Perception of Organizational Support Among Expatriate Academics in the Gulf: A Systematic Literature Review

Farah Kalmey[1], Muhammad A. Al-Roomy[2]*

A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T

Purpose: This study, through a systematic literature review investigated the kind of perceived organizational support (POS) accorded to expatriate academics working in universities and colleges in Gulf Countries and the effect POS has on their general adjustment. **Methodology:** Four electronic databases were searched viz., Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and EBSCO Host. The language was restricted to only English, while dates were restricted from 2010 – 2023, an era when active recruitment of self-initiated expatriate academics started in these countries. After applying Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA), 14 studies were selected for review. **Findings:** The results yielded that expatriate academics did not receive enough support from their employers, which made them less motivated. The few who got support were western nationals working in international branch campuses. The consequence of not receiving appropriate POS resulted in academics not adjusting properly. **Implications:** The study ended with some practical implications and limitations for further research.

Introduction

The education sector, like any other sector in the global economy, has not been immune to acquisition of global talents (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). There has been an increase in the recruitment of international academic faculty members among Asian universities to aid their global competitiveness. Following this trend, many private and public universities and colleges in the Gulf countries employ academics from abroad (Sulong, Dousin, & Ward, 2022). These countries do not have adequately qualified local people and that is the reason recruiting academics from other countries is a necessity (Tahir, 2023). These expatriate academics come from countries with different cultures and work policies

[1] Department of English, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, King Abdullah International Medical Research Centre (KAIMARC), Saudi Arabia.
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3067-5810, Email: Muhamadf@ksau-hs.edu.sa
[2] Department of English, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, King Abdullah International Medical Research Centre (KAIMARC), Saudi Arabia.
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0001- 8678-6697, Email: roomym@ksau-hs.edu.sa
* Correspondence: roomym@ksau-hs.edu.sa

to the host countries (Fenech, Baguant, & Abdelwahed, 2020). This kind of growth in the recruitment of internationally mobile group of employees is a response to the demand for global talent, and a consequence of the rapid development of technology and globalization.

Such overseas employees are often informally addressed as independent expatriates (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017), self-assigned expatriates (Doherty, 2013), company assigned expatriates or assigned expatriates (Alshahrani, 2022), self-initiated expatriates (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014), and short-term assignees (Shaffer et al., 2016). These new types of expatriates and their classification is based on the nature and purpose of employment. For instance, self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are those individuals who go abroad to seek employment on their own volition (Maharjan, Stoermer, & Froese, 2022). The increase in the global mobility of SIEs has alerted international and host country organizations notice the values and contributions that SIEs bring to their personnel and reputation (Alshahrani, 2022). Indeed, multinational organizations realized that SIEs can be an economical and flexible alternative human resource to AEs (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017). Similarly, assigned expatriates (AEs) are those employees who are sent to a subsidiary abroad by a parent company (McNulty & Hutchings, 2016), who have certain expertise and who are sent to work abroad by organizations to perform particular tasks (Andresen et al., 2014).

It is not surprising that these individuals develop a boundaryless mentality (Andresen et al., 2014). In the boundary-less global career, these individuals do not depend on employers to shape their career aspirations. Instead, they take sole responsibility of their career direction. However, the blurred boundary discourse is not shared by many researchers. For example, Haslberger, Brewster and Hippler (2014) believe that the idea that people can freely cross borders to pursue their dreams is not straightforward because countries erect boundary restrictions to protect their citizens and culture. This means the global free movement paradigm comes with caveats, for example, overcoming unwelcoming citizenry and dealing with cultural differences. Besides the sponsorship system followed in these countries requires that expatriates are willing to acclimatize themselves with socio-cultural similarities and follow the employment policies. Consequently, Singh et al. (2021) contend that these new types of expatriates, including AEs and SIEs, tend to adapt and re-package their social and work skills depending on the demands of the international job market.

In order that these employees get used to life and work in new countries, employers need to provide them full support to get the best out of their abilities and skills (Eisenberger, Rhoades Shanock, & Wen, 2020). Organizations must support these expatriates so that they can feel settled and become productive at work (Fenech et al., 2020). Much has been written on the importance of perceived organizational support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 2020). However, there is a dearth of literature about POS in the international work arena (Isakovic & Whitman, 2019), especially in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait, where millions of expatriates are employed. Some systematic reviews were conducted about the experiences expatriates go through as they adjust to life abroad (Jones et al., 2022; Malik & Khan, 2020; Sousa et al., 2017; van Bakel, 2019). There also exist a few studies that provide important data about the issues expatriates encounter when working abroad, but there is a gap in literature about the effect of POS on expatriate academics cross-cultural adjustment in the GCC, a region that employs millions of expatriates including expatriate academic (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017). Hence, the dearth

of studies on POS and adjustment in the individual GCC nations has necessitated the current study. The aim of the current study was to fill this gap by systematically analyzing and providing a synthesis about POS and cross-cultural adjustment among expatriate academics working in GCC countries. This study hopes to review current empirical evidence about the effect of organizational support among expatriate academics and whether POS helps facilitate adjustment.

