. Patterns in responses supported this statement by expressing their expectations such as, "I have focused on providing constant feedback" and "I spend a lot of time going over my expectations". Expatriates had a high frequency of regularly reiterating expectations and requiring local employees to demonstrate their comprehension of the expatriates' expectations.

Safety issues and concerns were the main hindrance for participants' socio-cultural adjustment to Kenya. Participants expressed feelings of fear and distrust of Kenyans due to a high reporting of personal, or close acquaintances' experiences, in which they were victims of violence or robbery. Responses regarding safety included extreme feelings of anxiety such as "Kenya has broke me", "I do not feel safe in my own home", and "I've become very untrusting of people". This correlates with the lack of meaningful relationships with Kenyans, and difficulties with landlords and health care workers. The development of distrust affects the participants' ability to deal with external stressors, seek support, and find suitable social activities. This scenario increases the feelings of detachment from the social and cultural Kenyan environment.

Participants reported trying to maintain hobbies and exercises that they enjoyed in their home countries. Close friendships have developed primarily among fellow expatriates. Building new relationships with those they have the most in common with because of similar norms and behaviors.

Separation method had the highest frequency for professional adjustment, with 35.5% of responses falling into this category. Of the responses, participants were more likely

to employ an active coping style to adjust external professional situations to meet their internal needs. Socio-cultural adjustment responses reported using separation method to reduce internal stressors.

| Question: | Participant Responses: | Coded Category: |
|---|---|---|
| What modifications have you had to make to personal behaviors, or situations within the work place (e.g. communication style, or organizational setting)? Please describe: | "I put everything (i.e. expectations, requests, etc.) in writing far in advance and send follow up emails and reminders in order to attempt to accomplish the task at hand in a timely manner." | Professional Separation Adjustment Method |
| Do you find the local traditional food satisfactory, or are you more likely to seek out food you are familiar with from your home country? Please elaborate on what food suits you: | "Not impressed with local cuisine in the slightest. I have had to learn how to cook just so I can find an affordable option to what I enjoy."<br><br>"I am not a fan of Kenyan food. I love the fish here, but otherwise, the food is not to my taste." | Socio-cultural Separation Adjustment Method |

**Table 4.3:** Separation examples from participants responses

### 4.3.3. Marginalization Method

For those responses that fell within the marginalization category participants expressed maintaining rigid roles, while finding flexibility and/or frustration going between the two roles. Frustrations occurred when participants were working between two different sets of motivations and priorities. Professionally, expatriates expressed frequency in putting priority on performance and work effort over building relationships, whereas Kenyan colleagues placed priority reversely. Participants often

expressed negative feelings when tasks took too long or tasks they deemed important were not considered as such. Responses noted the "work ethic to be rather friendly and flexible", but a high frequency reported focusing on completing individual tasks based on their own expectations. Communication was strained due to wavering between indirect and direct communication styles. It was expressed that both expatriates and Kenyans had an excellent grasp on cultural differences. However, marginalization responses did not commonly integrate, but rather oscillated between preferred professional norms and behaviors.

Learning the local language of Kiswahili was seen as necessary or beneficial for certain situations in which it was advantageous to be able to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in social situations. This was seen as needed when communicating with Kenyans, however, they maintained their primary language or English within the expatriate community. Additional balance between eating local cuisine and other cuisine was common. Recreational activities are maintained as possible, while experiencing new activities when desired. Safety at home and during activities was reported as a constant concern.

Relationships had a tendency to be based on necessity and choice for those responses that were categorized as marginalization. Participants reported building relationships with those who are similar to them, which includes other expatriates and middle class, educated Kenyans. They maintain their social behaviors and perspective and choose friendships that are complimentary to their social norms. Noted difficulties building relationships with Kenyans included a feeling that Kenyans already have a strong family/social network and are less likely to seek new friendships, expatriates feel that Kenyans see them as "fake and expect too much private info", and there is a separation between expatriates and Kenyans socializing exclusively amongst themselves.

Of the total, professional response units were categorized as marginalization. Participants using a marginalization adjustment method in professional settings had a higher rate of using passive coping techniques to adjust internal thoughts and behaviors to fit the professional role. Conversely, socio-cultural responses where

categorized using marginalization, with a higher percentage employing active coping to alter their external environment.

| Question: | Participant Responses: | Coded Category: |
|---|---|---|
| Do you encounter misunderstandings or conflicts among colleagues, supervisors or business associates that you have not experienced previously? Please explain situations in which misunderstandings or conflicts occur, and how you have been able to resolve conflict: | "In the west, at work, the project/team effort/performance target is important and the relationships are secondary. If someone on your team doesn't deliver their work, and lets the team down, people will criticize them and everyone will think this is reasonable. In Kenya I have found that people consider the relationship to be more important and if you criticize people they will cease to cooperate." | Professional Marginalization Adjustment Method |
| How would you describe socializing with Kenyan nationals? Or do you find yourself naturally drawn to personal relationships with other expatriates? Please elaborate: | I socialize with Kenyan nationals on a daily basis, but I find my interactions are more friendly or superficial. It can be a challenge to explain my feelings, or my perspective based on how I grew up. In these cases, I find my closest friends are expatriates since they understand where I am coming from. | Socio-cultural Marginalization Adjustment Method |

