WHY DO THEY STAY? AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING RETENTION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Alicia Ann Ritter
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to another institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

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Alicia A Ritter

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine factors affecting international teachers' decisions to stay in or leave their international schools. The research questions for the study answered what individual characteristics of teachers impacted retention, how cultural distance, length of time it took to settle in, and school support affected retention, and what guided teachers to remain in their locations. The participants were 100 international teachers in ten schools across four countries. The teachers ranged from younger to older and from newly experienced to more seasoned international teachers who had been working in international schools for a long period of time. The researcher interviewed each teacher personally and used a grounded theory approach to the collection and analysis of data, coding data into themes related to the research questions. The results of the analysis suggested that the most important reasons for staying in an international school were for personal reasons, including for partners or family, age, quality of life, right 'fit', and level of happiness. The second most important reasons for staying in a job included professional reasons such as for the school's philosophy, vision, administration, and for professional opportunities within the school. The third most important reason for remaining in a job was for the salary and benefits. International teachers who made an effort to get involved in their locations seemed to adjust better. The extent to which international adaptations were positive or negative varied depending on the country. The value of the present study was that the interviews gave a personal insight into the experiences of these teachers, the challenges they faced in working and adapting to new cultures, languages, and in different school settings around the world, and how these experiences impacted retention in international schools.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the present study

This research study was first inspired by the researcher's own experiences. As she first went abroad to work in an international school in China, she noticed that many teachers had unique and interesting stories of how they arrived in international education and why they remained overseas. While numerous studies had previously analyzed teacher retention in the context of teachers working in their own countries, few had focused on retention of teachers in international schools. Furthermore, the majority of the studies that looked at international teacher retention only analyzed the professional aspects of international teachers rather than their cultural experiences, too.

This study sought to examine all facets of the international teaching experience and link these with why international teachers remained in or left their current overseas postings. The researcher traveled to each international school in person and interviewed the teachers in their own international school environments. This made the researcher feel she gained an even deeper understanding of international teachers' personal stories in context. The study went beyond looking at professional reasons and got teachers to open up about their current experiences both in and outside of the international school.

1.2 The international school context

The number of international schools has increased dramatically over the last half century. In the 1960's, during the Kennedy administration, American Overseas Schools (A/OS) were created to ensure that schools in overseas locations provided expatriate children with a comparable education to that which they would have received in the United States. Today, however, there are many different types of international schools. Most international schools cater to expatriate children and have adopted the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. A common mission in international schools is

the desire to create global citizens who have an understanding of their world beyond a single, national perspective (Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Nagrath; 2011; Zilber, 2009).

The number of international schools has grown from 50 international schools in 1964 to nearly 1,000 in 1992 (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Today there are over 5,000 international schools and these figures will continue to rise to approximately 11,000 by the year 2020 (Keeling, 2010). Keeling (2010) found that even though the world economy took a downturn in 2009, 51 percent of international schools maintained their enrollment, 9 percent have decreased in enrollment, and 41 percent still increased in enrollment.

1.3 The teacher retention problem: Turnover in education

In the United States, 16 percent of the teaching population is lost each year (Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). In international schools it is similar, at 17 percent (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2010). One-third of teachers leave the profession within 3 years (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2006), nearly half within five years (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ingersoll, 2004; Mancuso, 2010), and as many as two-thirds within seven years (Byrne as cited in Coulter & Abney, 2009). Thomas (2007) found that 4 percent of teachers take other positions within the field of education, while Guarino et al. (2006) found that much teacher loss consists of migration from one school to another. Ingersoll (2004) noted that attrition rates for teachers are twice the national average of other professions. Although companies also face employee turn over in other areas, the main difference in education is that the impact is compounded as it is felt annually at the same point in time (Mancuso, 2010).

All these statistics indicate that teacher turnover is an important practical issue for schools in that the demand for teachers in many cases is higher than the supply, creating an imbalance and causing teacher shortages (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Changing schools can be expensive and disruptive (Powell, 2001), which raises the question of why it is that teachers turn over. Staying longer at a school may be a positive thing for teachers. For example, in a study of expatriates working overseas,

Brown (2008) found that expatriates who stayed longer in their posts experienced lower stress levels. So why then does turnover occur?

1.4 Reasons for teacher turnover

Teacher turnover in international schools is similar to that for teachers working in their own countries, yet teachers in international schools have higher job satisfaction than their counterparts in the domestic setting (Coulter & Abney, 2009; Gillies, 2001; Horton, 1987; Zilber, 2009). Greater levels of job satisfaction appear to be related to fewer student behavior issues, better salary and benefits, prestigious schools, overseas locations, and the feeling of being more valued in the work environment (Zilber, 2009). Gillies (2001) suggests that international teachers also enjoy a more respected status overseas. They are more admired by the international community which may in turn also contribute toward job satisfaction.

International teachers are also less likely to show signs of burnout. Coulter and Abney (2009) asked 44 Canadian international teachers and 58 Canadian home-country teachers to complete an online survey of teacher burnout and found that the international teachers in the survey had statistically lower levels of burnout than teachers working in their country of origin. They were less prone to general exhaustion, emotional exhaustion, and loss of interest in the teaching profession than peers in their home countries.

1.5 The significance of the present study

The fact that international teachers have more job satisfaction than is the case for teachers in their own countries and yet the turnover level is still similar raises the question of why this should be? It is an important question from an administrative point of view to find out what factors are likely to be motivators for this population of teachers. It is a question that has not been given the same amount of attention as has the issue of teacher retention in the domestic setting. It is also an important question in terms of the

economics of recruiting and retaining teachers. Timmer (2003) found that the cost of replacing an international teacher ranged from 20-150 percent of a leaving teacher's salary. That is therefore another reason for the present study in that the results may be of practical value in enabling schools to retain quality staff.

1.6 The aim of the study

This present study aims to extend our knowledge of why international teachers stay in schools. The researcher interviewed 100 international teachers in four countries about what it was that made them want to stay or leave a school. In particular, the study explored how the experiences surrounding the job and affecting the job, but not necessarily the job itself, played a role in affecting decisions related to retention.

1.7 The research questions

The current study sought to answer the following research questions on international teacher retention:

1) How do individual characteristics of international teachers impact retention?

2) How do cultural distance, the length of time it takes the international teacher to settle in, and the support provided by the school affect the overall experience and the decision to stay or go?

3) What factors ultimately guide international teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their locations?

1.8 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature. It will examine theories and research related to teacher retention in national and international contexts, and focus on general expatriate overseas transitions and retention. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology

and research design used in this study. Chapter 4 will present both the qualitative and quantitative results of this study. Chapter 5 will discuss the results, link them back to the literature review, and will also discuss the limitations of the present study and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section examines the characteristics of international teachers and the challenges of the education sector. The second section examines the nature of turnover in education, why it occurs, the kinds of teachers who leave the profession, and the pluses and minuses of turnover. The third section examines retention, and what makes teachers stay in their jobs. The final section examines turnover and retention in international schools.

2.1 Globalization and Its Effects on Education in the 21st Century

International expatriate assignments in developing countries are increasing and expected to further increase (Brown, 2008). International assignments require skills in building global markets (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2010). However, companies who assign expatriates on foreign assignments also assume they will adjust well to the host country and be successful in their positions. Often this is not the case (Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005). In previous studies, expatriate completion rates in the business sector approximated between 25-40% (Ho, 2012) and cost multinational companies between $50,000-$150,000 in losses associated with trainings, relocation, and compensation (Lee & Kartika, 2014). Expatriates who return home early additionally become less confident in future international assignments, making it difficult for companies to find and secure international talent (Thorn, 2009). With the expansion of multinational corporations and globalization, new industries and international identities emerged in the twenty-first century, leading to increased mobility in both the business and education sectors (Spring, 2008).

2.2 Stobart's Concept of Internationalism

Stobart's (1989) model for internationalism (see Figure 1.1) describes varying degrees of experiences abroad. This ranges from those who only have a general

awareness of other countries (level one) to those who make a permanent move to another country for extended periods of time – where 'home' may not actually be the country of their passport (level four). People in level four often do not know when they will return to their home country. They interact more with the host culture and often speak the host country language or even multiple languages.
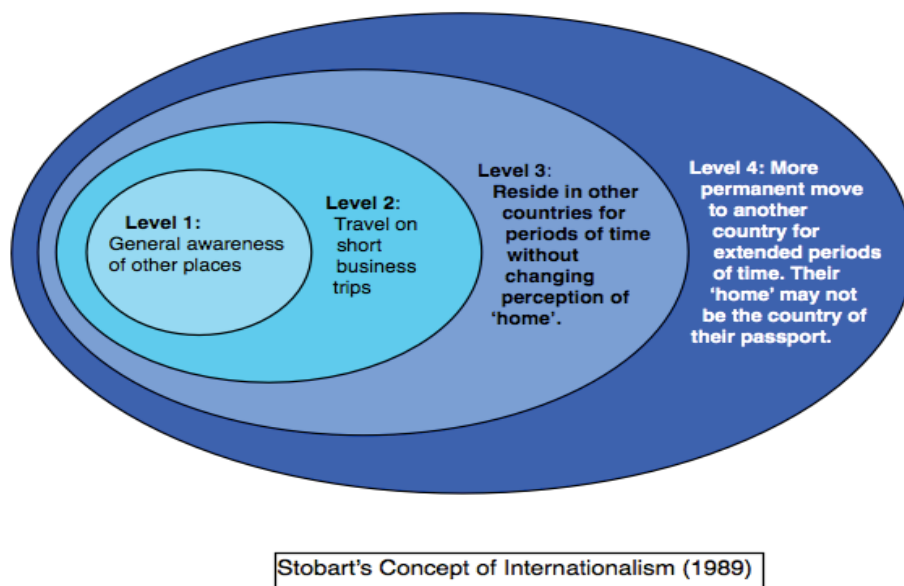
Figure 1.1: Stobart's Concept of Internationalism (1989)

Families who send their children to international schools and teachers who work overseas belong to levels 3 and 4 of Stobart's model (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

2.3 The Emergence of International Education

International schools developed as globalization increased. There is no universal or comprehensive definition of what an international school is (Cambridge & Thompson, 2000; Hayden &Thompson, 1995; MacKenzie, 2010; Nagrath, 2011; Spring, 2008; Zilber, 2009). Cambridge and Thompson (2000) claim that the meaning of an international school may rely less on actual definition and more on characteristics and

purposes of the families using it. Today there are several different types of international schools, including: 1) national schools overseas, 2) international school association schools, and 3) for-profit schools (Cambridge & Thompson, 2000). The first group of international schools is those catering to a specific nationality, such as the Gyosei International School in the United Kingdom, a Japanese school providing instruction specifically for Japanese children whose parents are living and working in the UK (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Additionally, there are international schools geared more specifically for British, Australian, or American children who follow specific national curricula of what the students would follow in their home countries. Still other international schools cater to all expatriate children and have adopted the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which Nagrath (2011) says "is now seen as the educational gold standard around the world" (pg. 3). Within these international school structures, some are designed to make profit while others are non-profit.

International schools have developed rapidly over the past 40 years. From 1964 to 1995, the number grew from 50 international schools to nearly 1,000 (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Today there are over 5,000 schools, a number that is predicted to rise to 11,000 by 2020 (Keeling, 2010). Many international schools differ in size, affiliation, accreditation, curriculum, governance, mission, and/or philosophy (Cambridge & Thompson, 2000; Hayden & Thompson, 1995; MacKenzie, 2010). Keeling (2010) revealed that even though the world economy took a downturn in 2009, 51% of international schools maintained their enrollment, only 9% decreased in enrollment, and 41% continued to increase in their student populations.

2.4 Nature and Needs of Expatriate Families in International Schools

Expatriate families who are living abroad often have different needs than if they were living in their home countries. Expatriate adjustment involves three levels: 1) adjustment to a new country, 2) psychological adjustment within a new environment, and 3) adjustment to the overseas workplace (Puck, Kittler, & Wright, 2008). Increased levels of stress are frequently associated with overseas adjustments, having the

potential to cause mental health consequences (Brown, 2012). Multinational companies often design specific training programs to keep in mind expatriate's psychological comfort, as well as paying attention to expatriate family factors such as level of family support, demands on time, and family-work conflict (Lee & Kartika, 2014). Simon, Cook, and Fritz (1990) found that it was the preparedness and attitude of the mother that most influenced a child's adjustment with regards to culture shock. If the mother's attitude was content in the new location and she made an effort to adjust to the culture, the children were more adjusted and content in their new environments.

American sociologist Ruth Hill Useem coined the term 'third culture kid' (TCK), referring to children who accompany their parents to other countries and cultures. David Pollock (2009) extended the definition in *Third Culture Kids* (pg. 13):

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.

Third culture kids have been described by numerous researchers as being internationally-minded, tolerant of diversity, cross-culturally aware, multilingual, well-traveled, and inclined to future international careers (Gillies, 2001; Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Pollock & van Reken, 2009; Zilber, 2009). The effect on the children of expatriate workers seems to be positive. Zilber (2009) says expatriate children are not as intimidated by new cultures and move from one culture to another with relative ease. While some TCK's feel they fit everywhere, others say they do not fit anywhere because they feel they have no culture or identity of their own. The disadvantages associated with being a TCK include: experiencing uncertainty about the future, fearing the formation of new friendships, having to say goodbyes frequently, and distancing oneself emotionally from others (Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Joslin, 2002; Zilber, 2009).

Children of expatriates are also found to be academically motivated. Rucci (1993) discovered that as a result of positive peer influences and improved study habits,

average children generally improved in their academics when transferring from public schools in their home countries to international schools overseas. Zilber (2009) also suggested that parenting overseas created a stronger involvement between parents and their child's education, which is also known to positively impact student learning (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). Moreover, Gillies (2001) noted that the majority of international school students were college bound.

The companies of expatriates often pay for their children to attend international schools, but host country nationals choosing to send their children to international school generally pay for the student's tuition themselves. International schools most often enroll both TCK's and local children from the countries in which they serve (Gillies, 2001). In some cases, international schools have up to 80% host-country students (Gaskell, 2012), but in other cases the majority of student populations are expatriate children. Zilber (2009) noted that 5% of children enrolled in international schools are the international educators' children. These students usually receive free or discounted tuition, a fringe benefit given by some international schools. In sum, the make-up of the student populations in international schools can be different and therefore addresses a unique set of needs for both the students and teachers in these contexts..

The make up of expatriate families in international schools often differ from the make up and needs of students in their respective home countries. When parents select an international school, they tend to look more specifically at a school that will meet the needs of their student academically, socially, and emotionally (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Parents typically also want strong academic programs offered in English (Mackenzie, 2010) and want the school to provide for their child's extra-curricular activities as well. For these reasons international schools want to retain staff who can appropriately meet the specific and unique needs of expatriate families and their children (Zilber, 2009). When international teachers repatriate or leave their international posts, the knowledge of how to assist with the specific nature and needs of expatriate families often takes time for new international teachers to develop.

2.5 Characteristics of Teachers Choosing to Work Overseas

In 1981, Werkman found that people initially moved overseas for a variety of different reasons: 1) work or study programs, 2) being in search of family heritage, 3) wanting to escape personal or professional problems, 4) wanting to learn a new language, or 5) searching for a better lifestyle. The initial reasons teachers sought an overseas adventure were for opportunities of increased travel and cultural experiences, to thrive within a satisfying work environment, to have like-minded colleagues, to have superior economic remuneration over that offered in their home country, and to accomplish personal life goals and challenges (Hardman, 2001; Horton, 1987; Olson, 2001; Thorn, 2009; Vogel, 1992; Zilber, 2009).

Another characteristic of overseas teachers is that they like the lifestyle. Zilber (2009) says that teachers who choose international teaching as a career describe their self-selected lifestyle with words and phrases as 'love', 'joy', 'enthusiasm', and 'wouldn't have it any other way'. These positive perceptions tend to cause them to stay in international teaching longer. Hirsch at al. (2006) found in a survey of 75,000 North Carolina teachers that teachers with positive perceptions of their work environment were more likely to stay in their current schools.

The literature on international teachers suggests that they often share characteristics in common. Matthews (1989) describes international educators as a group who have "foresworn their security for a nomadic existence ... representing a self-selected population, somewhat more adventurous and somewhat less rigid in its attitudes compared with their peer group in the domestic education system" (p. 29). International teachers have also been described as self-confident individuals who value change, are self-reliant, and have qualities allowing them to adapt and adjust easily (Gillies, 2001; Zilber, 2009). Those who find inroads into the host country are prepared for cultural differences, and those who are accompanied by a partner or family adjust the fastest in international settings (Gillies, 2001; Horton, 1987; Zilber, 2009). Horton (1987) interviewed several teachers in international schools and found that many were

married to other international teachers, which made the life transitions easier by facing potential challenges together.

Some teachers were more likely to accept international positions for enriching experiences than for professional aspects alone (Ren, Yunlu, Shaffer & Fodchuk, 2014). International educators value career development and remuneration packages, but also want their children to experience a variety of cultures and have a better education. Overseas educators who have children have attributed career satisfaction to watching their child grow up in school knowing they are receiving a quality of education they may not have been able to afford otherwise. Chandler (2010) surveyed international teachers and found that they were more likely to extend their contracts and less likely to leave on a whim if school conditions were suitable for themselves and their children. Therefore, international educators with children are more genuinely vested in the quality and continuous improvement of the school (Zilber, 2009). Motivations for remaining in a location are varied according to gender, location, and life stage (Thorn, 2009).

2.6 Cross-cultural Motivations and Working Overseas

Beyond adjusting to a professional life overseas, international teachers and expatriates must be cross-culturally aware and motivated to thrive in their work environments overseas. Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh and Tangirala (2010) carried out an online survey of 556 expatriate workers from a US multinational company, asking them to complete questionnaires on cross-cultural motivation, work adjustment, whether they felt supported, and how distant they felt from the new culture. They were able to relate the questionnaire results to information they already had on the work performance and evaluations of the participants. With this they found support for a model that said work adjustment and job performance were mediated by the extent to which workers felt supported as well as by their ability to adapt to and enjoy the culture.

Chen et al. (2010) created a model of factors (see Figure 2.1) that affect the job performance of multinational expatriate workers. They suggest that there are three dimensions of organizational support contributing most to expatriate success: 1)

adjustment support - helping expatriates and their families adapt in the international assignment, 2) career support - guidance and mentoring, and 3) financial support. In assignments where the expatriate is already familiar with the company's culture and environment, less support is needed to aid in the transition. However, if an expatriate is less familiar with the cultural contexts in which he or she is working, then more subsidiary support is needed for the individual to prevent the likelihood of turnover and to thrive in the foreign context.
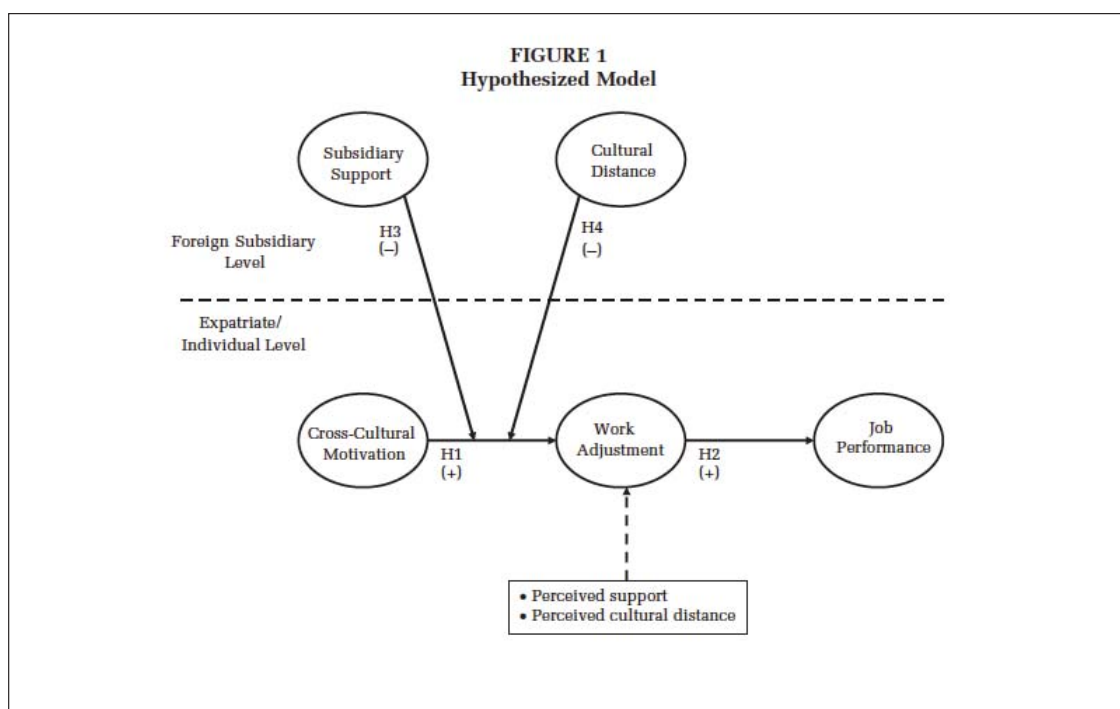
Figure 2.1: Chen et al.'s Hypothesized Model of Subsidiary Support

Cross-cultural motivation involves psychological processes that give guidance and direction outside the work environment, enabling them to more likely persist within the work assignment. Chen et al. (2010) explained that the more similar the country is to the culture of the expatriate, the less cultural distance there is to overcome and the more comfortable the environment is for the individual. Countries and cultures that are more culturally distant, or which are more dissimilar to the expatriate, will require the individual to marshal more personal resources including time, skills, and attention to

thrive in the foreign context. In their findings, cultural distance is more likely to attenuate motivation than amplify it.