Literature Review

Academics Expatriation in Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) comprise Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, which have witnessed huge economic growth since the discovery of crude oil deposits (Khedher & Asadullah, 2020). Due to this rapid economic growth, GCC countries have largely been dependent on expatriate workers because of shortage of adequately qualified indigenous workers (Alshahrani, 2022). Indeed, more than 90% of the workforce in some Gulf countries, for example UAE, are expatriates, who work in areas like medicine, education, and finance. To reduce their over reliance on foreign expertise, these countries rapidly invest in the expansion of institution of higher learning (Maharjan et al., 2022). This rapid expansion has outpaced the availability of qualified academic workforce that is available locally and has led to the over-reliance on expatriate academics (Austin et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2022). However, employing expatriates from other countries come with consequences. According to Asif, Bano and Al Najjar (2020) expatriate academics encounter myriad problems as they adjust into their work. Some of the problems they face include communicating in the local language (Selmer & Lauring, 2015; Thirlwall et al., 2021), understanding cultural issues (Richardson & Wong, 2018), government bureaucracy (Tahir, 2023) and lack of organizational support (Sokro, Pillay, & Bednall, 2021).

Perceived Organizational Support and its Consequence on Adjustment

Perceived organizational support (POS) is where employees have beliefs and feelings that their employers appreciate them (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2014). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) add that POS manifests itself when employees' general belief is that the organization cares about their wellbeing and values their contributions. When an organization has policies that respect and care for the wellness of its employees, a perception of support is developed by these employees, and this tends to not only engender cross-cultural adjustment in expatriates but also promote their productivity (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Hasbullah, 2022; Sokro et al., 2021). Expatriates are also confronted with new work policies and procedures that may be different to what they are used to in their home countries. Compared to domestic work settings, working in a foreign country come with huge challenges because expatriates have to overcome layers of uncertainties in terms of the culture of the host countries and new work bureaucracies (Stoermer et al., 2018). These challenges can be directly work related or a spill-over from experiences outside the workplace.

The workplace challenges can encompass language, ways of communicating and dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds and governmental regulations (Guttormsen, Francesco, & Chapman, 2018; Selmer & Lauring, 2015; Xu, 2024). In their

study based on GCC expatriates, Khedher and Asadullah (2020) found expatriates in the UAE suffer both psychological and anxiety problems due to the differences in cultures. However, they add that expatriates who receive support from their employers are able to adjust to their new surroundings. In their study on expatriates in Korea, Stoermer et al. (2018) establish a co-relation between POS and adjustment. This study reported that where POS was instituted by employers, and where organizations share information with new expatriate employees, the expatriates tend to adjust to work more easily. Making information available is without a doubt very important, but training about culture and work policies may equally be as important in inculcating perception of support. Therefore, employers need to support their expatriate employees so that they can adjust and become productive because of the high cost associated with expatriate failure (Ng, Bautista, & Williams, 2023; Sengupta, Chattopadhyay, & Ghosh, 2022; Sokro et al., 2021). When expatriates get support from their organizations, they not only adjust to life in the host country, but they become happier and perhaps stay longer.

Kawai and Strange (2014) support the significance of POS for expatriates. They argue that POS is about how employees perceive their organization and a reflection of the psychological contract between the organization and its workers. They maintain that discretionary benefits and opportunities accorded to employees may produce positive outcomes. For instance, organizations that give fair evaluation to employees' efforts could engender loyalty and commitment. Although Kawai and Strange's (2014) study provides useful points about the importance of POS, it was only conducted among only Japanese expatriates working in Germany. Another important consequence of perceived organization support may be its general positive contribution to the adjustment of expatriates. POS can be a catalyst that creates a positive feeling towards the culture of the host country because moving and settling in a new country with a different culture can be difficult task to overcome for expatriate academics (Kittle, 2022; Wilkins & Annabi, 2023). Furthermore, getting used to life in a culture can not only be a challenge for expatriate but their spouses and children too (Phuong, 2023; Thirlwall et al., 2021). Stoermer, Selmer and Lauring (2021) underscore the importance of accompanying partners/families. In their study of expatriate trailing partners, they attest that positive disposition of families can have a positive impact on expatriate general adjustment. However, besides personal disposition, support for families from employing organizations can play a major role in helping the accompanying families settle-in to their new county, thus contributing to the adjustment of the expatriate employee (Jones et al., 2022).

Studies On Perceived Organizational Support and Adjustment

Many studies have investigated the effect of perceived organizational support on cross-cultural adjustment. For example, in their longitudinal study, Major et al. (1995) add that new employees may adjust better to a new work environment if they get assistance from their co-workers and supervisors, even when they feel the organization is not meeting their expectation. Showail, McLean Parks and Smith (2013) suggest that POS may be particularly important for SIEs in cultures where adjustment can be difficult, for example, Saudi Arabia. They assert that SIEs could be vulnerable in such cultures and POS might be an important mitigating factor that helps to ameliorate their isolation. Indeed, according to Eisenberger et al. (2020) POS might even be more useful in Eastern cultures, for example, Gulf countries,

because of the collective nature of their culture and society, which might be manifested in organizations in these countries.

In other words, when POS is implemented or adopted at the workplace, it can have a more positive effect; that is, its effectiveness gets widespread which could contribute to increased productivity and inculcate organizational citizenship. However, the nature of mobility of SIEs is that organizations that support and care for their SIE staff in providing POS and career development, could inadvertently be supplying them with the tools they need to move to other lucrative destinations (Cao et al., 2014; Shi & Senom, 2023). In a recent study, Tahir (2023), investigated the challenges faced by expatriate academics in the United Arab Emirates in relation to the motivation, general adjustment, and retention. This study found that most interviewees reported positive responses because they were able to adjust well with the general environment such as living conditions in the host country. Few encountered some adjustment challenges concerning living conditions, healthcare system and the weather.