**Table 4.4:** Marginalization examples from participants responses

4.3.4. Integration Method

The promotion of positive and interactive communication between expatriates and local colleagues was the primary technique described by participants using integration as a professional adjustment method. As English is the primary language used in professional settings, communication difficulties often arise due to different interpretation of statements and not a language barrier issue. Participants noted using discussion "to better understand consensus" and "communicated in a way to gain

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respect". Learning and using local communication techniques was a common integration method. The idea of a professional "team" was also a common pattern that can be extracted from responses, working together as a team to reach common goals and be supportive of each other. This included "a mish mash" different work ethics from both expatriates and Kenyan colleagues. Lastly, a common pattern was mutual respect and understanding in promoting integration, promoting positive attitudes regarding professional differences in order to bring colleagues together.

In the socio-cultural setting, the incorporation of participants' cuisine, communication styles, relationships, activities and behaviors with those of Kenya was seen in responses that were categorized as integration method. Participants engaged in combining Kenyan cuisine with that of their home country, blending Kiswahili into conversation, and building relationships between cultural boundaries. Relationships were developed more readily between expatriates and Kenyans that were liberal, educated and had traveled, in which there were greater similarities in beliefs and perspectives. Romantic relationships also developed similarly.

Living standards were seen as satisfactory, and it was reported that participants where able to find agreeable housing, landlords, doctors and health care facilities while combining their needs with what is available in Kenya. Additional extracurricular activities such as hiking, gardening, and cultural events were seen as a positive addition to activities they already enjoyed.

A total of 21.5% professional responses were categorized as the integration adjustment method, whereas, the use of integration method was the most frequently used socio-cultural adjustment method used by participants. Socio-cultural response units were categorized as integration, indicating expatriates were most likely to merge social and cultural norms from their home country and Kenya.

| Question: | Participant Responses: | Coded Category: |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Do you experience good communication and teamwork between yourself and your | "Yes, for the most part, I feel like most of the teams I have worked with here have been cohesive and tried to work together to find solutions or complete | Professional Integration Adjustment Method |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| colleagues? Please describe your experiences: | projects. When met with mutual respect I find that communication is very open." | |
| Are you able to fulfill your personal hobbies, recreational activities or entertainment needs in Kenya? Please provide a few examples of how you have been able to fulfill your activities: | Yes and no. Kisumu is wonderful because it is a small city that is easy to navigate with many things to do (movies, tennis, swimming, nice lake bars, etc.). However, I come from a very mountainous area and I really miss doing activities in nature. Even though Kenya has many amazing outdoor activities, it is very difficult to reach. Road conditions are unsafe (have been in a couple accidents) and distances are long, making excursions difficult. | Socio-cultural Adjustment Method |

**Table 4.5:** Marginalization examples from participants responses

## 4.4. Results of Coping Styles Employed by Expatriates

A passive coping occurred at a higher frequency in both the professional and socio-cultural settings. Expatriates reporting on professional areas of adjustment reported applying passive coping styles 58.9% of the time. The use of assimilation and marginalization methods employed passive coping style in majority of responses. Indicating that expatriates were more likely to adjust their internal thoughts and behaviors to the professional norms of their organization.

Passive coping occurred in 51% of socio-cultural responses, with 49% of responses being categorized as active coping. This is a relatively even split between coping styles, and demonstrates that expatriates tended to use both active and passive coping styles to alter their internal and external environments to reduce stressors.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

The Summary and Conclusion chapter includes summary of study findings, research conclusions and recommendations for future research based on findings.

### 5.1. Summary of Findings

The first objective of the study was to explore the adjustment methods employed by expatriates to overcome difficulties in professional and socio-cultural environments. The most commonly reported adjustment method in a professional environment was separation, whereas within the socio-cultural environment participants were more likely to employ integration method (Aycan, 1997). Participants' experiences employing the separation method professionally were that they often reported feeling increased stress due to discrepancies between internal expectations and external outcomes with difficulties communication and negative reported experiences (Breiden et al., 2004; Balls Organista et al., 2004). Socio-cultural adjustment using integration method was the most commonly reported method used by expatriates. It resulted in participants reporting positive interactions and a harmonious combination local and home country activities, cuisine, language, and relationships (Zimmerman et al., 2003).