Joslin (2002) reflected on her own experiences as an international teacher working in her first overseas posting and explained that there are several layers of adjustment when choosing to work at an international school, both inside and outside of the school. In addition to a new school and experiencing a new school culture, international teachers are also settling into new regional, national, and global contexts, each having their own cultures as well (see Joslin's model in Figure 2.2). China is often seen as the most foreign of all expatriate locations (Boncori & Vine, 2014). More research is needed to determine to what extent these contexts influence international teacher retention.

Figure 1 **A model of multi-level cultural influences that impinge on an individual teacher in an 'international school'**
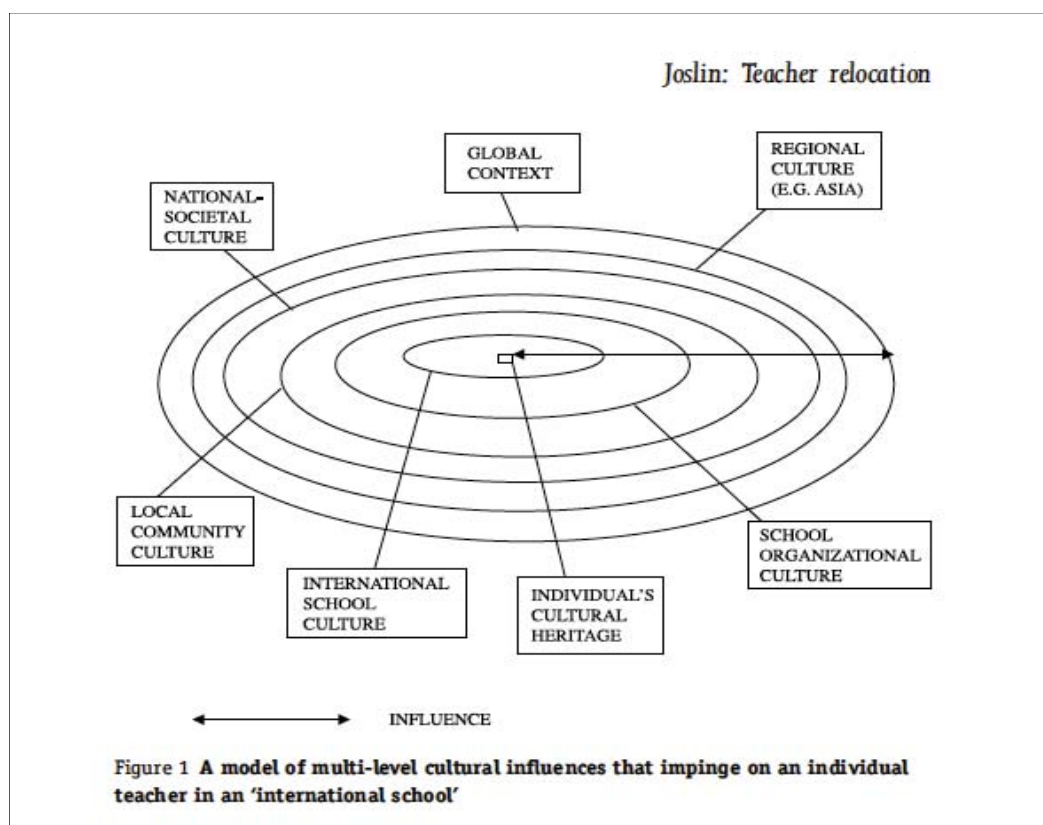
Figure 2.2: Joslin's Model of Cultural Influences

Most multinational companies send expatriate employees on specific foreign assignments for fixed periods of time (Chen et al., 2010). What makes international

teachers different from other expatriates is that they take initiative to relocate themselves, choosing where and when their future lies (Zilber, 2009b). It is this "free and independent decision-making process and self-preparation that distinguishes international school educators from other sponsor groups" (Zilber, 2009, p. 49). While most international companies offer assistance with relocation and cultural adjustment, international educators have to handle most of those adjustments themselves. Zilber (2009) determined that sponsoring groups were one of the major variables impacting success or failure of the expatriate family's ability to adjust positively to their overseas locations.

In summary, the above findings suggest that job satisfaction, ability to adjust to a new culture, feeling supported, and having opportunities for their own children to have enriching cultural experiences and a better education are the important characteristics of teachers choosing to work overseas. As Chandler (2010) puts it, choosing a new international school or new location is "more than 'sticking pins in a map' in making decisions about their professional future" (p. 225).

2.7 Challenges in International Education

Challenges in international education are unique by country and school (Zilber, 2009). Gillies (2001) describes the overseas community as being in "a constant state of flux, with a rapidly changing student body, staff, parent body, and board of directors" (p.16).

One challenge is for teachers adjusting to a new school. Teachers who are new in a school are also becoming familiar with the specific context of their school and are therefore experiencing different challenges in their jobs compared with veteran teachers (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). In the international school context, these challenges are compounded by settling into a new culture and learning a new language. Joslin (2002) reflected on her own experiences abroad as an international educator and determined that overseas teachers experience three main transitional phases when moving to a new location: 1) a "honeymoon" period, 2) a depression phase, and finally

3) contentment. Emotions affect both working and social behaviors. Shaffer and Harrison (1998), in a survey of 452 expatriates found that expatriates who do not adjust to their international work will not perform as well, will psychologically withdraw, and will likely return early to their home country.

Another challenge is the changing nature of the student population in international schools. For example, the NESA (Near East South Asia Region) region includes 25 countries from Libya to Greece through the Middle East and the Persian Gulf to the eastern end of the Asian subcontinent, including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Over the past 20 years, the student population of many American international schools in the NESA region have changed from a majority of expatriate children to a majority of children from local, affluent families (Mancuso, Roberts, White, Yoshida & Weston, 2011).

Yet another challenge in international schools is that working conditions vary greatly by school. Within the business sector, Chen et al. (2010) found that expatriates experience greater work adjustment when their roles are clear in international assignments. However, little research has been done on how well roles have been clearly defined in international schools and how this impacts retention.

A fifth challenge is security. Broman (2007) wrote, "images of violence … have dampened the appetite for overseas adventure" (p. 2). While it is not the case in every country, some teachers fear for their family's safety depending on both the reputation of the country the situation at the time of the contract.

A final challenge is that international schools are the sponsoring group for the teacher, so the salary and benefits packages directly impact the socioeconomic status, social status, and opportunities available for the international educator and their families. Zilber (2009) reported stories that some international teachers working in Europe had to supplement their income with private tutoring to make ends meet, while others in Asia remained for reasons of household help or childcare that were extremely affordable.

The greatest challenge in international schools is teacher retention. Administrators sometimes feel it is difficult to recruit and retain overseas staff for a variety of reasons

and often find strategic planning difficult because of these constant fluctuations (Mancuso, 2010). More research in this area will underscore the extent of challenges faced in international education and how they impact retention.

2.8 Retaining Educators

With the number of experienced educators leaving the profession, schools may be focusing too much on recruitment and not enough on retention (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2007; Baker-Doyle, 2010). Teachers often choose to remain in schools for a combination of personal and professional reasons. These include supportive induction and mentoring programs, job satisfaction, professional growth, congruency between the teacher's and the organization's philosophies, strong leadership, and the experience of a positive, trusting environment with strong collegial support.

Induction and mentoring:
Induction and mentoring programs have been known to lower rates of turnover (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Guarino et al., 2004; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wilkinson, 2009). Connors-Krikorian (2004) found that 85-90% of teachers remained in teaching after 5 years if they were part of a successful orientation program. Beginning teachers often felt they would prefer increased support through other staff members rather through material resources (Long et al., 2012). Effective orientation programs in international schools are designed to provide educators with a quicker adjustment to their new lives and thus a more effective transition to their professional responsibilities (Joslin, 2002). Although induction programs can be costly, Barnes et al. (2006) found in a case in Chicago that if the city would invest in an induction program at a cost of $6,000 per new teacher, they could save millions in turnover costs each year. Inadequate orientation trainings have led to a lack of clear distinction of work requirements between new and existing staff. Inadequate professional training related to practical knowledge about the school or having limited opportunities for staff to collaborate were among additional

consequences of inadequate orientation programs (Andrews et. al, 2007).

The key to retention in schools is providing new teachers with multiple opportunities to thrive in a high quality professional community (Blair, 2003). A quality induction program includes elements of school policy along with procedures within the school, discussing elements of school curriculum, time for reflective inquiry, and mentorship (Devos et al., 2012; Wilkinson, 2009). Systematic observations with prompt feedback and supportive school culture were more likely to make new teachers feel supported (Long et al., 2012; Wilkinson, 2009). Professional development training for new teachers (Twigg, 2010) and increased collaborative planning time were also known to increase retention, especially in a teacher's first year (Devos et al., 2012). Hirsch et al. (2012) found that the ability for a teacher to select his or her own instructional materials significantly increased student achievement. Every 10% increase in choice for a teacher to choose his or her own materials led to a 0.5% gain in student achievement. Another form of support for teachers was through the provision of teaching assistants, though research shows they are only helpful if they have had specialized training in working with students and if that training is ongoing (Tarry, 2011).

Teacher satisfaction:

Job satisfaction is known to be one of the greatest contributors toward teacher retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Dinham & Scott, 1998; Guarino et al., 2006; Shen et al., 2012). The main mediators of teacher satisfaction are school leadership and school climate (Dinham & Scott, 1998). Additionally, teachers need feedback and encouragement to persevere in the profession (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Individuals reach a state of contentment when they are able to function at the peak of their capabilities (Shen et al., 2012). Those who feel they are more effective in their positions feel more satisfied (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). Higher self-esteem has also been found to maintain higher levels of job satisfaction, as motivated workers reflect on their occupation as a challenging opportunity from which they can benefit (Judge & Bono, 2001). Shahani, Dipboye and Phillips (1990) note that challenge, role clarity, and lack of overload also contribute to higher self-esteem in the workplace. Moreover, teachers

want freedom in their classrooms and time to develop and incorporate creativity into their lessons (Lapeniene & Bruneckiene, 2010). They also desire increased autonomy (Guarino et al., 2006; Guarino et al., 2004; Mancuso, 2010; Thomas, 2007), which reduces the severity of stress, which is a significant predictor of turnover (Parasuraman, 1984).

Professional growth:

The most important asset to any work place is not the raw materials it has or the political influence it can carry, but rather the creative thinkers within the organization (McWilliam and Dawson, 2008). Egan (2005) says that the vitality of an institution is providing personnel with the space they need to "invent, dream, problem solve, craft, and correspond in fresh new ways" (p.160). Intrinsic motivation for remaining in education is attributed to self-efficacy, positive relationships with colleagues, feelings of both personal and professional growth, and increased autonomy in the classroom (Mancuso, 2010). Teachers want to feel rewarded and recognized for what they do (Jamal Shah et al., 2012), as higher levels of career satisfaction encourage greater professional involvement (Chapman, 1983). Professional involvement and career satisfaction are significant predictors of retention (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012).

School leadership:

Teachers who remain in international schools for elongated periods of time attribute this longevity to a congruency between their own teaching philosophy and their organization's philosophy (Baker-Doyle, 2010). Teachers want to feel that the attractiveness of their teaching position and the working conditions where they are currently employed remain attractive over other employment opportunities (Chapman, 1983; Guarino et al., 2006). Leadership has been a strong motivator for remaining at a particular school (Hirsch et al., 2006; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). New teachers have described discrepancies between administrative support they value versus the support they receive (Andrews et al., 2007). Since leadership practices have a tendency to predict beginning teacher's retention (Devos et al., 2012), new teachers want to feel

supported, have appropriate resources for their teaching, receive opportunities for increased collaboration, and have professional connections with others (Andrews et al., 2007). New teachers value opportunities to collaborate with other staff in meetings designed to improve teaching over meetings to discuss business (Andrews et al., 2007). Shen et al. (2012) found that principals who are good at improving school processes are those who increase job satisfaction the most. Additionally, Shen et al. (2012) found that administrators who had previous experience as an athletic director showed positive associations with teacher job satisfaction over former department heads since they were known to be goal-oriented and motivating.

Transformational leaders have been found to be the most successful in improving job satisfaction in schools (Bogler, 1999; Egan, 2005; Mancuso, 2010). They set clear goals, delegate tasks, and encourage participation in school-wide decision-making processes (Mancuso, 2010). Transformational leaders are also charismatic, provide intellectual stimulation, and motivate and inspire their staff (Bogler, 1999). They let teachers know what is expected of them, treat all staff fairly and equitably, provide support, and create opportunities for all staff to have input in decisions (Andrews et al., 2007; Bogler, 1999; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Mancuso, 2010; Roberts, Mancuso, & Yoshida, 2010; Thomas, 2007). Unlike schools districts where superintendents may not have everyday contact with their teachers, in an international school setting, school heads have more frequent interactions with their teachers. It was found that school heads who solicited teacher input increased international teacher retention (Mancuso, 2010).

Collegial support:

Teachers want to feel they are part of a collegial environment with strong support from colleagues (Borman & Dowling, 2008, Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Dinham & Scott, 1998; Mancuso, 2010). Surprisingly, major sources of teacher dissatisfaction can be related to working with children, or working with other staff members (Dinham & Scott, 1998). Often, teachers have little or no control over either. Meaningful, supportive interactions with colleagues can make a difference in the professional and social welfare of teachers

(Baker-Doyle, 2010; Devos et al., 2012; Long et al., 2012). Baker-Doyle (2010) suggests that teachers' mobility patterns are closely linked with their social networks. If they are more rooted in the school community then they are more likely to stay.

Principals generally believe their schools are trusting and respectful environments, but more than one-third of teachers hold different views (Hirsch et al., 2006). Employees who are more satisfied with their job generally display more loyalty to their organization, having positive and lasting effects on retention (Baker-Doyle, 2010; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). This is especially true for teachers who are in the beginning of their careers (Devos et al., 2012; Thomas, 2007). Elementary school educators rank collegiality of greater importance than high school teachers, and younger faculty members consider it more important than do older staff members (Shen et al., 2012). Conversely, schools can be disrupted by departures of key individuals causing a 'snowball effect' of turnover causing more turnover (Krackhardt & Porter, 1986; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Holes in the networks of an organization may make teachers reevaluate their decisions to remain in a particular school. Since collegiality affects job satisfaction, schools should continue to make an effort to create opportunities for increased positive interactions and relationships among staff members.

2.9 Turnover in Education

Businesses and schools maintain healthy levels of turnover (Barnes et al., 2006). New staff members infuse vigor and contemporary ideas into existing school environments (Barnes et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010).

However, as experienced teachers leave and new teachers arrive, there is a tremendous learning curve for new teachers (Barnes et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010). It takes time for them to settle into new routines, assimilate into the culture of the current school, and become as efficient as their predecessors. High staff turnover impacts school stability, focus, attitudes, job satisfaction, and staff morale (Gillies, 2001). Mancuso maintains that the consequences of an international school's learning environment include, "loss of curricular continuity, difficulty sustaining programs, loss of

momentum in school-wide improvement initiatives, and loss of stability associated with teachers who remain with schools for the long-term" (p. 6).

Turnover has also been found to negatively impact student achievement (Barnes et al., 2006; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Hirsch et al., 2012; Mancuso, 2010; Roberts et al., 2010). Barnes, et al. (2006) claimed, "In a vicious cycle, teacher turnover lowers student achievement, and lower student achievement leads to teacher turnover" (p. 8). In a single school year the difference between being taught by a highly capable or less than capable teacher translates into the loss of a full grade level (Hanushek as cited in Borman & Dowling, 2008). International teachers who change to a new international school and who do not adapt culturally or emotionally are less likely to perform at their potential and may have reservations about becoming invested in the long-term visions of a school (Joslin, 2002).

Each time a teacher transitions to a new international school there is an adjustment period both professionally and culturally. A new international teacher usually arrives only days before the school year begins and may be overwhelmed with acclimating not only to a new school, but also to a new country, language, and culture (Mancuso, 2010). Connors-Krikorian (2004) argues that turnover adversely affects productivity, impacts the cohesion and stability of the staff, and prevents a sense of community from ever being fully formed. Overcoming cultural distance and settling into everyday life may actually take longer for an international educator than settling in a professional sense, an area needing further research.

In the international school context, productivity is affected at two points in time: 1) at arrival, and 2) just before moving. It takes teachers between five months and one and a half years to become fully productive in their positions (Timmer, 2003). International teachers are often on two-year contracts, so by the time they are settling in to their new positions, some may already be considering changing schools or locations. Teachers who are leaving their international posts for other jobs overseas often begin looking for a new position up to a year in advance. Many know they are leaving still with one final year or semester remaining. Mancuso refers to this as the *lame duck phenomenon*. There is often reduced productivity during these final months, as leaving teachers are

spending tremendous amounts of energy focusing on both securing a new position or planning the logistics for their move such as shipping personal items and preparing for a new teaching assignment to their next destination (Mancuso, 2010). Sometimes, less energy is spent in the current workplace during this time of transition. International schools that make the effort to retain international educators can avoid such losses in productivity.

While there are some benefits to turnover, Mancuso argues that the overall consequences of turnover are more often negative. Attrition can be costly to schools (Barnes et al., 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010). Barnes et al. (2006) found that the Chicago school district's turnover costs totaled $17,872 per leaving staff member, totaling $86 million per year. Turnover costs in education in the United States alone total more than $7 billion each year (Shen, Leslie, Spybrook & Ma, 2012). The cost of replacing teachers leaving the profession cost the public school system $2.2 billion dollars each school year (Borman & Dowling).

In international schools, Timmer (2003) found that the cost of replacing an international teacher ranged between 20-150% of the leaving teacher's salary. Why is it so costly to replace a leaving teacher in international schools? International school heads and administrators attend recruitment fairs overseas, which are expensive. These administrators are often away for between 4-6 weeks throughout the recruitment season (Mancuso, 2010). Additionally, new hires must attend additional trainings that leaving teachers have already received (Barnes et al., 2006). In international schools, reimbursements for travel costs are provided for new teachers and leaving teachers at the same time as well as a provision for shipping allowances for both parties. It is more cost-effective for international schools to retain teachers than to pay for costs associated with turnover. Therefore, more data on international teacher retention is necessary to make further efforts to retain teachers.

2.10 Why Does Turnover Occur?

Causes of teacher turnover are complex and multidimensional. Reasons include

poor initial experiences, low salaries, inadequate organizational conditions, and low job satisfaction.

Poor initial experiences:

Beginning teachers often feel isolated or frustrated as a result of difficult teaching assignments or lack of support early on in their careers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). Despite these findings, Provasnik and Dorfman (2005) say that new teachers actually make great gains in the first year of teaching but smaller gains over the next several years. If teachers do not have successful experiences early in their careers, they are more likely to experience frustration and a sense of failure, thereby forfeiting the profession altogether (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2007; Baker-Doyle, 2010; Devos, Dupriez, & Paquay, 2012).

Student demographics:

Student demographics can also affect a teacher's decision to remain in a particular school (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hanushek et al., 2001; Mancuso, 2010; Rucci, 1993). Hanushek et al., (2001) found that teachers new to the profession often work with lower achieving students, adversely affecting student achievement levels. Teachers tend to favor high achieving, non-minority, non-low-income students (Hanushek et al., 2001). Rucci (1993) describes that most students in international schools come from families with an above-average socio-economic status. Hanushek et al. (2001) found that in the US, teacher mobility is more strongly related to student characteristics than to salary.