Hassan and Hashim (2011) compared the responses of Malaysian and expatriate academics about POS. The expatriate academics reported lower job satisfaction than their Malaysian counterparts because Malaysian academics are given tenured positions while the expatriates were employed on short term contracts. In the same vein, Austin et al. (2014) highlight the negative effect of perceived organizational injustice on organizational commitment. Indeed, many expatriate academics expressed that their lack of commitment is because they feel they do not get enough support from senior management. Furthermore, Hassan and Hashim (2011) also reveal that expatriates who perceive injustice and unfairness at work report low organizational attachment. They attribute this perception of injustice to the fact that there is little interaction between the native and expatriate academics, perhaps because the expatriate academics cannot mix with local academics due to cultural differences, thus may not earn "the in-group membership" (p. 90). Hassan and Hashim's (2011) research, however, does not specify the nationalities of the expatriate academics, which could have a bearing on the different adjustment problems experienced by them.

Methodology

Review Questions

This literature review commenced with the few questions investigating the kind of perceived organizational support (POS) accorded to expatriate academics working in universities and colleges in Gulf Countries and its impact on their adjustment to a foreign soil. These questions were the theoretical underpinnings to carry out this review and dominated the entire process of data retrieval and assessment of the sampled data.

Data Collection and Retrieval Strategies

The electronic databases utilized to search articles included Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Ebsco Host. The language of the articles was restricted to English only. The dates were restricted from 2010 – 2024 as the year 2010 was the year when active recruitment of SIE academics started in GCC countries. The keyword combinations of search terms were "adjustment" AND "perceived organizational support" AND "GCC

countries". Thereafter, additional keyword combinations were added into the search, that is close synonyms. For example, ("international academic*" OR "foreign professor" OR "international teacher") AND ("perceived support" OR "perceived organizational support"). These search terms resulted in retrieval of 586 records. The records were then restricted to research that emanated from countries in the GCC. This resulted in the retrieval of 55 articles. The articles were further screened to make sure that they answered the review questions. To exhaust all published works, further research was done by looking at reference lists.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were quite extensive as shown in Table 1. All criteria were strictly adhered to complete the process of the review.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Expatriate academics	Conference papers and study reviews
Peer-reviewed materials	PhD and master thesis
English-language texts	Non-English studies
Containing search terms in title, abstract and/or article.	Chapters from books
Empirical studies	Opinion, editorials, and news items
Study addresses POS and SIE academics adjustment experiences	Reviews of other studies that have been excluded
Research from the Gulf region	

Studies Screening Process

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) (Figure 1) (Moher et al, 2009) process was followed in the screening of the retrieved articles.

Quality Assessment Process

This systematic literature review utilizes studies that used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Hawker et al.'s (2002) critical appraisal tool (CAT) was used to evaluate the quality of these papers. The reason for choosing this assessment tool was because of its versatility; in other words, it can be used to assess different data from varied subject areas. There are other quality appraisal tools that could be used to assess the quality of the papers selected for this study. One of this is the traditional levels of evidence. However, the fact that it puts more emphasis on randomized controlled trials makes it less suitable. The measuring scale developed by Down & Black (Sousa et al., 2017), could have been used for the current study. However, its 27-item measuring scale is too long. This systematic review focuses on studies that are not homogeneous, and this means the use of hierarchies of scales may classify studies that are not methodologically quantitative, deficient and expert opinions.
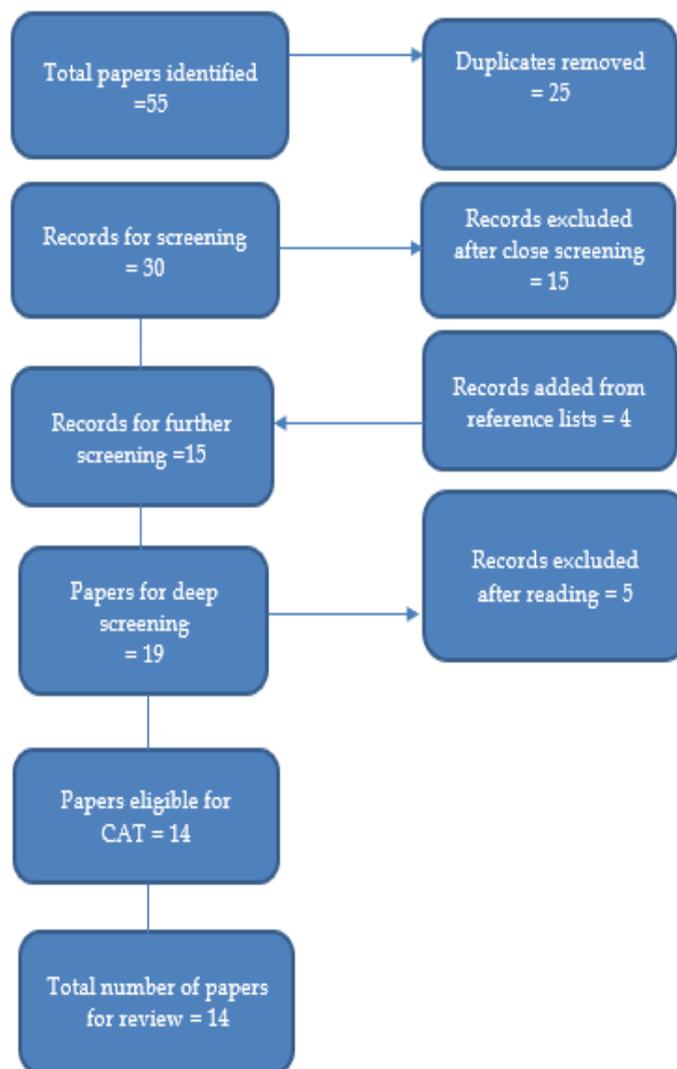
Figure 1: *PRISMA Process for Literature Search and Retrieval.*