Whether using marginalization, integration, separation or assimilation adjustment methods, participants reported using the passive coping style over active coping. This indicates that internal modification was the preferred coping style of expatriates (Skinner & Simmer-Gemeck, 2007). It was executed in professional and socio-cultural situations by altering communication styles, norms and behaviors to meet the external needs of the environment and reduce stressors (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

In summary, the purpose of this study was to explore and enhance our knowledge on professional adjustment methods, socio-cultural adjustment methods, and coping styles of expatriates living abroad in Kenya. Participants reported using separation method with passive coping for professional adjustment (Balls Organista et al., 2004), and integration method with active coping for socio-cultural adjustment as the most prevalent ways to aid in their adjustment to Kenya (Zimmerman et al., 2003). The study applied Social Cognitive Theory's reciprocal determination by examining the feedback loop between personal factors, behaviors and environment (Edmondson et al., 2009). Increased stress

and adjustment difficulties occurred when marginalization and separation methods were used due to contradicting feedback from environmental and personal factors, negatively affecting behavior and adjustment (Fugate et al., 2008). Expatriates employing an integration or assimilation methods found adjustment to Kenyan norms less challenging due to fewer discrepancies between reciprocal determination factors.

## 5.2. Conclusions

Professional adjustment was approached using a passive coping style in which expatriates reported using internal self-modification to meet the external demands of their work environment (Aycan, 1997). Only three (3) participants reported being provided with cross-cultural training to assist in adjustment to their new work environment, thus as a result, participants indicated applying the separation method of adjustment to maintain their professional perspectives while either try to modify or reject the professional norms of the role. The separation method was used passively through increased personal effort to promote a western business model through adjustment of communication styles, increased feedback, and the use of direct instructions to modify the work environment and outcomes. The professional norm of using an indirect communication method was rejected by expatriates who used the separation method, creating increased stress and difficulties when personal factors and behaviors did not correlate with environmental factors (Bandura 2001). Due to a low number of reported cross-cultural training programs, and a reported increase in stress and professional efforts, it is suggested that additional information and team building exercises can provide an expatriate with beneficial information and increase cultural understanding between expatriates and local colleagues (McAlister et al., 2008).

Outside of the professional environment, expatriates employed integration method in the socio-cultural environment to integrate their cultural norms and behaviors into the norms of Kenya. Integration method was applied using an active coping style to seek out social relationships, living quarters, cuisine, security, and health care providers that were in tandem with their internal needs (Zimmerman et al., 2003). Socio-cultural preferences were blended with available resources in Kenya, and provided a satisfactory adjustment for expatriates. Safety concerns and distrust created the greatest barrier for socio-cultural

adjustment. Expatriates who experienced regular fear for their physical and emotional well-being were less likely to seek out and build a support network or deal with external stressors from the environment (Fugate et al., 2008). Cross-cultural understanding and strong social networks outside of the professional setting benefited the integration method of adjustment in meeting internal needs through external accommodations (Bandura, 2002).

The limitations of this study provide avenues for future research that is geographically focused or expanded. The geographical region of the study did not represent the distribution of expatriates living in Kenya due to the limitations in recruitment methods, with future adjustments to recruitment expanding to include a greater number of cities to benefit the study and to reduce bias. Additional research for the future successes of expatriates in Kenya would benefit from focusing on exploring communication methods between expatriates and local Kenyans. This research study discovered that the use of a direct communication method by expatriates created increased difficulties in professional and socio-cultural situations. Therefore, research to explore the correlation between communication methods and positive adjustment, and the implementation of cross-cultural training focused on communication, would benefit the adjustment of expatriates in Kenya and promote the development of professional and socio-cultural support networks.

## 5.3. Recommendations

The challenge of recruitment for the study, and a source of potential bias, was the challenge of recruiting a representative sample of expatriates from a greater number of geographic locations within Kenya. Therefore, it is recommended that future research that is to be generalized to Kenya include a more targeted recruitment approach to collect responses that are representative of Kenya. That being said, the recommendation of the researcher is that future research is focused or expanded. Expanded to include a greater geographical and sample size of participants in Kenya to generalize adjustment methods appropriately, or through a focus approach to examine a specific subset of expatriates, such as a specific gender, age range, or occupation.

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# 7. Work Plan

| Phase: | Task: | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 | Week 8 | Week 9 | Week 10 | Week 11 | Week 12 | Week 13 | Week 14 | Week 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Data Collection | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Management of Data | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Data Transcription | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | |
| 3 | Coding of Conceptualized Themes | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| 3 | Category Organization | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | |
| 4 | Connect Interrelated Data | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| 4 | Examine Response Content | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| 5 | Evaluation and Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| 5 | Create Explanatory Reports | | | | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |

## 8. Appendices

## Appendix A: Informed Consent

**Please read the following information carefully and select the "Accept" to continue to the questionnaire.**

The Kenyan Expatriate Study aims to examine the adjustment methods and coping styles used by expatriates in various professional and personal situations while living abroad in Kenya. The Kenyan Expatriate Study will ask a series of questions regarding general personal information, professional experiences, and personal experiences.