Poor working conditions:

Mancuso (2010) suggests that organizational conditions of a school can bring the supply of teachers in line with the demand. Organizational conditions act as the mediator between turnover and retention. These are factors that the school has control over, including salary, benefits, working conditions, student discipline issues, staff

relationships, class size, and opportunities for advancement. These factors have been proven to affect retention (Bowman & Dowling, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010). Hirsch et al. (2006) pointed out that most teachers have little non-instructional time during the school day. In fact, more than 50% of teachers receive less than three hours per week of non-instructional time, and many are required to be on extra after school committees, coach sports, and run extra-curricular activities past their contractual hours. Schedules such as these do not allow for ample time to differentiate instruction or plan collaboratively. Non-instructional time and class sizes are also mediating factors not only to job satisfaction, but also on student achievement (Andres et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2012). Educators who feel they have not received adequate support from administration or who experience regular lack of norms in a school are also more prone to turnover (Baker-Doyle, 2010; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006).

Job dissatisfaction:

Job satisfaction is crucial to retention as dissatisfaction is a leading cause for turn over (Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Woods & Weismer, 2004). In international education, job satisfaction among teachers in international schools is higher than their domestic counterparts (Coulter & Abney, 2010). Sources of dissatisfaction are directly linked with lack of support from administration, colleagues, and parents. Student misbehavior and demands on teacher schedules may also contribute to teachers feeling less satisfied (Coulter & Abney, 2009; Woods & Weismer, 2004). Chandler (2010) concluded that satisfaction in international education varies more within international regions than between regions, suggesting, "It is not location per se that would seem to determine satisfaction, but rather the personal 'fit' of individuals to their location" (p.. 219). Over time, if teachers become increasingly dissatisfied with their jobs, this dissatisfaction may be the tipping point toward career exhaustion (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012).

Low salaries:

One of the leading contributors to teacher turnover is poor salaries (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Guarino et al., 2006; Hanushek et al., 2001). Other researchers, however, have found little evidence that teacher wages affect student outcomes (Loeb & Page, 2000) and the decision to remain in or change locations (Chandler, 2010), Chapman (1983) previously found that salary varies in value among different teachers. Higher salaries are more important to teachers who have been in the profession between six and thirty years compared with teachers in the first five years of their careers (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Baker-Doyle (2010) found that teachers more often leave because of lack of structure and norms in a school, not as a result of stipends, bonuses, or poor salaries. Although higher salaries can be positively associated with retention, beginning teachers' reasons for leaving the profession within the first 3 years are credited to both lack of prestige for their profession and as a result of low salaries (Guarino et al., 2006).

2.8 Characteristics of Educators Leaving the Profession

Hirsch et al. (2006) suggest that teacher background characteristics explain for the greatest amount of variation in turnover rates. Twenty-five percent of new teachers leaving education within the first 5 years pursue alternative careers as a result of low salaries and job dissatisfaction (Connors-Krikorian, 2004). Others leave to raise children, pursue further education, take care of other family members, change locations for better salaries and benefits, or retire (Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Ingersoll, 2004; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005).

Math and Science:

Teachers of math and science are more likely to leave the profession than other groups of teachers and particularly more likely to leave than elementary teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, Daley, & Brewer, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006).

Highly qualified:

Human capital refers to formal, professional training (Baker-Doyle, 2010), while specific capital theory refers to higher education within a specific field (Chapman, 1983). Chapman claimed that people investing in specific capital theory were less likely to change careers. However, other researchers found that educators with higher degrees may actually become less committed to teaching and more likely to change positions or professions (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010). Some educators use specific capital theory in an effort to advance professionally, though it has been found that social capital, interpersonal skills, and personal contacts are more influential on career advancement (Guarino, et al., 2006; Thomas, 2007). The more the teacher pursues advanced education does not always equate that they will remain in the field of education.

Gender and years of experience:

Gender and years of teaching experience are significant predictors of turnover (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Guarino et al., 2006; Guarino et al., 2004; Hanushek et al., 2001; Mancuso, 2010; Roberts et al., 2010). Male teachers are more likely to stay than female teachers (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2006; Chapman, 1983; Guarino et al., 2006) except in the case of international education where men transfer at higher rates than women (Mancuso, 2010). Attrition appears to be higher for teachers who are newer to the profession (Barnes et al., 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Hanushek et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2010) and younger teachers are more likely to turnover than older teachers (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Roberts, Mancuso, & Yoshida, 2010). However, Guarino et al. (2006) and Mancuso (2010) found that middle-aged teachers and older teachers closer to retirement also have high attrition rates. In international schools, Mancuso established that international educators with less than 7 years of experience in the same international school were more likely to move, but those who stayed longer than 7 years did not usually change schools after that point.

Unmarried:

Married teachers are less prone to turnover than those who do not have a partner or spouse (Chapman, 1983). In the case of international education, Mancuso (2010) found that married couples' decisions to stay overseas may have been attributed to whether or not their spouse could secure a job. Single females were previously found to have less satisfaction with teaching and were more prone to turnover (Chapman, 1983). Over time, however, Borman and Dowling (2008) found that females were more likely to leave teaching for family and personal reasons rather than if they were dissatisfied with their jobs.

Working conditions:

School characteristics also influence retention in schools. Schools that reflect a lower socio-economic level have a tendency to have an increased rate of teacher turnover (Barnes et al., 2006; Hanushek et al., 2001; Guarino et al., 2006). Hanushek et al. (2001) encourages schools with these characteristics to consider alternative means for compensating their teachers, including non-pecuniary means such as lowering class sizes. Ingersoll (2004) found that teachers working in smaller schools tended to feel they had more control than teachers working in larger schools because they could contribute more input. Guarino et al. (2006) determined that educators in private schools change schools less often. Provasnik and Dorfman (2005) found the opposite, that public school educators remain longer in their positions. However, it was determined that private school teachers were more likely to leave the profession altogether (Guarino et al., 2006; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005).

Desire to move:

Teachers, on average, remain 5 years at the same school before changing positions (Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). Hardman (2001) recommended that international teachers provide a minimum of five years service within a single school before changing locations. No matter how long a teacher remains in his or her school, each individual school and the working conditions within contribute more to teachers' decisions on

retention (Guarino et al., 2006).

2.11 Turnover and Retention in International Schools

Keeling (2010) maintains that teacher shortages currently exist in international schools. One of the biggest challenges administrators and school heads face each year is being able to fill the classrooms with quality educators by August (Roberts, Mancuso, & Yoshida, 2010). Zilber (2009) claims that most international educators have not received formal training in international teaching, including the IB program and other curricula offered in international school settings. Cochran-Smith (2004) suggests that international schools partner with universities, professional organizations, school districts, and communities to implement successful visions on how to recruit and retain quality international teachers. Hobson (2000) found that only 13% of American international educators had more than 5 years of experience in American schools before they moved abroad.

One cause of turnover in international schools is the desire for more overseas experiences. Many overseas educators are drawn to the lifestyle of international teaching. They do not plan the elongated odyssey, but rather it becomes an evolution of circumstances as a result of social, educational, professional, and economic advantages (Zilber, 2009). International teachers have the freedom to move around the world and international school circuit as they please. Some international teachers remain in one school for many years while others lead a more transient lifestyle with only two or three years of service per school before transitioning to other countries. Hardman (2001) classified international teachers into 6 categories: 1) mavericks – those who change schools often, 2) career professionals without children, 2) career professionals with family accompanying, 3) senior 'mavericks', 4) senior career professionals, and 6) senior 'Penelope's' – those who stay in schools longer than they should. Hardman claims out of the 6 classifications of international teachers, there "is no single 'right' kind of teacher" (p. 131), as they all have something to contribute. Hayden & Thompson (1995) reported that 40% of international teachers had taught in five

international schools or more during their international career, suggesting that overseas educators are an extremely mobile population.

Mancuso (2010) also found that the turnover rate in international schools in the Near East South Asia (NESA) Region was 17.3% over a 3-year period. International schoolteachers are usually hired on an initial one-, two-, or three-year contract and tend to take advantage of their mobility. Wanderlust is a desire to roam about or travel. In the context of international teaching, wanderlust is likely associated with teacher turnover but viewed by some as the norm for international educators (Mancuso, 2010). Wanderlust influences teachers' decisions to move among countries to experience various cultures (Zilber, 2005). Wanderlust can be more powerful or carry more weight in the decision to remain or change locations even over salary (Zilber, 2009b). Teachers seeking personal growth are more likely to change their location whereas teachers seeking increased professional opportunities are more likely to remain in their current international school locations (Mancuso, 2010).

Horton (1987) remarked that, "Although the work experiences of these teachers is similar to that of public school teachers in the United States, the differences in environment, student populations, and other qualities of the work contrast sharply with the U.S. experience" (p. 32). International schools have been known to be more attractive than the teaching environment in one's own country. Coulter and Abney (2010) reveal that teachers who choose to work overseas experience less stress, anxiety, and feelings of burnout compared with their domestic counterparts. Moradi (as cited in Zilber, 2009) found that job satisfaction in international schools is linked with student motivation, student behavior, and salary and benefits. The teaching environment in international schools has been described by international educators as less stressful, therefore increasing the probability that international educators are more likely to remain in the international field than to return to their home country to teach (Coulter & Abney). If international teachers are not prone to wanderlust, retention at international schools may be naturally higher compared with teachers in national contexts because of the working conditions in international schools alone.

Life changes can also affect the desire to stay or leave an international location.

Twenty-five percent of international educators enter bicultural marriages or marry other international educators while overseas (Hobson, 2000). Educators accompanied by a spouse or children tend to adjust to cultural differences better than single teachers (Wolfe, as cited in Zilber, 2009). Some international teachers don't return to their home country because of expired teaching credentials. Others fear that after being away for so long that their teaching strategies and experiences will no longer align professionally with the teaching strategies and school programs in their country of origin. Reasons for remaining in international teaching remain quite varied, but more research will further tease out the complexities in why international educators remain in their overseas schools.

2.12 The Need to Retain Quality International School Educators

International school growth creates a concern of supplying enough educators to meet the current demand. Retaining veteran expatriate faculty is vital because they are experienced in the international environment and have a better understanding of the students' needs in overseas schools (Schoepp, 2011). It is equally important not only to recruit the best international educators but also to retain them to promote continuity, community, and greater student learning (Mancuso, 2010).

Many international teachers change locations numerous times in their overseas teaching career. Chandler (2010) found that location initially played an important role in the decision of where the international teacher wanted to work overseas but was less of a factor in later career. Mancuso, Roberts, and White (2010) found that international teachers who remained at a particular international school were likely to be those who:

1) were early or late in career
2) did not have a teaching spouse
3) had more than 7 years of experience in the same school
4) were satisfied with salary and school leadership
5) were in schools that encouraged shared governance (distributed leadership)

While these data suggest practical implications for schools wishing to retain staff, they also focus mostly on the professional aspects of working in international schools only. How do other aspects of the international teaching experience influence retention? Factors related to language, culture, social networks, emotional support, or effective transitions? How do schools help teachers settle in both professionally and culturally and how do these factors link with longevity in international schools? How do cultural frustrations both inside and outside of the workplace influence the degree of functionality or happiness within the workplace and culture? Aside from salary, benefits, and school leadership, what are the motivators guiding the international teacher's decisions on whether or not to remain in a school or country? While studies using questionnaires have been helpful in learning more about retention related to professional experiences abroad, the present study determined that using an in-person interview would gather even more in depth data on what guides international teachers' decisions to remain in their locations.

2.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the research literature on retention and turnover was reviewed as well as studies relating specifically to international teachers. The research indicated that international teachers had many characteristics in common, wanting cultural and travel experiences, good working conditions, good salaries, development in their careers, benefits related to their children's education, elevated status from working in prestigious schools, and to feel satisfied in their jobs.

The research on teacher turnover suggests that turnover was more likely to occur when salaries were low, when initial work experiences were difficult, and when poor working conditions and job satisfaction were low.

Retention was more likely to occur when teachers were well inducted and monitored, when they felt satisfied with the job, when they had support and could relate to the leadership, and when there was collegial support. The research also indicated

that while turnover can be positive for a school and bring new ideas and energy, there was also a cost factor in terms of the expense of re-hiring, effects on student achievement, and loss of experienced staff.

While these research findings are compelling, there may be more to learn about factors associated with international teacher retention over results of previous studies involving questionnaire surveys only. Sometimes factors unrelated to the job, but that surround and affect the job, affect retention the most. A real-time interview can tease out the complexities and provide more in-depth understanding about the experiences of international teachers and how cultural and other aspects do or do not affect retention in international schools. The present study was designed to provide such face-to-face interaction through on-site interviews with 100 international educators currently working in four different countries.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to focus on international teachers' experiences abroad and what prompted their decisions to remain in or change international schools. This chapter explains the research paradigms considered and methodology used in this research study. The participants, measures and procedure are explained first. Then the design of the study is explained, including the justification for selecting grounded theory. Data analysis is also explained in depth. Finally, ethical consent and consideration are explained at the end of the chapter.

3.2 Research Objective

The main research objective is:

To better understand the motivations for international teacher retention in international schools.

3.3 Research Questions

1) How do individual characteristics of international teachers impact retention?

2) How do cultural distance, the length of time it takes the international teacher to settle in, and the support provided by the school affect the overall experience and the decision to stay or go?

3) What factors ultimately guide international teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their locations?

3.4 Research Paradigm

Methodology is the framework that fits generally within a research paradigm and is used to guide or inform the research study (Punch, 2009). To better understand the motivations for teacher retention in international schools, a multi-dimensional paradigm was adopted, employing both qualitative and quantitative measures. It was considered appropriate to adopt these measures in order to obtain both objective and subjective views of the participants on what guides their decisions to remain in or leave their international schools.

This study incorporated questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and basic demographic information, enabling the researcher to gain numeric data about aspects of the participants' experiences. To achieve this, the researcher chose to travel to each location herself to conduct interviews face-to-face in order to solicit more in-depth and personal responses. The basic design of the study was qualitative in that it relied on interviews. Under an interpretive research paradigm, qualitative methodology is appropriate to understand a complex and detailed problem. Though the initial design was mixed methods, this study mainly used a grounded theory approach to data collection to obtain insight into the perspectives of the participants in order to better understand their behaviors and choices (Seidman, 2006). The advantage of face-to-face interviews was that teachers' responses gave voice to their experiences in a way previous studies have not yet done. The face-to-face interview enabled the interviewer to read body language, emotional state, and posture of participants. There were no power dynamics between the interviewer and an interviewee causing the participant to feel threatened by what they may say. Participants shared responses with the researcher, who was also an international teacher, which they may not have shared with their own administrators or international school directors, knowing responses would remain anonymous. Each interview took between forty-five minutes and one hour.

"All is data" in grounded theory (Glaser, 1998). It is the job of the grounded theory researcher to let the data emerge in its own right and induce meaning as it is happening.

According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory uses successive levels of abstraction through comparative analysis to constitute core findings. The researcher constantly compares the data in order to make sense of it and develop categories, sub-categories, and core categories (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The goal of grounded theory is to generate theory as it relates to the core categories that emerge in the data.

After considering numerous ways to approach the research, it was determined that interviews would be the best methodology to gain the level of depth necessary into not only generating new insights into the international teaching experience but also how those had the potential to affect retention decisions (Seidman, 2006). Other methodology considerations included conducting surveys only, but as the researcher had studied closely the results of Mancuso (2010), the researcher sought to gain more in-depth perspective through interview responses than what may have been produced with survey results only.

3.5 Field Research Entry

According to the International School Services Directory (2010-2011) at the time of planning this study, China was listed as having 37 international schools, Germany had 15, The United Arab Emirates had 120, and Brazil had 7 international schools. From this list two schools from two different cities in each country were contacted and included based on if the schools head responded. The schools that responded were then recruited to represent the countries in this study, creating a combination of both a convenience sample and a stratified random sample. Locating, contacting, recruiting, and interviewing participants did not pose a challenge in this study. An introductory email was sent to international school heads with information about the study (See Appendix A). A brief summary and background of the study were provided to international school heads, principals, and international teachers who agreed to take part in the study. Most principals were receptive and responsive within a week of being

contacted.

The researcher made personal travel arrangements to visit each school in person and meet with the international teachers on site. The principals helped recruit teachers or ask for volunteers to participate in the study on the basis of several other criteria requested by the researcher. The researcher wanted to recruit teachers representing a variety of nationalities, ages, genders, education levels, and years of experience both in teachers' home countries and overseas. This request was to gain a variety of perspectives of the international teaching environment and how perspectives influenced choices to remain in or change international schools over time. International teachers had to have completed at least one year in international teaching to be considered for inclusion in this study. In this way the final sample was purposive in the sense that teachers in the study were representative within a range of characteristics (Springer, 2010). In most cases teachers who were first responders were recruited for the study and school secretaries often helped set up the dates, times, and locations for where the interviews were to occur on site, away from distractions.

3.6 Participants

One hundred international educators from ten international schools in four countries worldwide were involved in the study: China N=28, Germany N=27, United Arab Emirates N=25, and Brazil N=20. This study was not aiming at a representative sample, as there are over 5,000 international schools (Keeling, 2010) and nearly 300,000 international teachers (Gaskell, 2012). The countries of origin of the 100 international teachers included Canada, USA, Mexico, Colombia, England, Scotland, Bangladesh, Australia, and New Zealand. The following results are based on demographic information collected from 94 of the teachers in the sample. The number of teachers in each country was: China = 28, Germany = 27, UAE = 25, Brazil = 20.

Figure 3.1 depicts the countries from which the international teacher originated. Figure 3.2 illustrates a map of where the international teachers in this study have worked collectively.

Figure 3.1: Countries where international teachers in this study originated
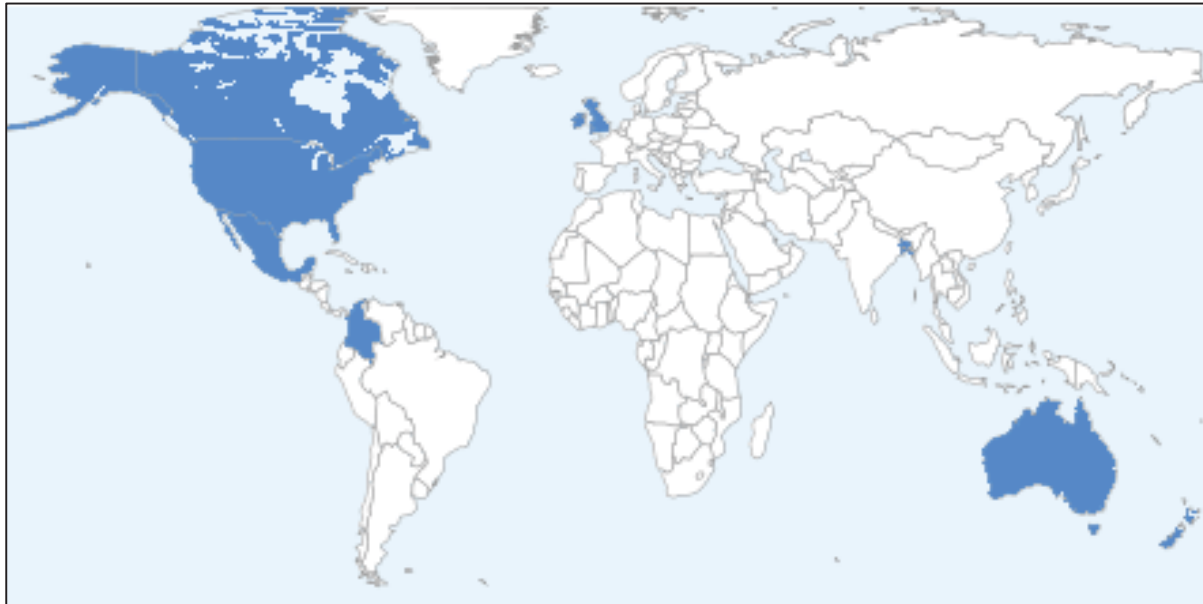
Figure 3.2 Map of countries where international teachers in this study have worked: Combined total of 65 countries

Table 3.1: List of countries where international teachers in this study have worked broken down by world regions

Africa	Asia	Central/ South America	Europe	North America	Middle East	Australia Pacific
Eritrea Mauritius Nigeria Senegal Sudan Tanzania Togo Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) Zambia	Cambodia China India Indonesia Japan Kazakhstan Malaysia Mongolia Singapore South Korea Taiwan Thailand Uzbekistan Vietnam	Bolivia Brazil Colombia Cuba Dominican Republic Ecuador El Salvador Guyana Honduras Peru Venezuela	Belgium Czech Republic Denmark England France Germany Greece Italy Luxembourg Netherlands Poland Romania Scotland Spain Switzerland Turkey Ukraine	Canada USA Mexico	Egypt Jordan Kuwait Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia Syria UAE	Australia Guam New Zealand

Table 3.2 shows that demographic information is reported on the participants, including gender, age, marital status, highest degree obtained, number of years teaching in both country of origin and overseas, and where the country falls on the teacher's continuum of experiences (also see Appendix C).