Hawker et al.'s (2002) tool CAT utilizes nine appraisal items across a research article. A score of 1 (very poor) to 4 (good) is given to different areas of a paper (Hawker et al, 2002). Thus, a research paper may be given a general lower quality score of between 9 (very poor) to a higher score of 36 points (very good). Therefore, the articles chosen for this study were all assessed using these criteria. Papers with a score of 20 and above were selected for the review. At the end, using the Hawker's CAT quality assessment tool, 14 papers got a score of between 21 and 34 and were included in the final review for analysis, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Review Papers About SIE Academics

	Author (s)	Year	CAT score	Country	Method	Scope
1.	Abdul-Cader and Anthony	2014	26	Saudi Arabia	Mixed method	The study investigates the motivation of SIE academics working in Saudi Arabia.
2.	Alshammari. H	2012	21	Saudi Arabia	Quantitative	The study evaluated whether previous and marital status on SIEs working in a university. There were 207 academics from 2 universities.
3.	Asif et al.	2020	24	Saudi Arabia	Qualitative	Describes the experiences of 13 non-western academics working in a university.
4.	Austin et al.	2014	26	UAE	Qualitative	The describes the motivation, satisfaction and commitment of 33 academics working in 13 universities.
5.	Bashir	2012	32	UAE	Quantitative	The paper investigates the effect of POS on adjustment among SIE academics
6.	Isakovic and Whitman	2013	34	UAE	Quantitative	The study investigates the adjustment experiences of 207 academics working in 10 universities.
7.	Isakovic and Whitman	2019	34	UAE	Quantitative	Investigates the success of female SIEs working in the UAE
8.	Lamers-Reeuwijk et al	2019	28	Oman	Mixed method	Study tries to establish the challenges faced by non-Western academics working in Oman.
9.	Naithani	2016	26	Bahrain, Oman, & UAE	Quantitative	Investigates the effect the provision of recreation can have on SIEs.
10.	Wilkins and Neri	2019	29	UAE	Quantitative	Explores the motivation and adjustment of 17 expatriates working in 4 universities.
11.	Wilkins et al	2023	32	UAE & Qatar	Quantitative	Investigates the rewards and challenges SIE academics working for international universities face
12.	Romanowski and Nasser	2014	28	Qatar	Qualitative	The study presents the experiences and conflicts of 20 professors.
13.	Sulong et al,	2022	30	Saudi Arabia	Qualitative	Explores the motivation and experiences of SIE academics working in Saudi Arabia
14.	Tahir	2023	28	UAE	Qualitative	Explores the motivation, adjustment and retention of SIE academics

Findings

Study Designs of Papers Identified

A total of 14 articles were selected for this review (Table 2) for final analysis. All the identified papers were published between 2012 and 2023. Moreover, all the studies emanated from the Gulf countries. Indeed, majority of the articles were from the UAE (8) and was followed by Saudi Arabia (4). Two articles originated from Qatar while Bahrain and Oman had one each. The concentration of studies in the UAE and Saudi Arabia means that universities employ many foreign academics. Moreover, it may be an indication of the emerging nature of higher education in these countries and that there may not be enough local talents to fill vacancies.

The fact that there were only 14 articles selected for the current point to the nascent nature of SIE academics' research in general and POS in particular. As far as the research methodologies used in the identified papers is concerned, 50% of the identified records used quantitative methodology (Alshammari, 2012; Bashir, 2012; Isakovic & Forseth Whitman, 2013; Isakovic & Whitman, 2019; Naithani, 2016; Wilkins & Annabi, 2023; Wilkins & Neri, 2019). 36% of the papers were qualitative (Asif et al., 2020; Austin et al., 2014; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Sulong et al., 2022; Tahir, 2023), while 14% used mixed method approach (Cader, 2012; Lamers-Reeuwijk, Admiraal, & van der Rijst, 2020).

The sample size of the articles used in this review vary. They range from n= 20 (Asif et al., 2020) for a qualitative study, to n= 900 (Bashir, 2012), an article that utilized quantitative method. Papers that used qualitative methodology had smaller sample sizes for example, (Asif et al., 2020). The larger populations samples come from the non-qualitative articles for example, (Alshammari, 2012; Isakovic & Forseth Whitman, 2013). The disparities in the sample sizes are to be expected as qualitative research is more about details or deeper understanding of a phenomenon, whilst quantitative is meant to assess a larger population for generalization.

For aims of the selected records, the papers that used qualitative methods are generally exploratory (Sulong et al., 2022; Tahir, 2023), and others researched the participants every day experiences (Austin et al., 2014; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). The quantitative articles are cross sectional and investigated different areas of adjustment among expatriate academics. For example, Naithani (2016) investigates the benefits of the provision of support to academics and how their perception of about their improves. Bashir (2012) assess whether there was an improvement in adjustment possibilities among expatriate academics when the organizations they work provide extra support. Other papers, for instance, Lamers-Reeuwijk et al. (2020) investigate the challenges academics face as they adjust to life in the host countries.