This research is being conducted through the University of Nairobi – Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies.

All personal identifying information provided will be considered confidential, and all responses will be considered anonymous. The primary researcher is responsible for ensuring the protection of participants' personal identifying information, and records will be kept strictly confidential. Personal identifying information will not be revealed in any written or oral reports or publications.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time about the study please contact the primary research at **Expat_Study@aol.com.**

By selecting the "Accept" bottom at the bottom of the page you are giving your voluntary consent to participate in the Kenyan Expatriate Study. Hereby granting permission for the use of the information provided from this point forward.

| **Decline** | | **Accept** |
|---|---|---|

## Appendix B: Open-ended Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Kenyan Expatriate Study. Please read each question carefully and provide a detailed response on your personal experiences regarding the specific area of interest. All responses are anonymous and personal identifying information is confidential. Please direct all questions or concerns to the primary researcher at Expat_Study@aol.com.

Please complete this questionnaire when you have approximately 20 minutes to provide thoughtful and detailed responses.

**Demographics:**
Please select the best response that describes you for each of the following questions.

| | |
|---|---|
| **D1** | **Gender?** <br> Male                                                  Female |
| **D2** | **Age Range?** <br> <18          18-22          23-30          31-40          41-50          51-60          61+ |
| **D3** | **What Kenyan city do you currently live in?** <br> (Open-ended) |
| **D4** | **How long have you permanently lived in Kenya?** <br> 0-1 month      1-12            1-3 years      3-5 years      5-10            10+ years <br>                   months                                                  years |
| **D5** | **What country are you from (primary citizenship)?** <br> (Open-ended) |
| **D6** | **What is your primary purpose or activity in Kenya?** <br> ☐ Public Sector Employment (government, embassy, trade council etc.) <br> ☐ Private Sector Employment <br> ☐ Entrepreneur or Business Owner <br> ☐ Non-profit, NGO, or International Agency employment <br> ☐ Consultant or Project-based Expert <br> ☐ Exchange or International Student <br> ☐ Other:    (Open- Response) |

**Professional Adjustment:**

Please read and consider each of the following questions regarding how you adjusted to the following areas in your professional role in Kenya. Please focus on areas of **personal changes** or **external environmental changes** that have made your adjustment easier.

| | |
|---|---|
| **PA1** | Have you experienced any language barriers, getting 'lost in translation', between colleagues (e.g. communication difficulties)? Please describe and how you overcame them: |
| **PA2** | Have you experienced different performance standards or expectations while working in Kenya (e.g. meeting deadlines, or work quality)? Please provide a few examples: |
| **PA3** | Have you observed a different work ethic in Kenya in comparison to your home country? Please elaborate on your views of the work ethic here in Kenya and possible ways it can be improved: |
| **PA4** | What modifications have you had to make to personal behaviors, or situations within the work place (e.g. communication style, or organizational setting)? Please describe: |
| **PA5** | Do you encounter misunderstandings or conflicts among colleagues, supervisors or business associates that you have not experienced previously? Please explain situations in which misunderstandings or conflicts occur, and how you have been able to resolve conflict: |
| **PA6** | Do you experience good communication and teamwork between yourself and your colleagues? Please describe your experiences: |
| **PA7** | Did you receive formal or informal type of cross-cultural training prior to, or at the beginning of, your current position? Please describe any training you received, or areas in which training would have been beneficial: |
| **PA8** | Have you found it difficult to adjust to the organizational culture, or the shared values of those you work with, while in Kenya? Please explain your difficulties or successes: |

**Socio-cultural Adjustment:**

Please read and consider each of the following questions regarding how you adjusted to the following areas in your social interactions and daily living in Kenya. Please focus on areas of **personal changes** or **external environmental changes** that have made your adjustment easier.

| SA 1 | Do you find the local traditional food satisfactory, or are you more likely to seek out food you are familiar with from your home country? Please elaborate on what food suits you: |
|---|---|
| SA 2 | Do you feel that learning kiswahili is necessary while living in Kenya? Please describe your exposure level to kiswahili and if it is helpful: |
| SA 3 | Does your current housing situation meet the comforts that you are accustomed to in your home country? Please provide details on your current housing situation, and any difficulties or challenges you faced adjusting to the new housing situation in Kenya: |
| SA 4 | How would you describe socializing with Kenyan nationals? Or do you find yourself naturally drawn to personal relationships with other expatriates? Please elaborate: |
| SA 5 | Are you able to fulfill your personal hobbies, recreational activities or entertainment needs in Kenya? Please provide a few examples of how you have been able to fulfill your activities: |
| SA 6 | Do you have access to adequate health care and medical facilities? Please recount your experiences with the medical facilities and health care providers in Kenya: |
| SA 7 | Do you feel that Kenya provides adequate support for your emotional, financial and physical well-being (e.g. social support, personal/property safety)? Please describe your sense of personal safety while living and traveling in Kenya: |
| SA 8 | Have you encountered differences or difficulties maintaining romantic relationships or friendships with Kenyan nationals? Please elaborate on any differences or difficulties: |
| SA 9 | Have you experienced any embarrassing situations in which you felt you were not dressed or behaving appropriately? Please provide a few examples: |