Table 3.2 Participant Demographics

	China	Germany	UAE	Brazil
Total number of participants:	28	27	25	20
Gender: Male	5	9	12	8
Gender: Female	23	18	13	12
Age: 20s	4	2	4	5
Age: 30s	10	11	16	9
Age: 40s	6	7	1	2
Age: 50s	6	5	3	4
Age: 60s	2	1	1	0
Marital Status: Single	6	8	15	9
Marital Status: Married to Non-Teaching Spouse	8	12	2	3
Marital Status: Married Teaching Couple with no Dependents	4	5	1	6
Marital Status: Married Teaching Couples with Dependents	10	1	7	2
Highest Degree: Bachelors	9	8	13	3
Highest Degree: Masters	17	17	12	17
Highest Degree: Doctorate	2	2	0	0
Where country falls on continuum of experiences: 1st	8	10	10	9
Where country falls on continuum of experiences: 2nd	8	8	3	5
Where country falls on continuum of experiences: 3rd	5	5	6	5
Where country falls on continuum of experiences: 4th	2	3	3	0
Where country falls on continuum of experiences: 5th or more	5	3	1	1

The results for gender showed that most of the international teachers N=63 (67%) were female. By country the percent of female teachers were: China N=21 (80%), Germany N=18 (67%), UAE N=12 (57%), and Brazil N=12 (60%). A chi square comparison showed no significant difference among the four countries, $\chi^2(3, N=94) = 6.62$.

Teachers were divided into two groups according to age level: younger (20s and 30s) and older (40s, 50s, and 60s). The results for age of teachers showed that most of

the teachers in the sample were younger N=55 (59%). By country the percent of younger teachers was: China N=12 (46%), Germany N=13 (48%), UAE N=16 (76%), and Brazil N=14 (70%). A chi square comparison showed no significant difference among the four countries, χ^2(3, N=94) = 3.60.

All teachers in the sample had either bachelors or postgraduate (masters or PhD) degrees. Analysis of the data showed that most of the teachers in the sample had postgraduate degrees N=64 (68%). By country the percent of postgraduate teachers was: China N=20 (77%), Germany N=19 (70%), UAE N=8 (38%), and Brazil N=17 (85%). A chi square comparison showed a significant difference among the four countries, χ^2(3, N=94) = 12.33, p = .006. The pattern of results indicated that most teachers in China, Germany, and Brazil had postgraduate degrees whereas most teachers in UAE had bachelor's degrees.

The average number of years as a teacher for the whole sample was 13.40 (SD = 8.69). The average number of years of teaching experience of the international teachers in the four countries was: China 16.21 (SD = 9.04), Germany, 14.76 (SD=8.42), UAE, 10.48 (SD = 8.29), and Brazil 10.98, (SD = 7.99). A chi square comparison showed no statistically significant difference among the four countries in terms of number of years of teacher experience, F(3,90) = 2.56.

The average number of years teaching in international schools for the whole sample was 8.40 years (SD = 7.33). The results for each country were: China 10.17 (7.84), Germany 10.59 (8.42), UAE 5.33 (4.45), Brazil 6.38 (6.17). A one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference among the four countries, F(3,90) = 3.27, p=.025. Contrasts showed that teachers in China had significantly more experience in international schools than those in UAE. Teachers in Germany had significantly more experience than those in UAE and Brazil.

The average number of years in the current school for the whole sample was 4.02 years (N=94, SD = 5.12). Results by country were: China 3.79 (SD = 2.64), Germany 6.52 (SD = 8.08), UAE 1.29 (SD = .56), and Brazil 3.83 (SD = 3.47). A one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference among the four countries, F(3,90) = 4.66, p=.004. Contrasts showed that teachers in Germany had significantly more years of teaching in

their current schools than teachers in China and UAE.

3.7 Measures for Data Collection

A semi-structured interview of 18 questions (Appendix D) asked the teachers questions about their experiences as international teachers. The questions for the interview were selected in terms of their relevance to the research questions in the present study. There were also some questions related to demographics such as number of years of teaching experience and so on that the teachers completed separately on a form (Appendix C). Additionally, a survey was given out at the conclusion of the interview for each participant to fill out in person (Appendix E, F). The survey questions were designed based on a previous PhD study on teacher retention in American overseas schools by Mancuso (2010) (Appendix G). The survey, however, did not yield significant results as the researcher had expected. There were few items producing anything of statistical significance, so the survey results were intentionally left out of the results chapters. Therefore, only the qualitative results were reported in the three results chapters only. The interview questions had previously been tested and refined as part of a pilot study before this research study commenced in order to refine the wording and yield the greatest depth and variation of responses.

3.8 Procedure

Each interview followed the same format. First, the participant filled out the demographic form. Then they took part in the interview with 18 open-ended questions, and completed the survey last. When the researcher first met with the teachers, the researcher took some time to become acquainted to put the teacher at ease. Before the interview the researcher explained that she would be using recording software that would enable her to transcribe what the teacher said later. Some time was taken to set up the software.

The researcher did not start the interview until the teacher was feeling at ease. The researcher explained the purpose of the interview and that it was confidential to assure the teacher that his or her responses would not be identifiable. The researcher gave ample time for the participant to respond to each question and avoided leading questions or yes-no questions and only asked for clarification when a comment was not properly understood. During the interview the researcher avoiding making any comments that might be judgmental or upsetting to the interviewee. Each interview took about 45 minutes.

Initial data were collected from November 2012 through March 2014. Interviews were conducted in the UAE (November, 2012 and December, 2013), in China (March-May, 2013), in Germany (June, 2013), and in Brazil (March, 2014). Travel expenses and additional costs related to the study were the sole responsibility of the researcher.

Interviews were transcribed using the software Dragon Dictate. Each interview took between two and four hours to transcribe and were then edited by the researcher for accuracy. After completion, a copy of the transcript was sent to each interviewee by email so the participant had the opportunity to cross check the responses. The respondent then had additional time to reflect, edit, and correct responses before data in the transcripts were confirmed. Participants were given time to add, change or remove any responses on or before 31 July 2014. The use of email offered a continuous form of keeping quality records, helping to enhance validity. A summary of the findings was provided to each participant and international school administrator via email in May 2015.

3.9 Data Analysis

After interviews were completed, subsequent data analysis was carried out on all transcripts. The approach to data collection was based on grounded theory in that the researcher tried not to have preconceived ideas about what to expect from the interviews. Transcripts were analyzed thoroughly and coded numerous times to contribute to the development of categories and themes. The survey response data

were analyzed using descriptive statistics and some correlation statistics including regression analysis to quantify some of the responses, though these results were not reported on the basis that they did not produce significant findings.

Grounded theory coding processes, also called the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), were applied to the interview data, combing the transcripts numerous times to classify and sort emerging categories and themes (Charmaz, 2006; Punch, 2006; Saldana, 2009). Throughout the coding process, data were continually compared with other data, codes, and memos, which helped to form theoretical codes to later identify major themes. The qualitative analyses had two phases: 1) line-by-line coding of analysis where each word or line of the transcript was analyzed to develop tentative codes, and 2) focused coding which sorted, synthesized, integrated, and organized large amounts of data from the more advanced codes (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher also used the *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldana, 2009) as a main reference for coding transcripts. Codes ranged from a single word to a full sentence or paragraph within an excerpt of the transcript and were placed in a column alongside the full transcripts.

Upon the completion of the first two coded transcripts, the researcher met with two other PhD graduates who were familiar with coding processes and qualitative methods. With the permission of two participants, each allowed their transcripts to be viewed by the two colleagues for the purposes of testing accuracy. Each of these two separately coded two sample manuscripts and later met with the researcher to compare findings. The three coded 98% of the same themes within these first two transcripts. With this high level of accuracy and control for researcher bias, the researcher continued coding the remaining ninety-eight transcripts on her own.

Various coding techniques were employed, including first cycle methods (*In Vivo codes, process codes, attribute codes, structural codes, value codes, domain and taxonomic codes, and theming*) and second cycle methods (pattern codes, focused codes, axial codes, and theoretical codes). A summary of the kinds of coding techniques used in this research is summarized in Table 3.3: Coding Techniques.

Table 3.3 Coding Techniques

First cycle coding methods	Further ways codes were analyzed
In Vivo codes - quotes taken directly from what the participants says	- grounded theory - frequency counts - memo writing about the codes - phenomenology - thematic analysis
Process Coding – coding processes used in collecting the data	- cognitive mapping - decision modeling - grounded theory - illustrative charts, matrices, diagrams - memo writing about the codes - splitting, splicing, and linking data
Attribute coding – demographic characteristics of the participants for future management and reference	- cross-cultural content analysis - frequency counts - mixed methods research - within case and cross-case displays
Structural coding –phrases in the interview collected together for more detailed analysis	- content analysis - interrelationship - splitting, splicing, and linking data - thematic analysis - within-case and cross-case displays
Values coding – a belief is part of the system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals	- assertion development - grounded theory - interactive qualitative analysis - poly-vocal analysis - situational analysis
Domain and Taxonomic Coding – discovering the cultural knowledge people use to organize their behaviors and interpret their experiences	- cognitive mapping - componential and cultural theme analysis - content analysis - cross-cultural content analysis - graph-theoretic techniques for semantic network analysis - illustrative charts, matrices, and diagrams - memo writing about the codes - situational analysis - thematic analysis
Theming the Data – "category", "domain", "phrase", "unit of analysis"; A theme functions as a way to categorize a set of data into an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas	- assertion development - meta-ethnography, metasynthesis, and metasummary - metaphoric analysis - thematic analysis - vignette writing
Second cycle coding methods	**Further ways codes were analyzed**
Pattern coding – the search for rules, causes, and explanations in the data; patterns in human relationships; formation of theoretical constructs and processes	- assertion development - content analysis - decision modeling - grounded theory - interactive qualitative analysis - mixed-methods research - situational analysis

	- splitting, splicing, and linking data
Focused coding – Search for most frequent codes, developing salient categories that make the most sense; compare new concepts and categories across other data; find properties sharing common elements; find different degrees of belonging	- axial coding or theoretical coding - grounded theory - memo writing about the codes - situational analysis - splitting, splicing, and linking data - thematic analysis
Axial coding – Reassemble data that were "split" or "fractured" during the initial coding process; relates categories to subcategories and specifies the properties and dimensions of a category; components, conditions, causes, and consequences of a process – actions that let the researcher know if, when, how, and why something happens	- theoretical coding - grounded theory - interrelationship - memo writing about the codes - situational analysis - splitting, splicing, and linking data - thematic analysis
Theoretical coding – functions like an umbrella that covers and accounts for all other codes and categories formulated thus far in a grounded theory analysis; spine of the skeleton; analysis condensed into a few words that seem to explain what the research is all about	- grounded theory - Illustrative charts, matrices, diagrams - memo writing about the codes - situational analysis - thematic analysis

Interpreting and diagraming results involved figures from Miles and Huberman's (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis* text. Early in the qualitative analysis process, marginal notes were drafted on interview transcripts. Codes were formed and placed in tables for later comparison. After following the processes of grounded theory, including making field notes, writing-up themes, coding, and making general conclusions, these processes were revisited several times to validate that all possible themes were extracted before proceeding to write up formal reports. Figure 3.3 shows a sample of how an interview transcript was coded.

The Qualitative Analysis Documentation Form from Miles and Huberman's *Qualitative Data Analysis* was also a helpful reference in documenting the processes upon completion of each set of 25 interviews and surveys. Several figures and tables from this text were used in the analysis, including Miles and Huberman's Ladder of Analytical Abstraction for analyzing trends in the data, both segmented and smooth causal networks showing relationships among factors in teachers' decisions to remain in or change locations (Miles and Huberman's *Qualitative Data Analysis* Box 6.4, Box 6.5, and Figure 8.3), Composite Model 2, a flow-chart for the decision-making process (Miles and Huberman's Figure 7.6), a Variable-by-Variable Matrix to classify subjects linking style of teacher with codes on decision making (Miles and Huberman's Table 8.8), and

the Overlapping Clusters showing commonalities with theoretical coding categories (Miles and Huberman's Box 10.2) were also used as displays when reporting findings in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The Miles and Huberman's forms on classifying and analyzing data were instrumental as references for this study.

3.10 Determining Themes

Upon completing data analysis from the interview transcripts, categories were developed related to the experiences of international teachers across all locations. These categories were initially mapped out to make connections between the categories and to be able to ascertain the main themes that emerged.

The goal was to look for similarities within categories and differences across categories. The researcher went through the data numerous times to identify categories and emerging themes (Charmaz, 2006; Punch, 2006; Soldana, 2009). As can be seen in Figure 3.5, the researcher identified categories and then looked for links with other categories drawing lines between them until a pattern emerged where much of the data could be linked to just a small number of categories or themes. This process was repeated a number of times to ensure that all possible themes had emerged before deciding on the main themes that were touched on in the interviews (Huberman, 1994).

When it came time to analyze the interview data the researcher highlighted comments in the transcripts that seemed to fit a theme and then wrote these onto large sheets of paper. Where there seemed to be connections among themes the researcher drew lines. Figure 3.3 shows a complex map drawn up that shows the relationships among the different categories. From this map several overarching themes were deduced from the data as shown in Figure 3.4. The themes were determined by analyzing where the most intersection points occurred on the complex map. The areas that had strong links to several sections became main themes among the categories.

Figure 3.3 Mapping of categories as a result of the interviews
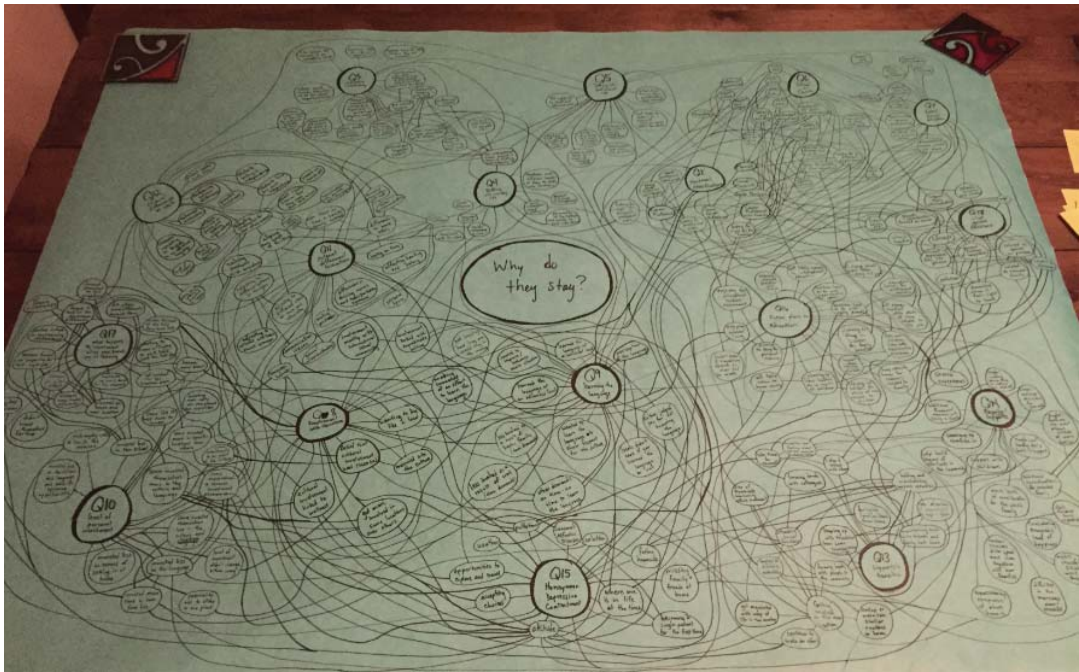
Figure 3.4 Themes emerging in the research
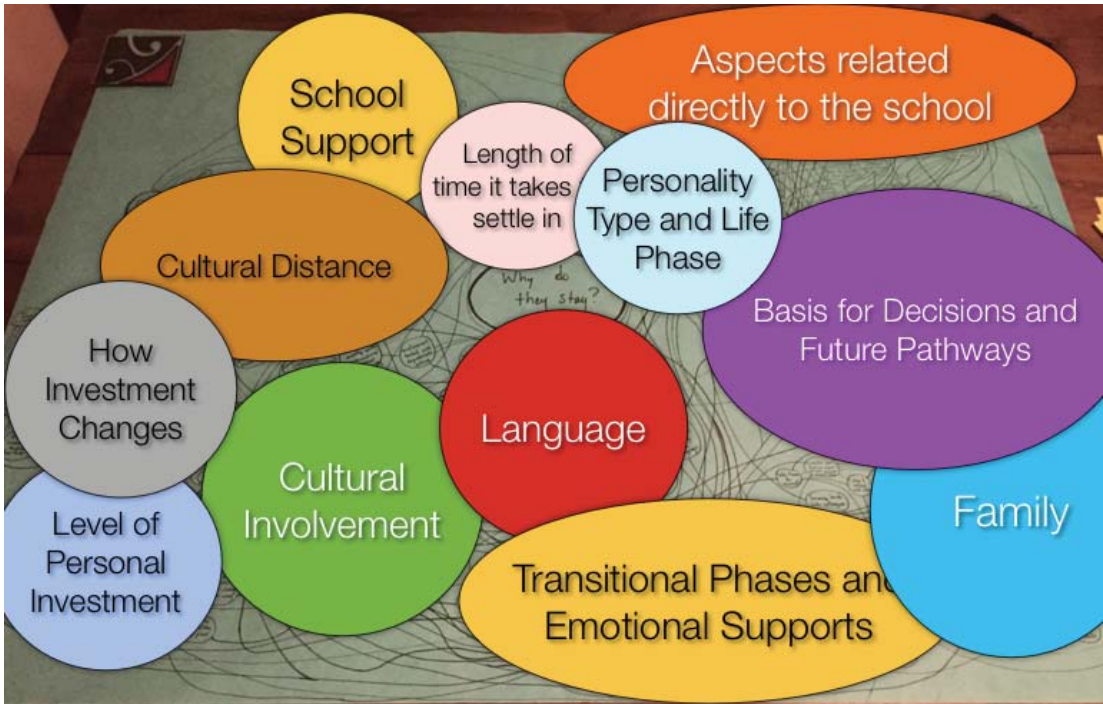
As a result of the connections among categories, twelve major themes emerged from the data collected: school support, cultural distance, length of time it took to settle in, personality and life phase, aspects directly related to the school, the level of personal investment, how investment changed over time, cultural involvement, degree to which one learned the language, transitional phases and emotional supports, how family tied into decision-making, and in what way each linked to how teachers would base their future decisions.

Figure 3.5 shows the Inverse Data Analysis Pyramid on Developing a Coherent Theory. A theoretical framework of these themes was developed to explain the factors guiding the decisions on why international teachers remain in international schools or environments.

Figure 3.5 Inverse Data Analysis Pyramid on Developing a Coherent Theory
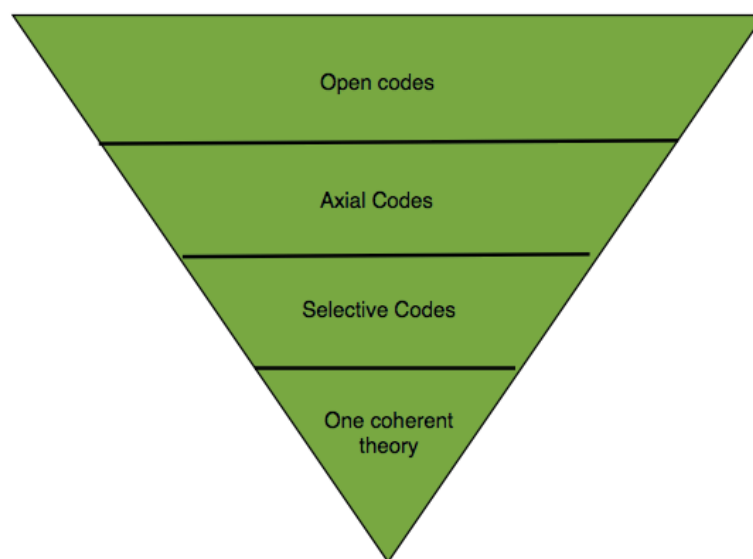
The theory developed with the themes from this study will be presented at the conclusion of Chapter 4.3.