Perceived Organizational Support

The perception of being supported by your employer can have a positive effect on one's productivity at the workplace. Indeed, research in domestic settings recognize the importance and positive effect of organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The effect of perceived organizational support (POS) becomes even more imperative when working in a new country and culture (Isakovic & Whitman, 2019). The presence of POS in an organization helps SIEs have a more positive intent to stay (Cao et al., 2014). Indeed, the

uncertain and unfamiliar surroundings in a foreign setting make POS important. Its absence or lack of it can lead to expatriate's maladjustment. In other words, expatriate employees may feel their services not being valued and thus may leave their assignments prematurely. The current review found that there is evidence POS leads to expatriate adjustment. Where organizations institute a perception of value and inclusivity, the tendency is that SIE academics tend to reciprocate accordingly (Naithani, 2016). Expatriates appreciated and responded positively when there were engagements and interactions from their employers.

However, according to Naithani (2016) academics in the Middle East feel their organizations do not give them enough resources to develop their careers. Austin et al. (2014) claim that academics working in universities in the UAE were not given adequate support by their organizations in doing research. There was more focus on teaching than doing research and this seems to affect the adjustment of these academics. Naithani (2016) further argues there is a general perception among expatriate academics that they are not given freedom to choose courses they would like to teach. An earlier study by Bashir (2012) has also established a positive correlation between POS and adjustment. His study of academics working in a college in the UAE suggests that academics were able to adjust to life in the UAE because of the support they received from the institution they were working for. The lack of POS has also been found in the literature to affect adjustment. In the study of academics working in a university in Saudi Arabia, Asif et al. (2020) posit that expatriate academics felt unwanted because of a perception of lack of support from their management.

The Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on Adjustment

The current review points to adjustment as being critical to expatriate academics (Sulong et al., 2022; Tahir, 2023). Lack of training and professional development has been highlighted as a major drawback to adjustment (Austin et al., 2014). Academics in the UAE voiced their frustration about the how their institution did not see training and development as a priority. In many cases the absence of any form training, cultural training for example, may have contributed their misunderstanding of certain cultural situations. This has made these individuals loyal to their jobs and not the employer. Most expatriate academics in studies reviewed complained about the lack of job security as a major contributor to them seeing it as transit until they found other opportunities (Asif et al., 2020; Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Tahir, 2023). Moreover, as reported in some of the studies, another aspect that affects the adjustment of expatriates is the way people are compartmentalized. In other words, academics are accorded privileges according to their nationalities and passports they hold (Asif et al., 2020; Austin et al., 2014; Fenech et al., 2020; Naithani, 2016; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015).

From the studies reviewed, it becomes apparent that the phenomenon of pigeonholing and ethicizing academics into different categories transcends across the Gulf countries. However, Tahir (2023) and Wilkins and Neri (2019) found that many expatriate academics were generally satisfied and happy with life in the UAE. These group of academics attributed this positive feeling to the use English as a lingua franca and the presence of a large expatriate community. Moreover, the fact that Wilkins and Neri's study from expatriate academics working for satellite campuses of Western universities reports positive adjustment outcomes point to a different approach that could be adopted by host country universities

Discussion

The current study reviewed studies that emanated from GCC countries and examined the effect organizational support on the adjustment of expatriate academics in this region. It is the first one to synthesize evidence of organizational support among expatriate academics in the GCC- a region with a very large expatriate population. This review established that the effect of organizational support is an area that has not received enough attention from researchers. Considering the large number of expatriates working in these countries, this is surprising because the effect of organizational support factors on workers in domestic settings is well established (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Isakovic & Whitman, 2019). Most of the studies in this review point to lack of organizational support (Asif et al., 2020; Austin et al., 2014; Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) argue that the transient nature of the expatriates gives institutions little motivation to be more supportive. Asif et al. (2020) add that expatriate academics in Saudi Arabia find solace in their teaching because they feel their institution do not support them. This finding is consistent with research findings of (Austin et al., 2014) and Romanowski and Nasser (2015) who established that there is a general lethargy in Gulf universities when it comes to supporting their academic staff from abroad. The few that provide some support to their foreign academics tend to do it selectively. In other words, support is given to academics of certain nationalities namely those with Western passports (Austin et al., 2014; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015).

However, Wilkins and Neri (2019) and Wilkins and Annabi (2023) report that expatriate academics employed by foreign universities with branch campuses in the Gulf felt supported and were happy with their lives. These outcomes may be attributed to the fact that international branch campus and local universities may have different cultural practices and policies. In addition, it is possible that international satellite campuses are guided by employment and equality policies of their parent institutions. With respect to adjustment, POS has its positive impact to enable expatriate academics to adapt in the host country (Tahir, 2023).

The current review has found that the subject of POS has not received attention from researchers as there are very few studies (Bashir, 2012; Cader, 2012; Chapman et al., 2014; Naithani, 2016) that investigated the effect of POS on expatriate academics working in the Gulf. The subject of organizational support in domestic settings (Eisenberger et al., 2020) is well established and the little focus it has received in international settings, especially in the GCC- a region with millions of expatriates is a surprise finding of this review. Indeed, evidence from Stoermer et al. (2021), a study conducted in Korea, shows when organizations provide support to their expatriate employees, they tend to adjust and feel happier. Organizational support is an important pillar that can positively raise reciprocity among expatriate academics, and it is thus recommended that institutions strive to institute in their policies. Moreover, the feeling of being valued can not only motivate employees to be more productive but can instill a sense of belonging to the institution. For example, where organizational support was provided (Bashir, 2012; Chapman et al., 2014), expatriate academics reported that they were happy and adjusted to life in the GCC.