**Overall Adjustment:**

Please rate how well you feel you have adjusted to the professional, social, and living conditions of Kenya.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have **not** adjusted well to Kenya, and experience daily issues | | I have generally adjusted to Kenya, but still experience **occasional** issues | | I have adjusted quite well to Kenya, and do **not** experience daily issues |

Thank you for your completion of the Kenyan Expatriate Study. Your time and responses are greatly appreciated.

For research results, questions, or comments, please contact the primary researcher at Expat_Study@aol.com. Asante sana!

# Appendix C: Conceptualized Codes

The conceptualized codes will denote specific indicators that are located within the transcribed open-ended questionnaires.

| Code: | Concept: | Indicator: |
|---|---|---|
| SA-A | Socio-cultural Adjustment-Assimilation | Complete adoption of social and cultural norms of Kenya-changing perspectives and behaviors |
| SA-S | Socio-cultural Adjustment-Separation | Maintaining cultural norms, perspectives and behaviors, while altering or rejecting the cultural norms of Kenya |
| SA-M | Socio-cultural Adjustment-Marginalization | Alternating between one's cultural norms and Kenya's cultural norms, adjusting perspectives and behaviors accordingly |
| SA-I | Socio-cultural Adjustment-Integration | Merging and incorporating one's cultural norms and the cultural norms of Kenya together |
| PA-A | Professional Adjustment-Assimilation | Modifying professional perspectives and behaviors to conform to the professional role |
| PA-S | Professional Adjustment-Separation | Maintaining professional perspectives and behaviors, while modifying or rejecting professional role |
| PA-M | Professional Adjustment-Marginalization | Maintaining professional perspectives and behaviors, and maintaining the professional role |
| PA-I | Professional Adjustment-Integration | Merging and incorporating one's cultural norms and the professional role together |
| PC | Passive Coping | Internal self-modification to meet external demands |
| AC | Active Coping | Altering external situations to meet internal needs |

**Appendix D: Questionnaire Response Data Examples**

Subsets of participants' responses from the questionnaire were selected to provide a more detailed example of the thoughts and opinions of the participants in this study. Participants' personal identifying information is protected through the use of a participant ID number to protect the anonymity of participants.

<u>Professional Question 1:</u> Have you experienced any language barriers, getting 'lost in translation', between colleagues (e.g. communication difficulties)? Please describe and how you overcame them:

ID571: *Yes. Misunderstandings often arise even when speaking the same language. The best way I found to overcome communication difficulties is to have the person repeat back to me the next steps (not in a commanding way though, but i.e. So I will do x and you will do...letting that person confirm')*

ID151: *Language barriers are not difficult as all colleagues I've worked with speak English fluently. However, there are some communication barriers that result in differences in culture. For example, I've noticed many Kenyans are not very direct and are hesitant to give a response that you may not like. Many people will prefer to say "yes" all the time rather than "no" and will tend to not respond if they have news that you may not like. To over come this, I think I have become a bit more persistent and regularly follow up with people and ask many questions to get to the real story.*

ID025: *Often times our Kenyan colleagues will only speak in mother tongue or kiswahili. This is against the rules in our office, so it's a bit frustrating.*

<u>Professional Question 2:</u> Have you experienced different performance standards or expectations while working in Kenya (e.g. meeting deadlines, or work quality)? Please provide a few examples:

ID590: *Personally, I have so far had good experiences with partners; however, I see friends who have experience issues with business partner who fail to show up to appointments and cancel in the last minute, bosses who fail to pay fees and salaries on time, and a strong sense that people expect a lot from you, but sometimes neglect to*

*reimburse you. This just makes me stick to my own strict rules of collecting payment for services rendered.*

ID501: *Yes, I find that meeting times are very flexible and are not adhered to strictly. Meetings also tend to be longer and have open discussion forums instead of direct, quick meetings led by a member of management. In the work I do, I find that delegated work needs to be very detailed and with specific requirements; asking for general input or someone to 'run away with something' tends to yield minimal results.*