3.11 Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

The researcher received ethics approval on November 7, 2012 with ethics

approval number MUHECN12/078. Participation in this study was completely voluntary. International principals and school heads helped recruit teachers after they were initially approached.

An audit trail was established to verify the rigor of work carried out by the researcher throughout the years of data collection. The researcher maintained copies of all documents, kept an analytical journal, and safeguarded the data on hard drives and USB sticks. Additionally, hard copies were printed, filed, and protected.

3.12 Timeline of the study

A timeline for the study was established in Table 3.4 in order to document the overall pacing of the research.

Table 3.4 Timeline of the study

Timeline	Goals	Completed
June 8, 2012	Official Start Date	X
July: 2012	Initial ethics proposal, exploring the literature, developing the foundation for the study – developed the interview questions and survey	X
August-December: 2012	Gained Ethics Approval – November 7, 2012	X
	Trialed and developed interview questions – pilot study Drafted Research Proposal for confirmation event	X
	Literature Review & Methodology Drafts	X
	Completed Proposal and Preparations for the AAIE conference in San Francisco	X
January-June, 2013	Presentation for the Association for the Advancement of International Education: San Francisco – February 15, 2013	X
	Prepared oral confirmation presentation and summary	X
April 4, 2013	Oral Confirmation Event (Passed: April 4, 2013)	April 4

Timeline	Goals	Completed
	- Revised Methodology and literature review - Established contact with schools and potential participants - Recruited participants for the study in China and Germany	X
April-June, 2013	Collected data in China	X
June, July 2013	Continued data collection – Germany	X
August-November, 2013	Transcribed Data using Dragon Dictate–China & Germany	X
	Coded Transcripts – China and Germany	X
December-January, 2014	Collected UAE data	X
	Continued data analysis & transcribed UAE interviews	X
March: 2014	Collected Brazil data	X
April-May, 2014	- Transcribed and coded UAE and Brazil interviews - Emailed copies of transcripts to all participants for verification and opportunities for changes	X
April-May: 2014	Began to identify trends and draw conclusions from data collection	X
June, 2014-July, 2015:	Data analysis and writing up of the results chapters	X
February, 2015 May, 2015	Presentation of findings at AAIE Conference (February, 2015) in San Francisco, CA Summaries of findings sent to participants and principals	X
August-November, 2014:	Final drafts of the thesis	X
December: 2015	Submission of thesis	X
January-March, 2016	Preparations for defense exam	X
April 20, 2016	Defense examination	X
May-August, 2016	Emendations to the thesis	X
September, 2016	Final submission of thesis and application for graduation	X

3.13 Summary of Methodology

This was a qualitative study involving 100 international teachers. The researcher contacted the teachers via their schools in China, Brazil, Germany, and United Arab Emirates. Teachers were asked a series of 18 interview questions. Their responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the grounded theory approach. An overview summary of the study is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Overview of the Study

Table 3.4	Overview of the Study
Research Topic	Why do they stay? An analysis of factors influencing retention international school teachers
Research Questions	1) How do individual characteristics of international teachers impact retention? 2) How do cultural distance, the length of time it takes the international teacher to settle in, and the support provided by the school affect the overall experience and the decision to stay or go? 3) What factors ultimately guide international teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their locations?
Methodology	Grounded theory
Data Collection	1) Demographic Information 2) Face-to-face Interview 3) Survey
Research Site	On international school campuses worldwide
Participants	28 participants from China 27 participants from Germany 25 participants from the UAE 20 participants from Brazil 100 international teachers in all

3.14 Organization of remaining chapters

The results for chapter four are divided into three sections: 1) Chapter 4.1 answers research question one related to characteristics of the international teachers, 2) Chapter 4.2 answers research question two related to cultural distance, transitional phases, and school support, 3) and Chapter 4.3 answers research question three related to future decisions and pathways of international teachers.

Chapter 4.1: Results for Research Question 1

4.1.1 Research Question 1

    1) How do individual characteristics of international teachers impact retention?

4.1.2 Themes on characteristics of international teachers

Three themes emerged on how the individual characteristics of international teachers influenced retention. Figure 4.1 depicts that the personality type of the teacher, the marital and family status of the teacher, and the personal investment on the part of the teacher all play a role in retention decisions. It is the individual characteristics of the teacher that make each have a unique angle on their experiences.

Figure 4.1 Themes on Individual Characteristics of International Teachers
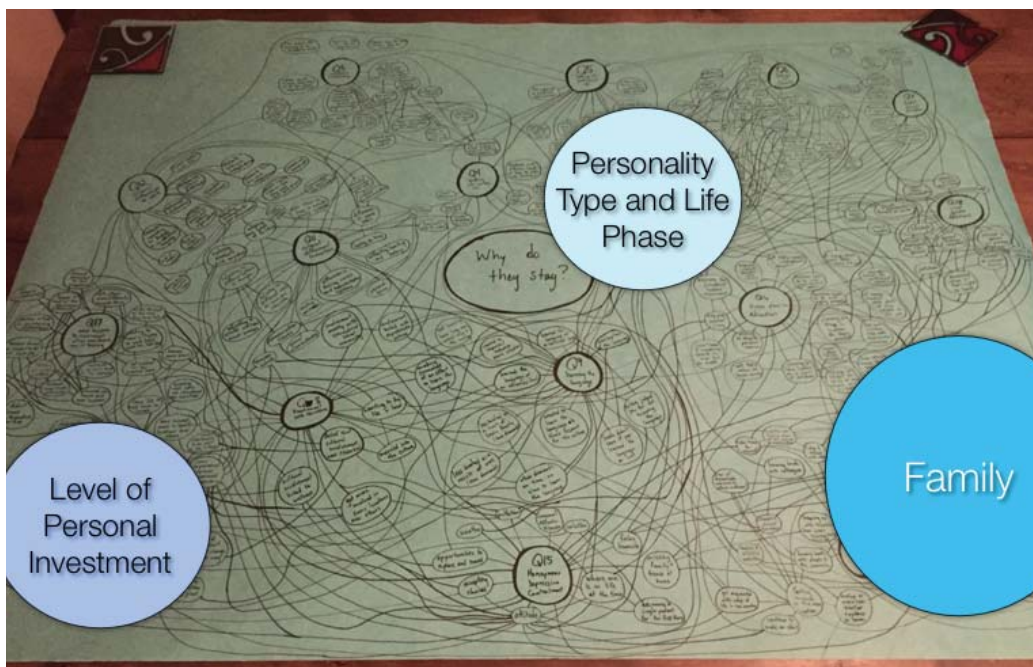
One theme was the personality type of the teacher. Teachers classified themselves into one of six categories: mavericks, career professionals, career professionals with families, senior mavericks, and senior Penelopes. Another theme that emerged was the classification or marital status of the teacher. Singles, teachers with partners, and teachers with children all experienced the overseas experience in different ways and therefore approached decisions from different angles. The third theme that emerged related to the individual characteristics of international teachers was the level of personal motivation each teacher brought to the overseas experience. Knowing how long the international teacher would or would not be in a location and how much effort they would likely put into the experience either way varied by individual teacher.

International school administrators have little or no control over these factors, but knowing and understanding them may help school leaders to better perceive what motivates each kind of teacher and from what angle they are approaching decisions related to remaining in or leaving their current international schools and locations.

4.1.3 Hardman's classifications of international teachers

Hardman (2001) was an international school administrator who classified each international teacher into one of six categories: 1) mavericks, 2) career professionals, 3) career professionals with partners or children, 4) senior mavericks, 5) senior career professionals, or 6) senior Penelopes. These classifications were important to the study because no other researcher has previously classified international teachers in any particular way. The first three categories describe international teachers earlier in their careers, while the next three categories describe them later in their careers. More lengthy descriptions of each classification will be described within each subsection below. Though all teachers initially classified themselves into a single category, many identified themselves as changing classifications over time.

1) **Mavericks** were those who wanted to see as much of the world as possible. They wanted to travel. While many fulfilled their contract lengths, mavericks were interested in

traveling and experiencing as many places as possible so were likely to move among international schools more often.

> "The maverick I would say–I want to travel and see as many places. I've ended up working in one place not by accident or because I like it but that one place was a good hub for traveling, and so maverick I think would fit me well." (G1/27)

> "I don't know how much longer I'm going to teach for. I think I would like to see as much of the world as possible, at least go to another 2 continents." (U8/25)

> "Each time I go to a job fair I'm more or less pretty open to the world." (U21/25)

> **Philosophy was to live in the moment:**

> "I don't have the sensation of Plan B and plan C. I don't have that. I take it as it comes and I take the opportunity (B1/20)."

> "If I know I'm going to be here for a long time I don't feel the need to rush. I'm more relaxed. It's like, 'Oh, I'll go and do this eventually.' And I do. But I don't feel any time that I have get everything crossed off a bucket list." (G27/27)

> "In Belgium I just kind of jumped in with both feet. I loved it. I couldn't believe I was in Europe–I kept pinching myself the whole year." (C22/28)

2) **Career professionals** without families were those interested in career growth. They tended to contribute more to schools and volunteered to lead and organize a myriad of activities. Their career was the most important aspect of the overseas teaching experience for them.

> **Looking for the professional match**:

> "It's very important to me – the school – that's how I chose this place. When I, because I had several offers, so I picked what I thought would be the best fit for me as far as philosophy because I never thought I would end up China and I didn't pick it because it was in China. I picked it in spite of being in China." (C22/28)

> "I don't think it was ever about seeing as many places as possible. I think it was really about the professional match–like, know that you are going to a good school in a country that interested you, but it wasn't like it was… I don't see

myself as being sort of the international backpacker schoolteacher, yeah." (C26/28)

"I think for the longest time my career has been the thing for me that has been of paramount value. I am very, very driven. I am very focused on teaching. I absolutely love what I do. It is my passion, no doubt. I won't make another career even if I had the chance to." (G27/27)

Looking for professional development:

"I want a good school that I could grow in, contribute to, but also learn from as well." (C24/28)

"I want to find a good school that could support me as a professional and help develop me as a professional." (U19/25)

Looking for cultural 'fit' alongside professional match:

"The school is the most important thing to me. Unfortunately for the first three positions the locations were such that staying beyond two years wasn't an option. Kazakhstan and Mongolia were far too cold … Here I found a place I was happy to stay, and not only the location but the school." (C17/28)

"My wife and I are looking to stay in schools anywhere from 2 to 6 years and to hop over to another school to see another part of the world, but we are not necessarily interested in building a career in only one school." (B17/20)

3) **Career professionals with families** often stayed longer in international schools where they felt their children had the best educational opportunities within that school and location. They were less likely to leave if conditions were suitable for themselves and their children.

"I think when you come with family you can't be such a maverick." (C9/28)

"I am here because my job is self-fulfilling but also because my children are getting a free education worth $50,000 a year or more." (C19/28)

"Career professional with children was good for awhile because my oldest sons spent his school years here basically. … I was in the lucky group. I didn't have to pay anything out of my own salary for my son's education. He basically went here from pre-K until he graduated and nowadays teachers have to pay the tax on the

tuition. They don't pay the tuition itself, but it's viewed as salary by the local authorities and so somebody has to pay taxes on it." (G5/27)

4) **Senior mavericks** were similar to the former description of a maverick except that they were usually older. Either their children had grown up or they did not have children. They were nearing the end of their international school career and wanted to experience more places before they retired.

> "We started off in the Middle East … So we thought we would give it a go and saw this local advertisement in the New Zealand Gazette and it was for Muscat– we didn't know where that was so we had to find all the information out and so we got the jobs and we only took a year's leave of absence to see how things would work out-to see if it was for us. … We rented the house out, the kids were still at University and so we thought, we'll give it a go for a year." (C3/28)

5) **Senior career professionals** had transitioned into this category by their age. Comments from these teachers suggested that they wanted to stay where they were, that it would be difficult for them to move on.

> "As we get older it's not as easy to move in many, many ways. Because as the kids get older you don't want to keep moving them around and it just appeared after this last recruitment fair that we are less employable." (U11/25)

6) The term **Penelope** means loyalty, based on the Greek legend about Odysseus and his wife Penelope. Senior Penelopes were likely to stay at a school until retirement.

> "Find a school where I can be comfortable and stay until retirement, yes." (G17/27)

> "I think we plan to finish our career here unless something extraordinary came up." (G3/27)

> "At this point in my life, because now I am 56, it makes sense that I'm not going to start anything new." (G11/27)

> "I'm not interested in moving all over the world. I think a lot of people are who are international teachers but I don't have the stamina. This lifestyle is hard … I don't think I have another move in me. As far as what I want for my career, I'd rather stay put for awhile." (G18/27)

Table 4.1 depicts the number of teachers in the sample who rated themself according to Hardman's six classifications. Some teachers, however, felt they could belong to more than one category, as they felt their classification had changed over time.

Table 4.1 Number of International Teachers Fitting Hardman's Classifications

	China N out of 28	Germany N out of 27	UAE N out of 25	Brazil N out of 20
Maverick	3 = 11%	5 = 18.5%	9 = 36%	6 = 30%
Career Professional	9 = 32%	10 = 37%	10 = 40%	8 = 40%
Career Professional with Children	11 = 39%	7 = 26%	6 = 24%	6 = 30%
Senior Maverick	1 = 3.5%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%
Senior Career Professional	4 = 14%	3 = 11%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%
Senior Penelope	0 = 0%	2 = 7.5%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%

4.1.4 Summary of classifications of teachers within the scope of this study

As shown in Table 4.1, a majority of teachers in China were career professionals with children, whereas in Germany, the UAE, and Brazil the majority were career professionals without children. In all countries, however, there was a significant amount of career professionals with children (between one-fourth and one-half of participants in each location). China and Germany had more senior career professionals over other locations, and few locations had either senior mavericks or senior Penelopes. Hardman (2001) said there was no single right kind of teacher, as all has something to contribute to an international school. The classifications presented in Table 4.1 provided a

snapshot of what kinds of teachers were working within each country in this study, providing further insight into the kinds of motivations each may be guided by when making their decisions related to remaining in international schools.

4.1.5 Teachers changing classifications over time

Even though international teachers initially classified themselves into a category for the purposes of this study, many said they felt they could have actually belonged to more than one category or that their classification had changed over time. One said, "I think the answer to that question is different at different stages of your life." (C27/28)

Combination maverick and career professional:

"It's a mix between being places and developing my career. I don't want to see a ton of places … it's more of a new experience for a short time to develop my career and have experience." (B3/20)

"I would say a combination of a couple of those. I would say when my husband and I look for jobs we have to find a school that would be able to hire both of us. And traveling is also very high on the list." (B18/20)

Belonging to combinations or multiple categories:

"I wouldn't say any of them really. I mean if I had to choose one of them it would probably be a maverick but it's not really that – because I spent my childhood growing up living in different places. I think for me it is really finding somewhere that I can call home. Whether that will ever happen or not, I don't know." (G9/27)

"Definitely not get to a school and stay for the rest of my career, it's a tough one. It's kind of the maverick and career professional with children [categories]. We would like to see more countries but we want to make sure they are at good schools and we would like to stay for extended periods of time, but not for the rest of our lives." (U18/25)

"Somewhere between the cracks. I can say that I do like traveling but I don't like this idea of constantly moving so I would like to go but come back to this same spot. Having to move every 2-3 years is not for me." (U16/25)

From maverick to career professional:

"I also want to travel and stuff but at this point I'm getting kind of sick of it …. I would like to focus on this and develop a program." (U7/25)

"I am a maverick, I wanted to travel and see as much as I could. But I'm finding that I am not settling as well. In the next 5 years I do want to settle down – I'm going to be less selfish in the places that I choose to settle down. So it's not really the job anymore, it's more the country." (U5/25)

From maverick to career professional with family:

"I think previously I was a maverick and I was really interested in different cultures and teaching in different places but I think now that I've got a family, I think now I am more of a career professional with family." (C12/28)

"It's changing. I don't think I am looking to travel all over the world. I think I'm looking for that right job … ultimately I think about where I am going to settle down… whether I'm going to go back home and settle down. I'm not getting any younger." (U9/25)

"It's definitely changed over the course of my international teaching experience, whereas before it was maverick – I just wanted to get out and see the world. But now that we have kids, it's kind of like we want to find a school that best fits us professionally and what we believe in pedagogically and hopefully stay there for a good length of time." (U20/25)

From career professional to a career professional with family:

"I'm a career professional with family. It's changed from the beginning, though." (C13/28)

"When I first came here I probably would've called myself a maverick … since coming here I've gotten married to a local and have a child now so that is something that wasn't in the cards when I first started." (B6/20)

Choosing schools for quality education for own children:

"When I started this job I was single and my family status changed over the 20 years that I have been traveling, so obviously my views about how to choose a school changed as well. Now as a single mother of two kids I am looking at a school for my children." (U13/25)

"The career professional with children if I had to pick, but I think it's a little bit of each…I do want to see the world … but bottom line is if it's good for my kids. If my own kids are getting a good education, I'm happy." (U14/25)

"I am a career professional with family… The way we kind of feel about teaching now is that as long as my kids are well taken care of, I wouldn't mind taking a job where I am not as satisfied. So that's just kind of the sacrifice, I think, that the parent has to make, yeah?" (U17/25)

From career professional to Penelope:

"I probably started off as a maverick but now I am starting to become more like the last one – wanting to get to a school to stay at … My partner is here from Germany. I met him when I was in Ecuador." (G27/27)

"I think for the longest time my career has been the thing for me that has been of paramount value. I am very, very driven. I think somewhere along the way in [a prestigious international school] I had begun to realize that I wanted more for myself. I did not want to think of myself 10 years from now and all I had ever done was teach. And I felt that the balance in my life was off, like tremendously off. Since I have moved to [new location] I have found that balance …. Mind you it's exhausting after awhile [moving] and when you've done it a couple of times you begin to realize that it takes a tremendous amount of energy to start over. And as you get older, you are probably not as interested in putting that kind of energy out and starting over. I'm at that point." (G26/27)

4.1.6 Summary of findings for those who change classifications over time

The most common shift was from career professional to career professional with family, or from maverick to career professional with family. What seemed to shift international teachers among categories in many cases was when they had children and how that shaped or changed their priorities. Some began to look for a good school for their own child over the best professional match for themselves. Others attributed age or not wanting to start over as reasons for changing classifications over time.

4.1.7 Marital and family status and influences on overseas experiences

Having a family or being single tended to change the overseas experience. Two-thirds of the international teachers in the study came overseas with partners or children

while one-third came overseas single. Participants offered insights into the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of family situation.

4.1.8 Advantages of being overseas with a partner or family

Of the 100 participants in this study, 66% came with a partner or family. Most said it was an immeasurable help, as they shared experiences together, had a built-in support system at home, and obtained a new layer of contacts through each member of their family.