Receiving help and getting used to a new country and workplace is an imperative that all expatriates need. Adjustment becomes more critical when the culture of the expatriate and the host nation are very different. This review has found that adjusting to life in GCC can be challenging for expatriate academics (Tahir, 2023), especially those who come from

Western countries (Thirlwall et al., 2021). It is therefore recommended that universities in the GCC provide trainings to their new expatriate employees so that they can understand both general and work cultures of the host nations (Thirlwall et al., 2021). Furthermore, as reported by Wilkins and Neri (2019) where the right approaches are adopted, expatriates report better work outcomes and general happiness. Thus, host country institutions should consider adopting the policies and approaches that are used by satellite campuses of foreign universities. Institutions that employ expatriate academics should consider sensitizing accompanying partners about culture of the host countries (Fenech et al., 2020; Stoermer et al., 2021). Organizations should consider inviting partners/families of expatriates to cross-cultural training to enable them to get a deeper understanding of the wider culture of the host countries. Moreover, they should organize regular social gatherings that involve both expatriate and host country nationals.

Conclusion

The current study reviewed the effect of perceived organizational support on adjustment and its findings suggest that there is a basis for future studies on POS and expatriate adjustment. Despite the importance of organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Stoermer et al., 2021) it is evident that there is a scarcity of studies in an important area of human resources development, particularly in countries with a large number of expatriates. This dearth of research about finding the effect of perceived organizational support on expatriate academics in the GCC shows a lack of evidence about domestic settings and benefits of POS on employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Isakovic & Whitman, 2019). The review, therefore, argued that perceived organizational support (POS) is more crucial in the international work settings because of many issues that can hinder the adjustment of expatriate workers. Thus, the study calls for more research to be done in this important area and for employees to institute and integrate perceptions of support among their expatriate personnel.

The study has also highlighted adjustment as a key component in international employment abroad. Employers play a major role in helping their expatriate employees adjust to life in their new country. This further inculcates a feeling of being settled and thus help expatriates settle into their work routines. Evidence from this review suggest that organizations from GCC may not be doing enough to help their expatriate workers (Asif et al., 2020; Austin et al., 2014; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). We suggest that employers take practical steps to help these individuals settle in their new country and work environment. Moreover, host country organizations should endeavour helping the accompanying partners of expatriates (Selmer & Lauring, 2013). This should be done through the organization of cultural awareness training sessions. The provision of training courses for expatriate partners may create a feel being supported, thus aiding the adjustment process of the expatriates and their families (Fenech et al., 2020; Richardson & Wong, 2018) that they are being supported, it is likely that these may have a positive effect on the employed expatriate and their families.

This research is not devoid of limitations. First, we restricted our search to studies that investigated organizational support and adjustment in the Gulf, and this may have reduced the number of papers for the review. Secondly, expatriate academics studies in general, especially in the GCC, is a fairly new area of research (Richardson & McKenna,

2002). Consequently, this nascent nature may also have affected the extraction of adequate records on POS and adjustment in the Gulf. Another limitation is that there has not been enough focus on the issue of organizational support in expatriate academic research. This may have limited the findings of the current review. That is why this review is calling for researchers to endeavor to study the effect of POS on expatriate adjustment in the GCC, because of this region has a large expatriate population and establishing the effect of POS on adjustment may engender positive adjustment and increased productivity. Moreover, this review was undertaken by only two researchers. Perhaps if there were more reviewers, more could have been extracted and the findings produced may have had more depth.

Future research should examine perceived organizational support and its effect on adjustment (Stoermer et al., 2021). This may be particularly important because countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) host millions of expatriates from different parts of the world. Conducting an empirical research to ascertain the relationship between organizational support and expatriate adjustment could add depth in helping expatriates get used to life in countries with homogenous culture and religion (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017). In terms of theoretical implications, the current review contributes to the study of expatriation and expatriate academics from the GCC. In particular, the review not only highlights but also provides valuable addition to the research on POS and expatriate adjustment, as opposed to domestic settings (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of interest

Authorship Contribution Statement: *Kalmey*: Conceptualization, design, analysis, data analysis, writing. *Al-Roomy*: Editing/reviewing, supervision.

References

Alshahrani, S. T. (2022). The Motivation for the Mobility–A Comparison of the Company Assigned and Self-initiated Expatriates in Saudi Arabia. *Cogent Social Sciences, 8*(1), 2027626. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2027626

Alshammari, H. (2012). Self-Initiated Expatriate Adjustment in Saudi Universities: The Role of Previous Experience and Marital Status. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3*(23), 184-194. https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_23_December_2012/19.pdf

Andresen, M., Bergdolt, F., Margenfeld, J., & Dickmann, M. (2014). Addressing International Mobility Confusion – Developing Definitions and Differentiations for Self-initiated and Assigned Expatriates as Well as Migrants. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 25*(16), 2295-2318. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.877058

Asif, U., Bano, N., & Al Najjar, H. (2020). Experiences of Expatriate University Teachers in a Health Science University in Saudi Arabia-a Qualitative Study. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences, 36*(4), 799-803. https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.36.4.1896

Austin, A. E., Chapman, D. W., Farah, S., Wilson, E., & Ridge, N. (2014). Expatriate Academic Staff in the United Arab Emirates: The Nature of Their Work Experiences in Higher Education Institutions. *Higher Education, 68*, 541-557. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9727-z

Baruch, Y., & Forstenlechner, I. (2017). Global Careers in the Arabian Gulf: Understanding Motives for Self-initiated Expatriation of the Highly Skilled, Globally Mobile Professionals. *Career Development International, 22*(1), 3-22. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-12-2015-0164