ID803: *Yes. My experience is that in Kenya, meeting deadlines, producing work that is free from errors and completed in accordance with the initial instructions from a supervisor are very infrequently expected or valued. I don't think this is necessarily wrong, but it makes the duration (though not necessarily effort) of tasks and the achievement of goals must more unpredictable. Also, junior workers are paid much less than junior workers in the west. At the same salary point I suspect the performance standards would be similar.*

Professional Question 3: Have you observed a different work ethic in Kenya in comparison to your home country? Please elaborate on your views of the work ethic here in Kenya and possible ways it can be improved:

ID501: *I do not find the work ethic to be different - so many people work so diligently and hard - but I find the approach to work is different. Items which can be done immediately are sometimes put off for a later date or put to a lower priority - there is less of an emphasis on timeliness.*

ID892: *Yes - tendency to not be timely, to submit sub-par work, one of my colleagues even naps at his desk! There is also not a culture of working late in my office. I also feel like people will say yes and then not deliver. I wish people felt that they were able to say when they lack the time/ability to complete a task.*

ID494: *Yes, a large portion of the day is spent taking breaks. This could be improved by setting higher expectations for staff rather than letting them complete a lower threshold of work than could be reasonably done throughout a work day. Also work ethic would*

*improve if they hired people who actually cared about the cause and didn't see the work merely as a paycheck.*

Professional Question 4: What modifications have you had to make to personal behaviors, or situations within the work place (e.g. communication style, or organizational setting)? Please describe:

ID151: *Kenya is very hierarchical. As a young female working with older male colleagues, I've had to communicate in a way to gain respect from them while not trying to tread on their territory.*

ID803: *In the west I would criticize someone who didn't do their job and let the team down. However, in Kenya I have learned never to criticize people in the work place because my experience is that, no matter how unreasonable or incompetent that person in being, they will always find this unacceptable. Also I just plan for everyone to be late to every meeting.*

Professional Question 5: Do you encounter misunderstandings or conflicts among colleagues, supervisors or business associates that you have not experienced previously? Please explain situations in which misunderstandings or conflicts occur, and how you have been able to resolve conflict:

ID833: *Yes, between British Expat and Kenyans. Brits have a colonial mentality of being the only ones who are correct and do not take into account the point of view of the Kenyan colleagues.*

ID742: *Misunderstandings usually occur when you expect things to be done, but they are not, mainly because you expect people to act proactively and remember, but that's not happening. People always rely on you to remind them or refresh their memory, which is tiring!*

ID671: *Not really. It´s a fact that people with different cultural backgrounds/religions etc have different attitudes - as long as there is mutual respect and tolerance that is enriching rather than conflicting.*

Professional Question 6: Do you experience good communication and teamwork between yourself and your colleagues? Please describe your experiences:

ID178: *Not really, I see no team work in my team, but I also think there's organizational issues inside the organization I work in.*

ID501: *I try to communicate as often as possible with my team and my colleagues. However, I often find that some communication is still missing, which affects teamwork and work.*

ID151: *Yes, I have had fairly good experience in communication. The one thing that I have had trouble with, though, is people not always willing to tell me when there is a problem.*

Professional Question 7: Did you receive formal or informal type of cross-cultural training prior to, or at the beginning of, your current position? Please describe any training you received, or areas in which training would have been beneficial:

ID501: *I have not received any training in cross-cultural communication, but working in oral environments and with different perceptions of time would be helpful.*

ID494: *No. At a previous position I was given a sort of "cultural orientation", but found it basically worthless in that it provided mostly stereotypes about Kenyan culture. When working at a larger ngo we had quarterly trainings that occasionally dealt with cross cultural differences and how they affect teamwork. However, many times they ended up becoming a pedestal for local staff to complain about expats or vice versa rather than a learning experience of how our cultural upbringings make us different and give us different perspectives on work and life.*

Professional Question 8: Have you found it difficult to adjust to the organizational culture, or the shared values of those you work with, while in Kenya? Please explain your difficulties or successes:

ID178: *My adjustment has been slow and I don't think I will ever be able to fully adjust as the only one in the organisation representing "Western business values". Learning*

*Swahili has helped, and at the surface everyone is very helpful and welcoming, but my Kenyan friends are all outside the traditional professional setting.*

ID542: *Not so difficult other than spending a lot of time focusing on mentoring and coaching*

ID151: *Things that I've found difficult to adjust to is that many people i work with have been hot tempered and while some of their comments seem appropriate to others here, in the US it would be seen as very poor workplace etiquette. Also, people's roles here seem very defined and it seems difficult for people to work outside of those roles. However, working in Kenya does not seem that much more difficult than working in the US. Every workplace has their own culture and it is just a matter of discovering it and learning how to adapt.*

<u>Socio-cultural Question 1:</u> Do you find the local traditional food satisfactory, or are you more likely to seek out food you are familiar with from your home country? Please elaborate on what food suits you:

ID542: *Most traditional local food is satisfactory but I am Indian and love eating Indian food here! Also, I don't like Matumbo.*

ID671: *As I am not much of a meat eater, nyama choma is just a bit too much for me, and I still have to find my love for ugali. I love, however, kachumbari, sukuma wiki etc as well as all the fresh fruit. As I love Indian food, I am very happy to find spices and igredients in Kenyan shops. I do not really cook all that much dishes related to my home country but rather a mix of mediterranean, middle eastern and Asian dishes. I was really happy when I found places to buy rye bread and cheese though!*

<u>Socio-cultural Question 2:</u> Do you feel that learning kiswahili is necessary while living in Kenya? Please describe your exposure level to kiswahili and if it is helpful:

ID494: *No. I took two levels of courses (about 50 hours) but when I tried using the language most people interrupted and spoke in English instead. Only in Tanzania did I find it necessary and appreciated that I had taken time to learn any. It does help to recognize when people are taking about you when they think you can't understand though.*

ID178: *It's not necessary but it's useful and any curious expat should seek to learn at least some basics.*

ID892: *No it is not necessary for my job but I am learning anyway (formal lessons at a language school twice a week) because it is fun to talk to people in kiswahili.*

Socio-cultural Question 3: Does your current housing situation meet the comforts that you are accustomed to in your home country? Please provide details on your current housing situation, and any difficulties or challenges you faced adjusting to the new housing situation in Kenya:

ID833: *Issues I've experienced are safety and water. Lived in a cheaper location with no water challenges, but experienced issues with safety. Moved to a more expensive location which is much safer, but have to buy water. It is a compromise I'm willing to make. Found the new place by word of mouth. It is large flat, 3 bedroom with many bedroom closets and a large kitchen. Most places in my budget have tiny kitchens and no storage in the bedrooms.*

ID025: *Current house is just fine. Water and power outages are constant. And living behind bars and askaris is very much an opposite of life in America, but I can't complain.*

Socio-cultural Question 4: How would you describe socializing with Kenyan nationals? Or do you find yourself naturally drawn to personal relationships with other expatriates? Please elaborate:

ID501: *My good friends are expatriates since I find we have a common understanding and similar takes on items. I socialize with Kenyan nationals on a daily basis, but I find my interactions are more friendly or superficial. It can be a challenge to explain my feelings, or my perspective based on how I grew up. In these cases, I find my closest friends are expatriates since they understand where I am coming from.*

ID571: *Personally, I find Kenyan nationals wonderful. I enjoy socializing with expatriates as well, but it is easy to find many Kenyans with whom we share commonalities.*

ID178: *Both, I have a mixed group of friends. However most of my Kenyan friends are very modern and liberal in their thinking. Strong class society makes it harder to mix and mingle more.*

Socio-cultural Question 5: Are you able to fulfill your personal hobbies, recreational activities or entertainment needs in Kenya? Please provide a few examples of how you have been able to fulfill your activities:

ID025: *Due to the recent (past year) security issues, this answer would be no. Westgate did a number on me.*

ID494: *No. I miss cultural events and wish there were more museum, symphony, plays, and other cultural events and wish that those that do occur were better advertised .I used to run with the hashers until I began to feel like the security situation precluded running on the roads.*

ID803: *Kenya has amazing outdoor activities and we've done a lot of that. But the security issues and lack of good roads make a lot of other things (jogging) difficult.*

Socio-cultural Question 6: Do you have access to adequate health care and medical facilities? Please recount your experiences with the medical facilities and health care providers in Kenya:

ID501: *I gave birth to my first born prematurely at NBO Hospital under an emergency situation and I have to say they did a wonderful job and saved her. However, I do fear an emergency situation and the response time of an ambulance due to their ability to make it through traffic...this actually I find terrifying with two young children...*

ID494: *The doctors are poorly trained and give similar diagnoses for every ailment regardless the symptoms. If you go to the hospital you are made to wait for hours for simple yet unnecessary procedures. They also don't have a concept of confidentiality and while refusing to provide test results to the patient, divulged sensitive information to third parties without permission.*

Socio-cultural Question 7: Do you feel that Kenya provides adequate support for your emotional, financial and physical well-being (e.g. social support, personal/property safety)? Please describe your sense of personal safety while living and traveling in Kenya:

ID833: *Not really, but then it is the same for most Kenyans I know; so why should I be any different. I think I can be targeted because I'm not Kenyan.*

ID151: *That is the one thing that I really don't like about Kenya, personal safety issues. I've been carjacked twice at gunpoint in 2 years and I've had a very good friend shot and killed during an attempted robbery. Approximately half the expatriates I know have been robbed violently (gun point, knife point, assaulted, etc.) at least once. People I know (expatriates and locals) don't walk at night because of safety issues. I know the police do good work, but it is frustrating when you see dozens of police officers at check-points taking bribes from over packed matatus, but don't see a single police officer patrolling crime prone areas.*