Shared experiences with partners and family:

First, with a family, international teachers could build and share experiences together. Comments included:

> "I think it creates a sense of stability knowing that things around you are always changing." (C4/28)

> "It's just your anchor. I think you become a pretty close-knit family because you are a self-contained unit – we don't have cousins, grandmas, aunts and uncles readily available to us close at hand." (C5/28)

> "At the end of the day sometimes it makes everything sweeter … and when you have those moments of realization, "Oh my gosh we are living in the Middle East. Most people wouldn't live outside of their home state let alone move to a new continent. And you have to sigh and take a deep breath and say, oh my gosh, this is really cool." (U17/25)

Built in support:

Second, with a family there was a built in support network to have someone to confide in, support with childcare, and support with cross-cultural understandings. Comments included:

Having someone to confide in:

"I couldn't do this without my wife. I love the support of someone to talk to about bad days and know it won't go anywhere." (U25/25)

"Having someone to talk to help you see it from your angle or someone to just tell you that you are an idiot and get over it." (B8/20)

"It's the place where I can go to and everything else doesn't matter." (C11/28)

"I wouldn't have done this without my husband. No. He is my home." (C2/28)

Support with having a family and childcare:

"Having my first child down here has been pretty fun, too." (B2/20)

"We have a little one at home with the nanny. That is a big deal. Of course you have a lot of trust." (U18/25)

"We will definitely want to look for a place where we can stay at least 4 years with the baby coming." (C23/28)

"One of the reasons we are staying is because of the maternity policies here. I mean we get 6 weeks before, 8 weeks after – that's all paid by the school. Then I can stay home for 3 years–3 years and my job is guaranteed. And for the first year the government pays me 65% of my salary. My mom was a stay-at-home mom so I know I am still a valuable asset to society whether I am home or at school. I think some women may value themselves on their jobs. I can take some time off of work." (G18/27)

Support with cross-cultural understandings:

"I ask my wife to help me with stuff because she is Brazilian. She knows how the system works better that I do and how to make things work." (B14/20)

"It's more helpful. My spouse is going through a lot of the same problems and issues from adjusting to a new place, a new culture, missing family, things like that. So it's kind of nice to have someone there that you can relate to and trust and really confide in." (B5/20)
"It's nice to experience things that are frustrating and have somebody to share that with and get their perspective on it." (G2/27)

Having family helped create layers of contacts:

"Having kids is really helpful. It just gives you an extra layer of contacts." (G7/27)

"It's huge in helping you meet other people. You meet your children's friends' parents. There's a whole community there. And we really notice that since our children are no longer with us. It's completely different." (C18/28)

"Weekends are a bit busier more with our son's events than ours. There's always something happening for the kids." (C12/28)

"Having kids is helpful because you plug into the parent network much more. You get invited to kids birthday parties, you learn where to have birthday parties in that country, and you meet parents on a social level more than you would have done otherwise." (G7/27)

4.1.9 Disadvantages of having a family while living overseas

Participants also mentioned that there were disadvantages or complications with having partners and family along. Some said that it was more difficult because they had to consider their partner more in making decisions related to staying longer or moving. For others, working in the same place with their partner was new and was not always positive. Those who had children experienced an extra layer of concern because they had no extended family nearby for support, while others were concerned for their extended families in their home country.

More levels of consideration for whole family:

First, there was a feeling that it was sometimes more difficult to make personal decisions because they had to consider everyone's level of happiness. Comments included:

Considering everyone's needs and levels of happiness:

"You think differently. When you look for a job, you don't look for the same things because when you have a family your target is different when you go to the job fairs. You put the children first … and put them in the decision making." (U13/25)

65

"It helps if everything is going well and then everyone's happy, right? But where it doesn't is if one person is not happy." (U15/25)

"It certainly weighs on how long you stay in a place. Most decisions are made based on the happiness of your children more so than your own happiness. I guess you child's happiness is your own happiness." (C9/28)

"I can't just pack up and leave. I have to think of my children. What is it going to do to them emotionally? Where are they going to go to school? Is that a school where my job is good, but is it good for my kids?" (C16/28)

"It has changed a lot because it is not my decision, it's our decision. And decisions take time so the process is slower." (C10/28)

"I wanted the kids to have a sense of home. When I grow up, my family moved every couple of years and so I don't really have a sense of contact to a geographical place. And I wanted my kids to have that." (B14/20)

Families overseas are together more often:

"We work in the same place before. It's not awkward it's just kind of different. You might not always agree. We find yourselves talking about work a lot, which is fine, but we didn't talk as much before about work when I was working someplace and she was working someplace else. So yeah, it's just different." (B5/20)

"It's easier in the way of transition, we have each other to fall back on, but in the same sense we don't try to reach out to other people as much." (G21/27)

"I suppose now that I've got a husband and a child, I'm never on my own. Ever. I never have any free time." (C8/28)

"I think the family is excellent for support and difficult for time management." (B6/20)

Additional considerations regarding family:

Second, teachers reported that there were less positive aspects to the international lifestyle for families of international teachers.

Made stressful situations more stressful:

"I think family to me it's like a pendulum of positive and negative. At the end of the day when we come home and we have experienced something brand-new, it's like oh my gosh, I'm so grateful we were able to share that. But on your worst day when I've taught crappy classes and your lesson plan didn't go as expected and then your kid throws a fit at the end of the day, it's so incredibly hard because you are at your wits end." (U17/25)

"I think being a single parent makes it about 1,000 times harder." (C20/28)

"It doesn't help if one person is not happy. It's almost easier to both be miserable or to both be happy than if one person is happy or miserable." (U15/25)

"It can be scary if you are in a culture where you have kids and you don't know how to help them if something goes wrong because you don't speak the language." (G13/27)

"Having to go to the doctor, the hospitals, and all of those things will be a little bit more challenging." (G16/27)

"There's also the problem for short-term friendships. When I think about my own son who lost his best friends every year for about the first 5 or 6 years of his time here, you know, he made a good friend and the next year they left. He had another good friend, and he leaves and that goes on and on." (G5/27)

Additional financial concerns with having a family:

"It's tougher to get jobs [non-teaching spouse and international teacher] because it's international. My kids also go to a local school [in Germany international teachers have to pay taxes on the tuition for their children, which is between 800-900 Euros per month if they were to attend the international school]." (G4/27)

"Teachers are not at the top end of the pay scale, but our children are mixing with families who are. That can cause problems because our children are not that rich either. For the teacher family it can create a bit of tension if your child wants to have X, Y, and Z or wants to do X, Y, or Z because their friends are all doing it whereas the teacher with the teacher salary can't always afford it." (G5/27)

"I am financially unable to keep up with my daughter's classmates. I'm financially unable to keep her in a $200 dress … In South America most of the schools aren't international. Some schools have more embassy attendance but when you get out to the extremities the rest is just filled up with wealthier locals so it changes the dynamic very much." (B9/20)

"The biggest disadvantage – especially for a family of our size is that everything just costs so much more and finances are a lot bigger decision in anything that we decide. And usually the taxi drivers won't pick us up. They see our big family and they just won't stop." (B8/20)

Difficulties in the marriage:

"If there are problems in the marriage, that can make it more difficult." (G14/27)

[Going through a divorce] "I was on my own after my husband left. In some ways that was okay, in some ways it wasn't. It would have been nicer to have family closer but ins some ways I just needed to get on with it. Some people didn't even know I was going through all the stuff I was going through and they said, 'Oh, I didn't have any idea.' And I was like, 'Good, that's the way I wanted it." (G6/27)

Transitioning perspective of where home is:

"Home was always where you Mom is. Now home is here." (G18/28)

Factoring in considerations for extended family:

"The thing that a lot of international teachers face is the price we pay to be away from our families. It may look like it's a wildly exciting and primitive lifestyle, but the truth is every time we leave home we don't know if we will ever see the people we love again and that could be a really high price." (C17/28)

"You have to deal with the guilt, I mean it's there. And my parents are getting kind of old but I always say if my dad wants to come he can hop on an airplane and he can come, but in reality he can't because my stepmom is going blind. So yeah, I think there is that bit of guilt." (C19/28)

"My grandmother asked me everyday when I am coming home." (U21/25)

"My parents hate it [that she lives overseas]. They hate every minute of it." (U10/25)

"For me, my kids have grown up. It is important I can contact them easily." (C21/28)

"I'm here and I'm single but at the same time I've got an aunt and uncle and my nephews. And my niece will be born soon." (C24/28)

"I was constantly going back [home] 4 weeks or 6 weeks in the summer and my partner was not a teacher and did not have all that time off and didn't understand why I wanted to go back to Canada so often. Well of course you don't understand, your family is here – one hour away and my family is 17 hours away." (G10/27)

4.1.10 Advantages of being a single teacher

Non-married teachers mentioned some advantages to being single such as only having to care for yourself, having more time to reflect on themselves and connecting with others easier. Comments included:

Making decisions for oneself:

> "It's just that easy. You only have to take care of yourself. As a single person it's easy. It's great." (C14/28)

> "You are not concerned with making the best decision that suits your family, that you are making the decision that is best for your individual lifestyle." (U16/25)

> "I can move or not move as I please." (G24/27)

> "I am free to go and do what I like. I can make my own decisions. I don't have to think too much beyond that, which is good." (U9/25)

Having more time to oneself:

> "It is nice to be able to spend time alone away from your [extended] family. I'm always going to be a little brother. I think in some ways it allows you space and time to redefine who you are or to be able to look at yourself introspectively and notice things about yourself that you didn't notice before when you have a family near you. I'm able to have that space to really be able to look at things that are important to me and to myself–in some ways, be selfish, which is okay to do." (B12/20)

> "I think for me that would have tarnished my work somewhat. I might have felt more of a pull between my duties to my family and my duties to the position that I had acquired by coming here. So in actual fact I think God they weren't here." (C15/28)

> "My family is one of those that everyone is always in everyone else's business and everyone is always talking about each other and everyone has an opinion on

what everyone else is doing. Sometimes the distance means I feel more independent." (G9/27)

"I've come to the conclusion that it helps that I don't [have family]. I'm exhausted at the end of the day." (G26/27)

Ability to connect with others easier:

"You can explore a lot more. It's easier. At night I am going to this event and be with these people and have a whole other group of friends and the next day after work, volunteer for different programs, get involved in coaching. So I think being single as an overseas traveler and worker is a good way to go about it." (U19/25)

"I have gotten to go on more trips and go out and make more friends and being by myself, people will start talking to me." (B4/20)

4.1.11 Disadvantages of being a single teacher

On the other hand there were disadvantages to being single such as finding a partner, not being as marketable as a candidate, or making choices on where you might consider living for employment.

Potential difficulties in finding a partner:

"Do I choose to stay in China and potentially stay single? It's not easy for a single female expatriate to find a husband here." (C1/28)

"As far as getting a job, sometimes being single prevented me from getting a job [at a job fair or when changing jobs] because they wanted teaching couples." (G11/27)

"Not having a partner even affects where I go. I would be more willing to go to more remote places if I had a partner or family. I think having a family is a whole different thing in terms of you can go to more remote places, crazier places, because at least you have someone to hang out with. Being single I feel like I choose my plans differently, I guess." (B11/20)

"As a single person I've been envious of family units where they take their support network with them. They go through these amazing adventures together." (G27/27)

Not having built-in daily support or security:

"If I was back home and something were to happen, say my car broke down, I might have a friend that would be able to help me out. But if something like that happened here [abroad] there might be a friend but there might not. I'm not certain yet. You don't really know how much you can depend on people." (U8/25)

"I would assume it would help a lot [having a partner]. For example tomorrow I have to rejig my entire life to get the cat to the cattery where he is going to spend Christmas holidays. I mean I'm sure there are challenges as well but I'm sure having a partner with you probably makes life a little easier." (U24/25)

"Disadvantages would be feeling lonely or sometimes maybe security issues. There are probably certain places I shouldn't walk at night by myself." (B4/20)

4.1.12 Summary of findings on family and marital status

Two-thirds of international teachers in this study came overseas with a partner or family, whereas one-third of participants came abroad single. There were advantages and disadvantages expressed for each different type of situation. Advantages for those with family included shared experiences and having a built-in support system, as well as an extra layer of contacts. Disadvantages of having a family included extra considerations for everyone's level of happiness and additional financial considerations. For singles, advantages included only having to make decisions for one and being able to focus on your work, whereas disadvantages included having more difficulty in finding a partner and not feeling as marketable at job fairs. Some felt having a partner would be more helpful, while others were happy to only worry about themselves.

4.1.13 Level of personal investment on the part of the teacher

For many international teachers, how much personal effort they put into the school, country or experience has to do with their personal motivations for being overseas, how they feel about cultural involvement and learning the language, and whether they are motivated more by the school or the country to be in their current

locations. Teachers who made decisions for personal reasons were those who were seeking and assessing best fit for themselves or their families. Knowing in advance how long one would or would not remain in the location often affected the personal motivation of each teacher to invest in the overall experience.

4.1.14 Length of stay affected investment level

Some teachers expressed that knowing in advance how long they would or would not stay contributed to how much they invested themselves personally into the experience. Some felt that if they were only staying a short amount of time they would not get as involved in the culture or would not learn the language at an advanced level. Others felt if they were in a location for only a short amount of time that they would give it all they had and invest as much as possible. This section breaks down responses in three ways: 1) knowing how long one will stay affected investment of the personal level, 2) knowing how long one would stay and how it did not affect personal investment, and 3) level of investment did not change either way. Additionally, a phenomenon called reverse investment occurred where originally teachers had started off investing themselves quite a lot and then they reached a point of investing less.

4.1.15 Level of involvement affected based on length of time in location

Teachers' levels of investment in their school and country were different based on, 1) knowing in advance how long they would stay, 2) not knowing in advance how long they would stay, and 3) investing regardless of knowing how long they would stay. Table 4.2 depicts the investment level breakdowns and how each affects personal levels of investment.

Table 4.2 Knowing Length of Stay Affected Investment Level

	Knowing does affect investment = 56/100	Knowing does not affect investment = 30/100	Will invest regardless = 14/100
China	12/28 = 43%	10/28 = 36%	6/28 = 21%
Germany	14/27 = 52%	9/27 = 33%	4/27 = 15%
UAE	14/25 = 56%	9/25 = 36%	2/25 = 8%
Brazil	16/20 = 80%	2/20 = 10%	2/20 = 10%

Some invested more:

"I think that if you know you are going to be somewhere longer it's more natural that you make the effort." (C25/28)

"I bought a house here. You put a lot of work into it. It's really nice. It's got a little backyard and stuff." (U4/27)

Invested more in the culture and language:

"I already came here with the intent of being here, so it makes more sense to kind of invest in the place and learn about the culture." (C1/28)

"Once you know you are in it for the long haul, the commitment to learning the language changes." (B10/20)

Investing more early on strengthened the experience:

"Having started being involved, I think it anchors you more. So it influences your decision as to how long you will actually stay." (C18/28)

"I think it's important that people no matter where they are living for however long that you have a really high standard for what you are doing." (C7/28)

Level of investment did not change either way:

"We never know how long we are going to stay, so my investment is always – I give it all I have." (C5/28)

"Once I sign on the dotted line my mindset is all give 100% if it's two years or ten years." (C4/28)

Involvement not specific to a particular cultural context:

"I think the first few years we were away from New Zealand, we were a lot more involved. Now it's becoming more this is our occupation, this is where we are." (C3/28)

"I just sort of live a normal life here now. I don't feel like I actually have to go out and do something specific to feel like I belong locally." (G5/27)

Some took time to invest:

Some, looking back over their experiences, wished they had put in more effort in their locations and experiences. Comments included:

"In Prague it was interesting because we thought we would be there for a year and actually the contract just got renewed for one year each time… to 7 years. If we had known this 7 years earlier maybe we all would have made a bit more of an effort." (C14/28)

"It takes me a good 6 months, minimum 6 months to actually get out of my shell." (U13/25)

"I think we made the investment when we felt comfortable and accepted and valued." (C2/28)

Not knowing how long one would be in the country:

"My excuse here? I guess not knowing how long I'll be here but I might not be in the country for more than a couple of years, so I guess I should be more motivated to learn it but I haven't been." (C9/28)

"I made a big effort with Chinese till I found out I was moving." (C14/28)

"The other thing is how useful the language is going to be once I have left the country." (G1/27)

"My Italian is actually pretty good. I spent a month in Sardinia where it was all Italian …. I was reluctant to learn German because I had spent all this time learning Italian." (G18/27)

4.1.16 Experiencing a reverse investment phenomenon

Some teachers started out by investing themselves more in their experiences, but then there came a point when they began to invest less overall. It may have been because it was because they knew they were staying while others were leaving, for others they could get by in a location without needing to invest more or in different ways. It was important to note this phenomenon, as in some cases it was the start of causing the teacher to want to leave. Comments included:

> "Yes, the reverse investment has actually happened a bit to me this year. The cause is my own personal desire for a career change." (U21/25)

> "Such intense investment into the school and the culture can be very absorbing and eventually draining. I think it is a healthy point when teachers start to balance their life with other hobbies or family or something so that they are not continually thinking of their commitment to their career or surrounding culture." (G4/27)

> "I don't feel the need to prove myself as much as I did when I first arrived. I have definitely invested myself less in friendships, as the constant meeting, getting to know and saying good bye to people had begun to wear on me emotionally." (C1/28)

> "Yes for sure. I think after I've fully transitioned in a place, like maybe the third year, I've felt that phenomena. The urgency to learn the language wanes as things are easier and more familiar and your friendship and support circles have naturally grown larger. You've gotten to know the area and overall just feel much more settled." (G22/27)

4.1.17 Summary of findings for relationship between investment and time

According to Table 4.2, fifty-six percent (56/100) of teachers said that knowing in advance how long they would be in a location made a difference in how they invested themselves. A further thirty percent (30/100) said knowing in advance how long they would be in a location did not make a difference on their investment level, and fourteen

percent (14/100) said they would invest themselves regardless of whether or not they would be there for a short period of time or a long time.

Certain teachers were determined to give their best effort even when they did not know how long they would be in a location. Others indicated that they were "stayers" regardless. They would put in the investment and stick it out. These teachers indicated it was in their "mindset" to invest effort in the culture no matter how long they would stay.

These results are important in terms of contract lengths because the majority of teachers who knew they would remain in a location longer tended to invest themselves more. This inadvertently increased the retention rate as teachers were investing themselves in their current life experiences. Some teachers said they would put in more effort if they knew they would be in the location for a long period, especially in terms of learning the culture and language. Others, however, said that if they were there a short time they were likely to invest less in the location and experience overall.

4.1.18 Overall summary of chapter 4.1

This chapter presented the characteristics of international teachers, breaking down classifications and marital and family status, personality types, and personal motivations of the teacher. International schools have little or no control over these factors, but knowing and understanding them may help provide knowledge about the personal motivations of each teacher and why they are making the decisions they do to remain or leave their current international schools.

Hardman (2001) was an international school administrator who classified each international teacher into one of six categories: 1) mavericks, 2) career professionals, 3) career professionals with partners or children, 4) senior mavericks, 5) senior career professionals, or 6) senior Penelopes. The first three categories describe international teachers earlier in their careers, while the next three categories describe them later in their careers. Though all teachers initially classified themselves into a single category, many identified themselves as changing classifications over time. What seemed to change teachers across categories in many cases was when they had children and how

that shaped or changed their priorities. Some began to look for a good school for their own child over the best professional match for themselves. Others attributed age or not wanting to start over as reasons for becoming a different kind of international teacher over time. Knowing and understanding what kinds of international teachers were within each international school helped make better sense as to what each were motivated by.

A majority of teachers in China were career professionals with children, whereas in Germany, the UAE, and Brazil the majority were career professionals without children. In all countries, however, there were a significant amount of career professionals with children (between one-fourth and one-half of participants in each location). China and Germany had more senior career professionals over other locations, and few locations had either senior mavericks or senior Penelopes.

Another characteristic of international teachers that helped shape retention decisions was marital and family status. Having a family or being single tended to change the overseas experience. Two-thirds of the international teachers in the study came overseas with partners or children while one-third came overseas single. Each kind of international teacher expressed advantages and disadvantages to the overseas experience based on their family and marital status. Advantages for those with family included shared experiences and having a built-in support system, as well as an extra layer of contacts. Disadvantages of having a family included extra considerations for everyone's level of happiness and additional financial considerations. For singles, advantages included only having to make decisions for oneself and being able to focus on your work, whereas disadvantages included having more difficulty in finding a partner and not feeling as marketable at job fairs. Some felt having a partner would be more helpful, while others were happy to only worry about themselves.

A final characteristic about international teachers that helps schools better understand their motivations on retention included the level of personal investment on the part of the teacher. The extent to which international teachers invested themselves into their overseas experience, connected with the culture, made attempts to learn the language, and got involved no matter how long they would remain in the location.

Some teachers expressed that knowing in advance how long they would or would not stay contributed to how much they invested themselves personally into the experience. Some felt that if they were only staying a short amount of time they would not get as involved in the culture or would not learn the language at an advanced level. Others felt if they were in a location for only a short amount of time that they would give it their all and invest as much as possible. Teachers who knew in advance they would be in locations for longer periods of time tended to get more involved and personally invest themselves more. A reverse investment phenomenon occurred with some when international teachers had stayed for what they felt was too long a period of time who then began investing less in their overall experience.

International teachers are different in some aspects from other expatriates in that they choose where and for how long they work abroad. They are not sent or sponsored by a company to a specific location like most other expatriates and after their initial contract most international teachers have a choice on whether they will remain in their job and location or choose somewhere else to go next. Understanding the individual characteristics of teachers may help make sense behind the motivations and perspectives for making decisions related to retention.

Chapter 4.2: Results for Research Question 2

4.2.1 Research Question 2

2) How do cultural distance, the length of time it takes the international teacher to settle in, and the support provided by the school affect the overall experience and the decision to stay or go?

4.2.2 Themes on cultural distance, settling in, and school support

Six themes emerged related to how cultural distance, settling in, and school support influenced retention (see Figure 4.2). These themes included factors specifically related to cultural distance, cultural involvement, ability and willingness to learn the language, length of time it took to settle in both culturally and professionally, transitional phases upon arrival to new locations, support in new situations, and support provided by the international school.