Bashir, S. (2012). Perceived Organizational Support and the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Expatriates in the UAE. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues, 5*(1), 63-82. https://doi.org/10.1108/17537981211225862

Cader, A. A. (2012). *Motivational issues of faculty in Saudi Arabia* [Doctoral Dissertation, Walden University]. https://www.proquest.com/openview/af461bbc186de3df3747ded3254e851f

Cao, L., Hirschi, A., & Deller, J. (2014). Perceived Organizational Support and Intention to Stay in Host Countries Among Self-initiated Expatriates: The Role of Career Satisfaction and Networks. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 25*(14), 2013-2032. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.870290

Cerdin, J.-L., & Selmer, J. (2014). Who is a Self-initiated Expatriate? Towards Conceptual Clarity of a Common Notion. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 25*(9), 1281-1301. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.863793

Chapman, D., Austin, A., Farah, S., Wilson, E., & Ridge, N. (2014). Academic staff in the UAE: Unsettled journey. *Higher Education Policy, 27*, 131-151. https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2013.19

Doherty, N. (2013). Understanding the Self-initiated Expatriate: A Review and Directions for Future Research. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 15*(4), 447-469. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12005

Eisenberger, R., Rhoades Shanock, L., & Wen, X. (2020). Perceived organizational support: Why caring about employees counts. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 7*(1), 101-124. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-044917

Fenech, R., Baguant, P., & Abdelwahed, I. (2020). Cultural Learning in the Adjustment Process of Academic Expatriates. *Cogent Education, 7*(1), 1830924. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1830924

Guttormsen, D. S., Francesco, A. M., & Chapman, M. K. (2018). Revisiting the Expatriate Failure Concept: A Qualitative Study of Scandinavian Expatriates in Hong Kong. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 34*(2), 117-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2018.03.005

Hasbullah, M. A. (2022). Do Employment and Business Laws Integrate? Identification of Implications for Organizational Performance in Indonesia. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences, 17*(2), 15-26. https://ijcjs.com/menu-script/index.php/ijcjs/article/view/505

Haslberger, A., Brewster, C., & Hippler, T. (2014). *Managing Performance Abroad: A New Model for Understanding Expatriate Adjustment*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203111468

Hassan, A., & Hashim, J. (2011). Role of Organizational Justice in Determining Work Outcomes of National and Expatriate Academic Staff in Malaysia. *International Journal of Commerce and Management, 21*(1), 82-93. https://doi.org/10.1108/10569211111111711

Hawker, S., Payne, S., Kerr, C., Hardey, M., & Powell, J. (2002). Pearls, pith, and provocation: Appraising the evidence: Reviewing disparate data systematically. Qualitative Health, 12, 1284–1299

Isakovic, A. A., & Forseth Whitman, M. (2013). Self-initiated Expatriate Adjustment in the United Arab Emirates: A Study of Academics. *Journal of Global Mobility, 1*(2), 161-186. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-09-2012-0011

Isakovic, A. A., & Whitman, M. F. (2019). Factors Contributing to the Success of Female Self-initiated Expatriate Service Workers in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Organizational Psychology, 19*(5), 10-31. https://doi.org/10.33423/jop.v19i5.2508

Jones, E. M., Reed, M., Gaab, J., & Ooi, Y. P. (2022). Adjustment in Third Culture Kids: A Systematic Review of Literature. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 939044. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.939044

Kawai, N., & Strange, R. (2014). Perceived Organizational Support and Expatriate Performance: Understanding a Mediated Model. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 25*(17), 2438-2462. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.884615

Khedher, H., & Asadullah, M. A. (2020). Role of Social and Organizational Support in the Adjustment of Tunisian Self-initiated Expatriates. *European Journal of Training and Development, 44*(2/3), 171-190. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-08-2019-0142

Kittle, S. (2022). Grace and Free Will on Quiescence and Avoiding Semi-Pelagianism. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 14*(4), 70-95. https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.2022.3766

Lamers-Reeuwijk, A. M., Admiraal, W. F., & van der Rijst, R. M. (2020). Expatriate Academics and Transnational Teaching: the Need for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement to Go Hand in Hand. *Higher Education Research & Development, 39*(4), 733-747. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1693516

Lee, T.-I., Wang, M.-Y., Huang, B.-R., Hsu, C.-Y., & Chien, C.-Y. (2022). Effects of psychological capital and sport anxiety on sport performance in collegiate judo athletes. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 46*(2), 197-208. https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.46.2.9

Maharjan, M. P., Stoermer, S., & Froese, F. J. (2022). Research Productivity of Self-initiated Expatriate Academics: Influences of Job Demands, Resources and Cross-cultural Adjustment. *European Management Review, 19*(2), 285-298. https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12470

Major, D. A., Kozlowski, S. W. J., Chao, G. T., & Gardner, P. D. (1995). A Longitudinal Investigation of Newcomer Expectations, Early Socialization Outcomes, and the Moderating Effects of Role Development Factors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 80*(3), 418-431. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.80.3.418

Malik, A. P., & Khan, A. M. (2020). Bridging the Gap: A Review of Communication Skills Challenges for Expatriate Doctors in the Arabian Gulf. *Middle East Journal of Family Medicine, 18*(10), 107-111. https://doi.org/10.5742/MEWFM.2020.9381

McNulty, Y., & Hutchings, K. (2016). Looking for Global Talent in All the Right Places: a Critical Literature Review of Non-traditional Expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 27*(7), 699-728. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1148756