ID748: *All of this (social support & personal support) is there. I'm only afraid when driving at night due to a carjacking years ago but overall I feel safe*

Socio-cultural Question 8: Have you encountered differences or difficulties maintaining romantic relationships or friendships with Kenyan nationals? Please elaborate on any differences or difficulties:

ID501: *Yes, I find that it is hard to become friends with Kenyans (or making friends in general gets more difficult with age). Since most Kenyans have strong support networks, here - families, friends from school, etc. they are less likely to put themselves 'out there' to make a new friend. I find I often have to make the plans or 'encourage' the friendship. In this way, friendships with expats tend to be easier since they're also willing to put themselves 'out there' to make a new friend.*

ID590: *Ah, now I can elaborate...I am dating a Kenyan / Japanese who was raised here. We are still experiencing serious communication issues, particularly in him keeping appointments, and informing me of any delays or unexpected hurdles which he may face in the meantime. But I've just had to be completely blunt and broke it down, so I hope things will improve!*

Socio-cultural Question 9: Have you experienced any embarrassing situations in which you felt you were not dressed or behaving appropriately? Please provide a few examples:

ID542: *Aside from eating Matumbo and having to spit it out, no.*

ID106: *Not really, though I find the locals here dress up a bit more than I'm used to (heels and makeup, etc.) and are usually in very fine form while I walk around in jeans and sandals!*

ID151: *I always feel this when I work out, especially run. I usually dress to Kenyan standards, but when I run, i have a very hard time not wearing athletic shorts. I run regularly and I always get stares from people and I notice the stares are more when I'm in shorts. In all other situations, I gladly conform to Kenyan norms (no mini-skirts, shorts, inappropriate shirts, etc.), but this is the one case where for my own comfort, I conform to American norms. I just find it incredibly difficult to run in pants when it is hot and sunny.*

## Appendix E: Notes from the Researcher

As a foreign student, and unique type of expatriate myself, I would like to provide a brief description of my experiences, as well as an interest that become thesis. I was born and raised in Wisconsin, United States of America, and began my studies at the University of Nairobi's Institute of Anthropology in 2012. My experiences are unique because I was not involved in a professional environment, but experienced academic and socio-cultural environments that required adjustment.

What modifications have you had to make to personal behaviors, or situations at university (e.g. communication style, or organizational setting)?:

*The greatest challenge that I had adjusting to the organization culture of the University of Nairobi was the decentralization of all activities. I was accustomed to an integrated system in which all resources and operational activities pertaining to classes and registration were all conveniently located on an online platform. It was challenging to figure out what and when I was supposed to complete specific required tasks, there wasn't a centralized location that I could find information.*

Have you found it difficult to adjust to the organizational culture, or the shared values of those you work with, while in Kenya?

*While adjusting to the difference in time management and timeliness, I tended to find expectations of work quality to be similar. I continue to be punctual for majority of my planned activities, so I was able to retain that behavior while in Kenya. But I did occasionally play the waiting game.*

Do you find the local traditional food satisfactory, or are you more likely to seek out food you are familiar with from your home country? Please elaborate on what food suits you:

*I do not have any complaints about the local cuisine available in Kenya. In fact, I much prefer the availability of fresh produce to what I am used to in the US. I found that food*

*tended to be fresher, and locally sourced. I continue to incorporate Kenyan recipes when cooking, even though I am no longer living in Kenya.*

Do you feel that Kenya provides adequate support for your emotional, financial and physical well-being (e.g. social support, personal/property safety)? Please describe your sense of personal safety while living and traveling in Kenya:

*In general, yes I felt support in most ways while living in Kenya. I had/have a great social and emotional support system in Kenya, and they were Kenyan, Ethiopian, South African, Swedish, German, Finnish, English, Italian, American and so much more. Nairobi presented great opportunities to meet and connect with people from all types of cultural backgrounds. And I was able to find a well-rounded support system. My personal safety in Nairobi however was always an area of great stress. I was the victim of several attempted robberies, so I feel that while Nairobi has so much to offer, there are a lot of opportunities to loose. Loose your sense of personal safety, trust in others and peace of mind. Anyone can be targeted, and it's a problem that all Nairobians deal with.*

Do you feel that learning kiswahili is necessary while living in Kenya? Please describe your exposure level to kiswahili and if it is helpful:

*I studied Kiswahili for two months when I first arrived in Kenya, but everyone insisted on speaking in English so that made it difficult to learn. I did find it very helpful in specific situations to know and understand Kiswahili; this was most helpful when traveling in smaller towns and villages outside of Nairobi. It was also helpful in bridging the social gap between Kenyans and myself, and it was generally appreciated (and a big surprise) when I used Kiswahili.*