Figure 4.2 Themes on culture, transitions, and school support
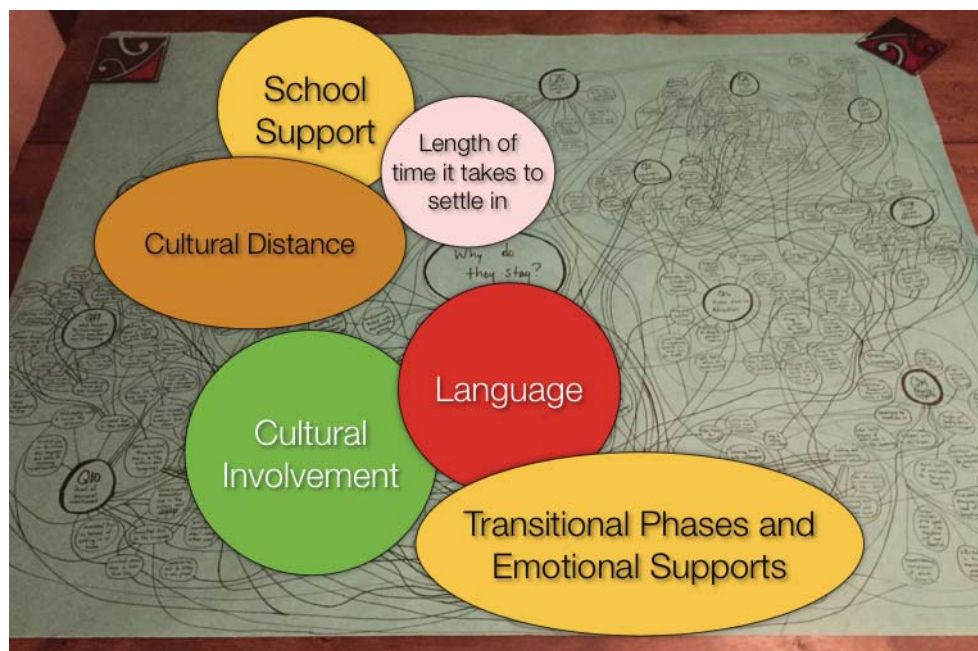
4.2.3 Cultural Distance

Cultural distance refers to the relative differences or distance of the current culture to that of the expatriate's home culture. The ability to integrate and adjust at a faster rate sometimes had to do with the cultural distance between these two cultures. This section addresses how international teachers in other cultures adjust to cultural norms, behaviors, different ways of thinking, different views on race and ethnicity, driving norms and transportation systems, different cultural attitudes towards women, language barrier, personal space, cultural punctuality, differences when making purchases, and differences regarding personal safety. These cultural differences are often present in both the host country and in the workplace, and it is relevant to schools because the teacher may experience differences with students, parents, colleagues, and with approaches to solving problems.

4.2.4 Adjusting to cultural norms, behaviors, and differences in thinking

Several themes emerged related to the adjustment of cultural norms, behaviors, which included adjusting to different ways of thinking, different views on ethnicity, differences in driving etiquette and transportation, differences regarding cultural norms and attitudes towards women, differences affecting communication and personal space, and differences regarding values and approaches to punctuality, and work ethic.

Adjusting to different patterns of thought:

Teachers encountered different ways of thinking when living among various cultures. The responses suggested that these differences were frustrating in some cases.

> "The line at the grocery store might take 40 minute because the cash register broke but they didn't want to tell you because they didn't want you to be mad." (B3/20)

"They lie. They will never tell you the word no. That frustrates me when you want just a concise answer so you can move forward with whatever you are doing." (B1/20)

"It's like they know one way to do something and if you pose a question that requires them to think in a way that is not trajectory to what they imagined, it's like you would think I was asking them to move Mount Everest." (C4/28)

"When I first asked my wife [host country national in South America] out on a date, I asked her out on a Monday to go out on Saturday. And she was like, "Why are you asking me out a week in advance? Ask me on Saturday and then I'll see what I'm doing on Saturday." (C6/28)

"This ridiculous "*in shallah*" attitude in that things get done whenever they feel like getting done, if ever." (U6/25)

"Having to get a visa, having to set up an apartment, not knowing the language … they [Germans] are not sympathetic to the fact that you are new and obviously don't know German yet." (G21/27)

Adjusting to different views on race and ethnicity:

"It took me kind of a year and a half to become adjusted to being stared at intensely [in China] or people pointing and running down the aisles [at the grocery store]. In Saudi Arabia there were more people of brown complexions than there are here and it hasn't been a discriminatory thing, just more of an awestruckness." (C2/28)

"In terms of Western background – I enjoy my freedoms over here [in the UAE]. If you are from Asian background being from Dubai is already set up. There's Indian [building hands from the bottom up], then Pakistani, and then you've got Filipino – who are the maids, etc. And then you've got the Westerners who do the banking and all the teaching. And then you've got the Middle Eastern people [at the top]. It can be frustrating. I came from Indian background but am from a Western society (Scotland) so then you find that people judge me quite a lot." (U2/25)

Adjusting to driving norms and transportation systems:

Teachers reported that they found driving and catching public transport "stressful", "aggressive", and "painful":

"In this part of Brazil policeman only watch over drugs and the people can do anything they want, which means people could be driving straight at work as fast as they want and so driving is extremely stressful because you are almost about to get into an accident everywhere we go because nobody follows any of the rules." (B15/20)

"Driving is a huge frustration, the really intense speed. I was thinking to myself thank goodness the Muslim religion doesn't allow her drinking here because I think drinking with the extreme speed would be just an impassively horrible situation." (U17/25)

"Getting my German driver's license took me a solid 2 ½ months and I was on top of everything. They give you a temporary American one and you have to take that to 15 different offices and have it translated into German. Then you have to come back and take the test – a different written test at another place. … Things are very efficient [in Germany] until it's different." (G18/27)

"The infrastructure of the roads … the fact that I have to use Google maps every time I go somewhere because if you make a wrong turn there's no way to get back. It's just so frustrating." (U14/25)

"Dealing with the public transportation is huge. I did that for like the first 6 months but it was the most frustrating, excruciating, painful experience–crowded buses, waiting for hours. You never know. The [bus] information is horrible, and everything is just really bad." (B19/20)

Adjusting to cultural attitudes towards women:

Women in some cultures were seen to be "subservient" or in some cases even "harassed". Female teachers were treated differently than men but also treated differently compared to where they came from.

"Being single, being female, the alcohol–the limitations that can bring [if you live in the Middle East]." (U10/25)

"I would get harassed by young boys. Like they would grab my chest, my bottom, because they thought it was okay. That's how they would perceive foreign women and that it's okay. "She's a foreigner, she's from the West, she's not covered up, I can do this." I had that happen a couple of times in Egypt and I didn't enjoy that at all." (G26/27)

"Be mindful about covering up even when it is so hot and make sure that you are respectful to the culture wherever you are. You've got to constantly be aware." (U5/25)

"One thing I do not appreciate in Asia was perhaps the general expectation that many, many people say as a woman you should be passive. You should be subservient…. These are values that in no way I respect or admire. And it didn't feel good to think that." (G27/27)

"Having a baby here [in China] was really hard in that everyone tells you what you should and should not be doing. It wasn't until I had my second child in New Zealand and had a totally different experience. Here you would get completely scolded if you took your child out while they were weeks or months old." (C12/28)

"Even though I am a married woman, still, having to have everything done through my husband is really annoying but it's part of where we live." (U20/25)

4.2.5 Cultural differences affecting communication

Teacher responses indicated that inability to communicate in the host language often caused negative experiences for them. An expression or gesture that may have meant one thing to an individual or culture sometimes represented something entirely different to another. Teachers with different backgrounds sometimes did not realize that when they said or did something it sometimes held different connotations in the host country or with others around them. They mentioned feelings of isolation, frustration and ostracism.

Language barrier:

"I think language is the top one. I think that it can make life feel very isolating. It hinders a lot of my colleagues from wanting to stay when you feel isolated." (B13/20)

"I haven't had the ability to communicate what I want to happen or being frustrated that I'm wanting something to happen and someone is smiling but I'm really upset." (C26/28)

"I get annoyed, but mostly I get annoyed with myself that I can't actually get much accomplished." (G25/27)

"Language. Language is the biggest one for me. If I can't understand, if I can't communicate with people, and if I can go into a shop and have a chat with somebody, I'm out of it. Because it gets to a point where I'll have the conversation with them whether they understand it or not." (U12/25)

Verbal and nonverbal communications:

"Gestures–like if you put 2 fingers up in England and you have it this way around, it's the same thing as putting your middle finger up." (C25/28)

"Writing a student's name in red in Korean is really bad luck." (C25/28)

"In the UAE, they click their tongue for "no". I used to think that was really, really rude. And then I read this book and it was talking about how people lived–Bedoin people. And how of course it's boiling hot and they have to conserve all their energy so they make the smallest motions in order to conserve their energy. Even for the bill, they just raise their finger a little like that." (U18/25)

"In New Zealand we say, "sweet as". "Sweet as, bro." Literally, for 6 months they thought I was saying sweet ass. And it wasn't until I was talking to a teacher once, and she was like, "when you say this, do you mean this? And I was horrified!" (G13/27)

"You need strategies and you need to change. Some things I've done in the past don't translate over and it just kind of falls apart. So you have to alter it for the audience that you have." (G25/27)

Cultural differences regarding personal space:

While some would assume that providing one with personal space is standard, teachers reported feeling uncomfortable with breaches of their personal space in some cultural contexts.

"This is my space, that is yours. Never the two shall meet." And then I think, I'm seeing this with a Western set of eyes. With a Western set of thoughts." It's what you've been brought up with and therefore it's hard to break that." (C15/28)

"For me I found it mostly in China. I just love the history and the architecture and I just love the ancient mystery of their culture. But it got to me–the spitting, personal space, they just pretend you are not there." (U11/25)

Cultural expectations regarding punctuality:

Several international teachers, particularly in the UAE and Brazil, experienced frustrations with how the locals in the country viewed punctuality versus how they perceived value in keeping to the schedule.

"They have cultures that are very relaxed and laid-back, which I'm used to being from California, but it's a whole other level in my opinion. It's like, "Oh, that will get done tomorrow." It might or it might be in a month. And so when I am working in a professional environment that can be frustrating if things don't get done or get done with quality." (B3/20)

"Here, the slowness of things. They are not efficient but you learn to deal with it because there are other benefits to every country. At some point you'll have some sort of issue no matter where you are in the world." (U16/25)

Cultural differences when making purchases:

"Everything is closed on Sundays [in Germany]. That took a long time getting used to." (G2/27)

"There were some crazy times, too – like [in Poland] you couldn't find things like toilet paper. You had to find toilet paper in a paper store or a stationary store. So one day I bought 10 rolls with a big string around it and people would stop me on the street and say, "Where did you get it?" You would always carry around a lot of cash in your pocket because if you wanted to shop or something, you bought it right then. And generally you bought two because you had a friend who probably wanted it as well." (G11/27)

"China could sometimes be frustrating with the bargaining. I just kind of want a fair price. So at times bargaining did not bring out my best side." (G24/27)

Cultural considerations regarding safety:

"I was in an area of the Congo where there were lots of rebels, and to get out of there was quite difficult. And so I packed two bottles of whiskey for a bribe and had sewn money into my skirt. I had like $5 in my purse because I knew they were going to look through my purse. Our car was stopped and I stayed calm while the driver took the bribe to them. I was calm and I just let them take my purse. It was pretty scary because they had guns. Always stay calm when you can, always stay calm." (C19/28)

"Many people are held up with a knife or a gun. Like a car across the street from our school at the beginning of the year – one of the teachers had a gun pulled out on her and her car was stolen. Yeah, it happens all the time." (B12/20)

4.2.6 Cultural differences specific to locations

Some teachers reported that cultural differences within specific countries had an impact on how long they remained in their locations.

In China:

"For me, I'm quite happy to move out of the country and the culture does have something to do with it." (C11/28)

"I didn't cope in China. I just didn't want to spend another year of my life in a concrete high-rise surrounded by other concrete high-rises and smog." (U24/25)

"I get angry with the approach of the Chinese culture – really basic things like spitting, the complete disregard for rules …. That's enough to move me on." (C21/28)

In Germany:

"It definitely impacts how long you stay. Definitely. The frustrations of dealing with people when you think that you are understood but you're not." (G27/27)

In the United Arab Emirates:

"It absolutely, categorically impacts how long you stay. I would be so surprised by my own reactions. And that's when you realize the accumulation of culture shock affects you." (G13/27)

"Won't settle here. The thinness of expat lifestyle will make me move on eventually. (U9/25)

In Brazil:

"So here it's been great for us physically but not culturally…. It's a much less educated city…. It's less organized and so that weighs upon us. If it were more organized, we might stay to fight the fact that the salary isn't really awesome. So I guess, yeah, cultural frustrations are impacting our decision to leave. (B17/20)

4.2.7 Summary of cultural distance and communication differences

Most participants went through a process of adjusting to cultural differences in their respective locations. This process included adjusting to cultural norms, behaviors, and different patterns in thinking, aligning own ways of thinking within different environments, and seeing how they fit into the environment long term. Cultural frustrations impacted longevity in all four locations, but retention was impacted most by cultural differences experienced in China.

One-seventh of the sample interviewed in Germany explicitly said Germany was harder to settle into compared with other locations. One teacher expressed, "This is the hardest place I've ever lived [Germany] … The culture of society, the culture itself." (G6/27) Another teacher exclaimed, "I think I had more culture shock here [Germany] than I ever did in the UAE." (G13/27) What made settling in Germany more difficult? Interview responses indicated aspects as basic as not knowing that a German apartment did not come with a kitchen or light fixtures, not knowing the shops were closed on Sundays, the language barrier in that Germans won't always use English even when they know it, and the perception that the culture was less friendly and welcoming than other cultures.

Fewer cultural frustrations were expressed about acclimating in the UAE and Brazil. However in the UAE, some teachers had difficulty settling in as a result of visa issues. Without a visa, an international teacher there could not drive legally, receive a shipment, buy alcohol, or open a bank account. Additionally, he or she had to leave the country every 30 days and reenter on a visitor's visa until a proper work visa was prepared. Some teachers mentioned it took several months (up to 16 months in one case) to obtain a working visa in the UAE, which was completely out of the teacher's control but causing considerable daily hardships for the teacher. In China, some teachers indicated they had difficulty adjusting to environmental factors, pollution, and to the language barrier. Several international teachers in Brazil said they had difficulty

settling in as a result of having fewer expatriates in which to interact, experiencing a language barrier, and not having enough salary to sustain a desired quality of life.

4.2.8 Cultural distance in the workplace

Many international teachers remembered specific stories and instances where cultural differences resulted in discomfort or frustration. While adjusting to cultural norms, behaviors, and ways of thinking, teachers reported that different ways of thinking of people from various cultures infiltrated both the workplace and everyday life situations. Work ethic and work habits were also different. Some teachers adapted to their overseas workplaces quickly while others had more difficulty.

4.2.9 Observing differences in work ethic with staff members

Teachers reported that work ethic both in society and the schools were not what they had been accustomed to in their home countries or in other countries in which they had worked. Teachers in international schools are from a number of countries, have worked in a number of countries, and hold different views on educational norms and standards. Differences with other staff members mostly came down to work ethic and workplace norms as seen from different individual and cultural perspectives.

Work ethic:

> "When you are fired from a job in Brazil, you are given extremely high payouts. So employees have the mentality of, "I don't have to work hard because if they want to fire me they are going to give me a cash payout when they do." And we have seen some of that even at the school. So that's hard to try to instill a good work ethic in people. I think that affects the entire culture." (B7/20)

> "Germans have a different philosophy of career … before I was a teacher, and I worked in a shoe shop, and in England I was a teacher before that and a bar manager. In England it looks like I have varied, I have a lot of experience. Whereas in Germany it looks like I am some sort of butterfly who can't settle on

anything. In Germany everything is career, down the lines – your degree or your major has to match the job, or you have to have done an apprenticeship or whatever. They are not so flexible in that respect." (G12/27)

"In the Middle East students were less motivated and thought that everyone could be bought with a price. I had students asking me how much for the key to the test. They said everyone had a price. Everyone could be bought." (C17/28)

"I will leave because of corporate culture. Here my biggest struggles are honestly the school–I don't think that is anything cultural. I think that it's a corporate culture as opposed to a country culture." (U10/25)

"People lose their tempers so maybe it could be some training for HR people as well. Many people are frustrated with their HR departments. It can become a sort of "us vs. them" situation." (G1/27)

Differences with members of staff:

"It's not only getting people to do their job, but to do their job to the best of their ability." (B7/20)

"In Brazil the teachers don't really have great classroom management skills so the students are used to doing whatever they want, whenever they want." (B8/20)

"Working with support staff… Telling them and they are just nodding their head and they are going to continue the way they worked before." (U12/25)

"Colombians are extremely talkative. If you have a staff meeting and you asked for quiet, like it's still chatty, chatty, chatty. So you have to go with a group activities that are group oriented and discussing things. And you just have to go with what their strengths are because you are not going to get everybody to be quiet all the time." (U18/25)

4.2.10 Cultural differences noted with students

Some teachers felt that students were either not independent enough or too independent. Others were not as creative, or they were mostly focused on grades or getting the correct answer instead of taking risks in their independent ability to think or with their English language abilities.

Level of student independence varies:

Students lack independence:

"Sometimes they are spoon fed. They are babied so much it robs them of confidence because they never do anything for themselves." (C22/28)

"Students have nannies and drivers – they are very wealthy so they are just not as independent." (B10/20)

Students have too much independence:

"Kids stay up late. Kids go to parties. Kids get a lot of say in what they do. So somewhere [in other parts of the world] where it's a little more parent directed…it's very child directed here." (B10/20)

"In the Middle East it was the attitude towards academic dishonesty. A lot of my students felt that we could be bought. We all had a price." (C17/28)

Creativity varies among student groups:

"I think my kids here just aren't as creative. I think they are not into risk-taking because for many of them it is not part of their culture." (C5/28)

"The biggest adaptation [for students who already had a lot of knowledge in the content area] really was getting up to their level." (C2/28)

Students focused on grades and getting the right answer:

"The differences between an Asian classroom and a Western classroom are huge. If you've got the critical mass of quiet, reserved, not wanting to, and it's not that they don't know the answers, but if they haven't got anything but 100% certainty on what it is, they won't even have a go." (C14/28)

"Students from Latin American cultures have sort of a different emphasis on their learning. Brazilians don't need a GPA to go to university. They sit in an exam before they go to a state or public university at the end of their high school. So they just need a diploma. So getting D's and C's in class is completely acceptable form from a Brazilian stand point and point of view. You have to try and really explain this to parents that report cards really matter if the student is planning on going on to an international university experience." (B6/20)

"With math it's not just about learning the facts." (G1/27)

Factoring in English as an additional language:

"Students are not speaking English at home – most of them. So you are really reliant on what they are being taught in the school environment." (B16/20)

"The vast majority of students were second-language learners. So I had to speak slower and concentrate on speaking more clearly. I also found that a number of my cultural references that I use as humor, they didn't understand." (B14/20)

Students' expectations:

"Entitlement. I feel like the local students have entitlement for sure. Not showing up to class, hanging out in the nurse's office, not dressing out for PE, missing school because we are going on vacation early … it's their lack of appreciation for their own education, you know, affects your teaching as well." (U14/25)

"The problem with a country such as this one is the fact that the school might not have high expectations and the local kids definitely don't have those types of expectations because of the way things are being run so that definitely interferes with my teaching style. Everybody is in a slow pace … let's not give them too much homework, let's not stress them out. When I feel like my standard should be up here and they are down here so I have to bring everything down, which I don't like but have to accept it." (U16/25)

"Hard work and studying hard is not very valued … That impacts student behavior and you feel that in the classroom." (B11/20)

Level of student respect:

"Most of them [students] have drivers because they come from wealthier families and everything is done for them." (B3/20)

4.2.11 Cultural differences noted with students' parents

Teachers mentioned that in some cases parents were overinvolved, under involved, or produced miscommunications as a result of the language. Yet others had a hands-off approach to their students' learning. They wanted the teachers to simply 'take care of it'. Communication with parents also presented some challenges, if English was not their native language so subtleties and nuances in communication were sometimes misinterpreted.