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & PRISMA Group*, T. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *Annals of internal medicine*, *151*(4), 264-269. https://doi/full/10.7326/0003-4819-151-4-200908180-00135

Naithani, D. P. (2016). Impact of Health and Recreation on Work-life Balance: a Case Study of Expatriates. *Available at SSRN 2866345, 1*(1), 33-45. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2866345

Ng, S.-P., Bautista, A., & Williams, K. E. (2023). Kindergarten teachers' knowledge of and beliefs in the influence of music and movement on children's self-regulation. *Electronic Journal of Music in Education,* (51), 116-130. https://doi.org/10.7203/LEEME.51.25809

Phuong, V. T. (2023). Factors affecting the learning of English proverbs and idioms of English-majored students at university of Khanh Hoa, Vietnam. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 9*(1), 35-47. https://ejal.info/menuscript/index.php/ejal/article/view/442

Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived Organizational Support: A Review of the Literature. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(4), 698-714. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.698

Richardson, C., & Wong, H.-W. (2018). Expatriate Academics in Malaysia: Motivation, Adjustment, and Retention. *Journal of Management Development, 37*(3), 299-308. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-12-2017-0421

Richardson, J., & McKenna, S. (2002). Leaving and Experiencing: Why Academics Expatriate and How They Experience Expatriation. *Career Development International, 7*(2), 67-78. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430210421614

Romanowski, M. H., & Nasser, R. (2015). Identity Issues: Expatriate Professors Teaching and Researching in Qatar. *Higher Education, 69*, 653-671. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9795-0

Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. (2013). Cognitive and Affective Reasons to Expatriate and Work Adjustment of Expatriate Academics. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 13*(2), 175-191. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595813485382

Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. (2015). Host Country Language Ability and Expatriate Adjustment: The Moderating Effect of Language Difficulty. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 26*(3), 401-420. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.561238

Sengupta, A., Chattopadhyay, S., & Ghosh, M. (2022). Innovative formulation of oleogels using bioactive compounds and sal starch and characterization of their products. *Future of Food: Journal on Food, Agriculture & Society, 10*(1). https://doi.org/10.17170/kobra-202110144899

Shaffer, M. A., Sebastian Reiche, B., Dimitrova, M., Lazarova, M., Chen, S., Westman, M., et al. (2016). Work- and family-role adjustment of different types of global professionals: Scale development and validation. *Journal of International Business Studies, 47*(2), 113-139. https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2015.26

Shi, Z., & Senom, F. (2023). Professional Identity Development of Chinese EFL Student Teachers through Practicum. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 107*(107), 235-253. https://ejer.com.tr/manuscript/index.php/journal/article/view/1478

Showail, S. J., McLean Parks, J., & Smith, F. L. (2013). Foreign Workers in Saudi Arabia: a Field Study of Role Ambiguity, Identification, Information-seeking, Organizational Support and Performance. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 24*(21), 3957-3979. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.781521

Singh, S. K., Edward Pereira, V., Mellahi, K., & Collings, D. G. (2021). Host Country Nationals Characteristics and Willingness to Help Self-initiated Expatriates in the UAE. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 32*(8), 1707-1730. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1547778

Sokro, E., Pillay, S., & Bednall, T. (2021). The Effects of Perceived Organisational Support on Expatriate Adjustment, Assignment Completion and Job Satisfaction. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 21*(3), 452-473. https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958211061007

Sousa, C., Gonçalves, G., Santos, J., & Leitão, J. (2017). Organizational Practices for the Expatriates' Adjustment: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Global Mobility, 5*(3), 251-274. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-03-2017-0011

Stoermer, S., Haslberger, A., Froese, F. J., & Kraeh, A. L. (2018). Person–Environment Fit and Expatriate Job Satisfaction. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 60*(6), 851-860. https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21920

Stoermer, S., Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. (2021). Expatriate Partners' Personality and Its Influence on Acculturation Into a New Cultural Context: Examining the Role of Dispositional Affectivity. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 21*(3), 474-490. https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958211057364

Sulong, R. S., Dousin, O., & Ward, M. (2022). The Driving Force of Self-Initiated Expatriation: A Case of Teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Global Business and Management Research, 14*(3s), 1208-1221. http://www.gbmrjournal.com/pdf/v14n3s/V14N3s-84.pdf

Tahir, R. (2023). Expatriate Academics: An Exploratory Study of Western Academics in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Management Practice, 16*(5), 641-657. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMP.2023.133218

Thirlwall, A., Kuzemski, D., Baghestani, M., Brunton, M., & Brownie, S. (2021). 'Every day is a challenge': Expatriate acculturation in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 21*(3), 430-451. https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958211039071

van Bakel, M. (2019). It Takes Two to Tango: A Review of the Empirical Research on Expatriate-local Interactions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 30*(21), 2993-3025. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1449763

Wilkins, S., & Annabi, C. A. (2023). Academic Careers in Transnational Higher Education: The Rewards and Challenges of Teaching at International Branch Campuses. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 27*(2), 219-239. https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153211052782

Wilkins, S., & Neri, S. (2019). Managing Faculty in Transnational Higher Education: Expatriate Academics at International Branch Campuses. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 23*(4), 451-472. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315318814200

Xu, S. (2024). Integration of Traditional Elements and Modern Education-The Inheritance and Reform of Seal Cutting Art Education. *Arts Educa, 38*, 344-357. https://artseduca.com/submissions/index.php/ae/article/view/288