Parental views on how they want their child to learn:

"Middle Eastern parents can be choosy about who they want their children to learn from." (C16/28)

"In Thailand, I had a mom who went to the principal and asked for her child to be taken out of my class. And went on and on about it. And went in and he was like, why do you want her taken out of the class? It's been 12 years and I still remember. And she said, "Well to be honest, I want my child out of class because the teacher is left-handed. And the left hand is the unclean hand." And that was a surprise to me. And fortunately he had to turn to her and say, "is that the only reason?" And she said, "Yes, that is the only reason." And he said, "Well unfortunately the other first-grade teacher is also left-handed so we're not going to be able to accommodate you." (G6/27)

"Families can be quite challenging in a particular view of what the school ought to deliver. There is a kind of entitlement attitude. The family thinks, 'We are paying big money to therefore you ought to give us. If they are paying the fees from their own pocket rather than the company did they have a different kind of attitude rather than this entitlement of what the school should do for them rather than, you know, "what do you offer?' (G5/27)

"The parents' expectations are high. They want to know how they can support their students at home and in a lot of ways you've got to be very careful they don't do too much in the way of academics, they do more in the way of problem solving or thinking outside the box." (C3/28)

Parents being too hands-off:

"It's more acceptable to have the attitude, "Well, I'm sending the kids to school– you take care of the academic part and I'm going to take care of the home environment." (B16/20)

"Parents are working all the time so they are withdrawn. They may be a little hands off for some of them." (B3/20)

"When parents don't show up for their parent teacher conferences and you say, well that's strange, they got straight C's – you think they would want to talk about it, there needs to be more initiative on the teacher's part to reach out to parents and educate the parents about expectations for University if the student was planning to study abroad." (B6/20)

Differences communicating with parents:

> "The language is a huge barrier because you can't interact with parents as readily to communicate concerns or to offer ideas as support at home because they are not speaking English at home, so it's a challenge." (B16/20)

> "Often e-mails will come across really abrupt or really discourteous or strong, but then you have to step back and think, "They are actually operating in their second language so maybe it doesn't really mean that." (G19/27)

> "I definitely have to respect and understand the culture to interact with the parents here." (B20/20)

4.2.12 Effects of culture impacting instruction

Effects of what teachers experienced in the culture and in society had spillover effects in their daily lives in the workplace. Cultural frustrations were sometimes carried from outside of school into the classroom related to calendars and disruptions, cultural superiority, and humor that didn't translate well across cultures. Lessons involving cultural sensitivity mostly occurred in the UAE.

Needing to show cultural sensitivity in lessons:

> "I couldn't show students certain images of famous painters because of the positions of the human body … I always try to make sure all cultures are feeling comfortable when they're watching my lessons and researching." (U5/25)

> "As an art teacher, we've got to be very sensitive about the human form. We are doing portraits. I have students constantly saying they can't do portraits. They can't take pictures of themselves. They can't draw the body." (U9/25)

> "You are going to have to adjust. For example, the East Asians are more receptive and passive so your discussions, you are really going to have to squeeze it out of them … Whereas Middle Eastern students are more talkative. You almost have to reel them in more and completely try to change your style because if you let them go they are just going to take over." (U15/25)

> "You have to be careful with swimwear in Muslim countries and how you involve the girls and boys to work together in PE classes." (U25/25)

"You have to be careful about what you teach about in an Islamic country, saying 'Israel' and things like that." (U25/25)

Other interruptions or cultural influences impacting instruction:

"I mean frankly I think it's outrageous that I have to teach 5 days in a row this week because every other week I've had some sort of interruption with something. I have some Islamic holiday that has been moved to some other day because of the moon. The constant interruptions make it very difficult to plan anything." (U6/25)

"Brazilians are a lot more social than what I am used to." (B12/20)
"They [cultural frustrations] impact your teaching because as a teacher, I think your life definitely impacts your classroom. When you have better weeks, I think this makes you a better teacher and when life is bad outside the school I think it's very easy for that to be what comes through with your classroom to the students." (B13/20)

"What I find really frustrating is that we do have other cultures here as well. So to negate all those other cultures and cater to one, I think is wrong." (U10/25)

4.2.13 Approaching cultural differences in the workplace

Some international teachers do not alter their teaching practices in international classrooms. They make considerations for differences as they go.

"It's the same approach to learning, so I would say cultural differences have very little impact in terms of how I teach. It's just how I teach wherever I am." (C9/28)

4.2.14 Aligning own ways of thinking in different environments

Over time, many international teachers became better adjusted to their international contexts. Initially, some compared home with the foreign environment or compared the country of their previous international placement with where they were now. Others arrived in a new placement and began to impose their views on how a society should operate. All of these mentalities could be slightly detrimental to assimilating in the new environment. Many began to realize that problems have the

potential to exist anywhere in the world and begin to develop strategies for becoming well adjusted in their overseas environments.

Adapting own views on how a society should operate:

Some teachers reported that that they had an initial idea in their head of what a country would be like, then their perceptions were proved wrong. They also reported that they had adjusted their ways of thinking and became more accommodating of differences.

> "And then my own stupidity, when I actually expect things to be like home. I get so mad I get frustrated with myself when I expect it to be better." (C2/28)

> "I think people who come to Germany expect everything to work and expect everything to be perfect, and it's not." (G1/27)

> "I think I was really kind of a cultural imperialist when I was younger. Now I enjoy the cultural differences and I find, of course, there are days when you – 'Why can't the German smile more?' Or, 'Why are the Arabs so noisy?' But in general I like that–to be out of my comfort zone." (G27/27)

> "My brother said about me, "You know, you think she would learn to love these cultures because she has traveled so much. But she's just learning to hate the world one culture at a time. Look at you go!" And I think what he should have said was frustrated with cultures. Now of course I feel like I am more aware of the differences and able to deal with them." (G18/27)

Accepting that problems are not always location based:

Teachers also reported that no matter where one lives in the world, or how many times one moves, problems will exist everywhere.

> "When you can't get any Internet connection, you can't get somebody to come to your house for 3 days. I was just thinking, it's probably a pretty common thing in any place." (G10/27)

"I don't know how much that [problems like having someone come fix your washing machine] actually impact whether you stay or go because you are going to get that wherever you go–even in the States." (B16/20)

"I would walk away from the situation and go, "That doesn't really require that emotion." Wow, this is affecting me more than I realized. You walk into another situation and you are obviously much more conscious about it, so therefore you deal with it." (G13/27)

Adapting to one's environment:

Teachers also reported that they remained open minded and tried to adjust and adapt, find humor in the differences rather than frustrations, and look at things from multiple perspectives.

"You have to go into it with the end goal in mind and an understanding that there's going to be a lot of things that are going to be difficult for you to adjust to." (B14/20)

"I have to adapt, I have to respect. I will not change myself, but I am not going to change them either." (U3/25)

"I don't think I had cultural frustrations. I don't come with my predetermined, Western values to a new country. You have to try and see it from their point of view." (C18/28)

4.2.15 Summary of findings on cultural distance

The effects of settling into a new culture of the new culture depended on the ability of participants to bond with incoming colleagues, to embrace change, to not compare previous experiences with their current transition, to have the ability to connect with new cultures and have the willingness to learn the language, and have preparation and assistance provided by the school.

Cultural clashes sometimes depended on one's expectations of the new country as compared with how things went in their previous placements. As found in this study, cultural involvement in second overseas placements decreased significantly both in

terms of getting involved in cultural activities and learning the language. This was in part as a result of teachers being extremely involved in their previous locations, so it is possible they may have forgotten the energy involved in starting over. Therefore, some became less involved in their second postings. Cultural involvement tended to increase again after the second posting. International teachers whose cultural involvement was deeper and who learned the language at higher levels tended to remain in locations longer over those who did not.

Cultural frustrations also had the ability to impact retention. The host country held varying views on race, ethnicity, gender, personal space, work ethic, values, punctuality, transportation etiquette and driving norms, as well as differences in thinking. Settling into the cultures sometimes proved quite difficult. Communication issues were related to language or miscommunication between people, and cultural differences affecting banking, salary, and the purchasing of items also resulted in frustrations. Cultural frustrations were experienced in all locations and had the potential to impact retention. Depending on the personality of the teacher, the intensity of the differences felt, and how the ongoing difficulties caused frustrations or consistent challenges over time could determine the length of time the international teacher was willing to spend in that location.

4.2.16 Involvement in the host culture

Some international teachers felt that getting involved in the culture was essential. They made an effort to live like a local would in their environment, attempted to learn the language, and got involved in a variety of activities. However, certain teachers adapted better in different cultures over others. From responses in the interviews, three levels of cultural involvement were developed: substantial involvement with the host culture, peripheral involvement with the host culture, and involvement with expatriate culture. Table 4.3 shows a continuum along which international teachers got involved in the host culture and where they ranked themselves across the continuum. As can be seen in Table 4.5 below, 19 out of 28 teachers in China (68%), 21 out of 27 teachers in

Germany (77%), 7 out of 25 teachers in UAE (28%), and 10 out of 20 in Brazil (50%) were involved somewhat or to a large extent with the host culture.

Table 4.3 Teachers' level of involvement with the host culture

Baseline for Cultural Involvement			
Host Culture ◄─────────────────────────────► Expatriate Culture			

Number of teachers and how they are involved culturally	Substantial Involvement with the Host Culture	Peripheral Involvement with the Host Culture	Involvement more with Expatriate Culture
China	9/28 = 32%	10/28 = 36%	9/28 = 32%
Germany	11/27 = 41%	10/27 = 37%	6/27 = 22%
UAE	0/25 = 0%	7/25 = 28%	18/25 = 72%
Brazil	7/20 = 35%	10/20 = 50%	3/20 = 15%

International teachers in China had nearly even spreads across all three levels. Teachers in Germany had the highest cultural involvement relative to the other locations in this study. International teachers in the UAE had very limited interactions with the host country.

In each of these countries, some teachers attributed their levels of involvement (or lack thereof) on not having time or not speaking the language. Others dated and married into the culture, resulting in a much deeper level of cultural involvement. According to interviews with participants in Germany and Brazil, dating and marrying into the culture was more prevalent in those two locations than in either China or the UAE.

The following section provides specific, in-depth examples of experiences and interactions across all three levels of cultural involvement: substantial involvement, peripheral involvement, or involvement with expatriate culture.

Ways to be involved:

> "Make connections with your embassy and see if there are cultural events that can get you involved in so you meet more people from your country, and background." (C16/28)

> "Taking language classes or joining clubs, because I was in the table tennis club, the chess club, the tennis club, so I think going out and doing those things with native speakers – those are very supportive." (G14/27)

> "Sports, getting involved in music, I play the cello, I've sung in a choir."

Became more involved in some locations over others:

> "In Japan, quite a lot. I learned the language and of course dating and marrying my wife…. Here I'm rather uninvolved." (G8/28)

> "Korea – yes. In the Middle East I haven't so much … it's quite different from our culture …. What I do with my time is not something that they would do. And it's not a large priority for me to try to conform." (U15/25)

> "In China I would say yes. In Germany, I've tried but it's been trickier." (G24/27)

4.2.17 Substantial involvement with the host culture

International teachers who were substantially involved in the host culture were involved in a variety of different ways. They held the philosophy that cultural involvement was essential to the overseas experience, lived among the locals or tried to adapt to the local way of life. Some married into the culture, sometimes resulting in remaining in the location for an even longer length of time.

Belief that cultural involvement was essential:

"That's part of my belief as a human being. You need to buy into other cultures." (U10/25)

"You get integrated into a place if you accept traditions, learn about the people, make friends, and learn what they believe in." (U19/25)

"I get involved where ever I am. That's my character, I want to know." (G12/27)

"Part of the reason for living abroad is to get involved in the culture. We would get involved with the culture either way." (B15/20)

"If you don't have the cultural context you are isolating yourself." (C19/28)

Married into the culture:

"I'm married to a Brazilian woman." (B14/20)

"My wife is German." (G12/27)

"My husband is Taiwanese so obviously I got involved in the culture there." (C19/28)

"I married a Brazilian and my child has a Brazilian passport now." (B6/20)

Lived like a local:

"Yes, I live here. I speak the language. I read the newspapers." (G7/27)

"Riding bikes, doing local things, and speaking the language." (G23/27)

"In Poland I think a lot more [involvement with the culture] because my language was good quite fast because I was forced – nobody spoke English where I lived for the first three years." (G14/27)

4.2.18 Became peripherally involved with the host culture

The degree to which some international teachers got involved in the host culture depended on how they viewed both the culture itself and their ability to interact with it. Some felt they could not get involved or simply chose not to get involved, while others

attributed lack of involvement with life stage or marital status. Teachers who were somewhat involved in the culture experienced limited aspects of culture while others made intermediate attempts to learn the language.

Experiencing some aspects of culture:

> "I always join clubs outside of school … like Dragon boating, getting to know people outside of school, going to their fund raisers or parties … it's a little bit harder because of the language barrier. You have a lot bigger jump, but it is still possible." (G4/27)

> "I go to a lot of museums. I learn about the history of a place." (G11/27)

> "I own leiderhosen. That's culture." (G25/27)

> "Getting involved in something you enjoy doing is helpful." (G21/27)

> "It's very, very important for new teachers to get out into the culture, to make friends and cultural contacts that have nothing to do with the school. You begin to appreciate what you have and learn about where you are." (B14/20)

Making somewhat of an effort to learn the language:

> "I could do a lot better learning the language, but I have better intentions than outcomes." (C25/28)

> "After a year or two, Germans start wondering why you are not learning the language. It becomes a 'you should be able to speak German now. I'm not speaking English to you. I will use English the first couple of times and then that's it'." (G16/27)

4.2.19 Involvement more with expatriate culture

Some international educators gravitate towards involvement with expatriate culture. They focus more on living an ordinary, everyday life and interact on a social level with expatriate colleagues from work or expatriates within their city. Others focus

more on themselves or their families, despite the culture in which they reside. While some make an effort to learn the language, others do not.

Involvement is more with people in the international school:

> "We haven't really reached too far outside and above our bubble as I say." (B5/20)

> "Actively [involved], no. The way things are set up in our school, we do so much that I don't feel the need to go out and seek it... I have seen a lot, done a lot, learned a lot just by being in an international school." (C16/28)

Involvement is linked mostly with other expatriates:

> "In Doha there isn't really a culture. It's very much like it's expat life or not. There's not really a culture as such." (C8/28)

> "Most of my friends that I spend time with outside of school are expatriates. Not just from the United States, I'm friends with people from Spain and other countries, and I think that has deterred some of my friendships with other Brazilians." (B7/20)

> "The country I live in now is very expatriate driven. I would say I'm as involved in the host culture as it is proportionate to the number of them here, which is about 15%." (U6/25)

> "I need, for my mental health, I need to get involved with people outside of school." (U13/25)

4.2.20 Perception of host culture and language level affecting involvement

Often involvement with the host culture was mirrored by one's own perception of the culture or to what extent one felt he or she could get involved with the culture successfully. Some felt cultural perceptions prevented involvement while others felt like the language was a barrier.

Reasons for lesser involvement related to cultural perceptions:

"I have gotten involved usually by volunteering. I went to orphanages, I went to prisons, I visited these poor girlfriends who got stuck by boyfriends with drugs and were there for life [Thailand]. The only place I have not been successful at that has been here [Germany]. Here you have to apply to be part of organizations and so then when you are not successful you go, 'Okay, they don't need my help. Okay, fine. Thank you.' In the USA I went to food banks, cleaned up parks, but here that has been difficult." (G6/27)

Reasons for being less involved related to limitations with the language:

"The language barrier makes it difficult-German is a pretty hard language to learn." (G9/27)

"The language barrier was really strong. If they [the Germans] think you have a certain amount of German – say after a year or two – they start wondering why you are not learning the language. It becomes a, "Yeah, you should be able to speak German now. I'm not speaking English to you. I will use English with you the first couple of times and then that's it." (G16/27)

"I just couldn't do it. I got like 10 words. And then I would speak in different languages. And I don't think I ever got … I still don't know what the Chinese is for toilet." (U12/25)

"If I knew the language better, I think I would be more involved … I could do more." (B3/20)

"I've never picked up languages. So everywhere I have lived for the last 10 years–to mail a letter would give me some kind of stress. Like if you get something done that a 3rd grader could do in the US, 'Oh yeah, I got that letter done! I mailed a letter, wow! And I sent the right word and I know it!' So I don't think I have ever felt really comfortable." (G25/27)

"I get annoyed, but mostly I get annoyed with myself that I can't actually get much accomplished." (G25/27)

4.2.21 Reasons for being less involved in the host culture

In the interviews teachers gave several reasons for not actively getting involved in the culture. These included the size of the expatriate community, too much pressure

at work, being too tired after work, the school not being connected to the community, the population mostly being made up of expatriates, being discouraged by the host country to be involved, or looking after their own children. Some comments included:

Size of the expatriate community could influence involvement:

"The country itself [Qatar] was so much smaller so you actually got to know people really quickly and really easily, whereas somewhere like a major world city it's so huge that actually it is really difficult to meet people outside of school." (C8/28)

"I think it was probably easier to integrate with a smaller population. You were sort of stuck together a little more than in a mega-city where there are a lot more expatriates. The expat community is probably not as close knit. I enjoyed a smaller expat community. I felt it easier to sort of get involved in the smaller network of expatriates." (C9/28)

Less involved in the culture as a result of the demands at work:

"The job is really demanding. We are working from 7:30 to 4:30 and then it takes a bit longer to get home and then we are working from home. And so for that I kind of feel more tired and stressed than I thought I would be." (B20/20)

"When I go home at 4:00, when I'm done teaching, I'm done. I have zero interest in trying to make cultural connections. The energy is not there. (G27/27)

"In Japan, I was far more actively involved. My workload was such that it was more manageable. I find that in certain places, in certain jobs they tend to take over your life and that's been the case here." (C17/28)

"It's extremely, extremely intense [work]. We had an expression for this, "golden handcuffs." You work, you work. It's the most I have ever worked in my whole life. It doesn't stop. And the pace just keeps getting stepped up but you are paid so well that you could never complain that the remuneration wasn't covered for the effort you were putting in – golden handcuffs – people couldn't leave." (G26/27)

Less involved in the culture as a result of time spent with family:

"Once you have kids the amount of time you have in order to really kind of explore a culture starts to get divided." (U17/25).

"In China, we really got involved with the host culture. I think that's primarily because we didn't have kids yet. Once you have kids, the amount of time you have in order to really kind of explore a culture … starts to get divided." (U17/25)

"To an extent. As much as four kids will allow me to." (B8/20)

"It makes a big difference for me being single or being with family. When you are a family, you have a self-contained culture and community in your own house and you don't feel the need as much to want to belong." (C16/28)

4.2.22 Cultural involvement linked to longevity in some cases

As involvement with the culture had the potential to influence one's comfort level and the feeling of being plugged in, cultural involvement did contribute to longevity in some cases.

"It seems like the people I've seen who have more substantial investment in developing a life outside of school in a place, stay longer." (G2/27)

4.2.23 Summary of findings related to cultural involvement

Examples of substantial involvement included speaking the language, having local friends in the host country, living among locals, dating or marrying locals, participating in community service for and with locals, and participating in local traditions and festivals. International teachers who were involved peripherally with the culture, considered involvement as eating at local restaurants, traveling within the country, using local transportation, reading about the country, or attending local music concerts. International teachers more involved with expatriate culture tended to maintain a similar lifestyle to that which he or she would in his or her home country. Examples of this could be going to the movies, playing on sports teams, having mostly English-speaking friends, developing friendships mostly with colleagues or with other expatriates, and using the international school as the social hub for developing friendships and participating in activities.

Cultural involvement was sub-divided into three different levels: being substantially involved, being peripherally involved, and being involved with other expatriates. Reexamining interviewee responses suggested that involvement in the host culture was probably not a factor in teacher retention in that most of teachers became involved to some extent in the host culture regardless of location. In most cases teachers were not disconnected from the culture entirely. The only country with minimal cultural involvement was in the UAE and this may have been because the country was made up of more expatriates than locals. Some international teachers, however, connected more in certain cultures or countries over others. This seemed to weave in 'cultural fit' that expatriates that may or may not have with their location. Whenever an international teacher seemed to have the best cultural fit in that location, the involvement tended to increase. Cultural fit could be linked with having the desire to learn the language, having the personality to integrate, proximity of living among locals, and taking into account the demands on one's time as a result of workload or having a family. In analyzing the international teachers' level of cultural involvement within each location, it was revealed that location itself did not play a main role in determining involvement, but was based more on the individual experiences of each teacher with his or her location.

In terms of retention, involvement in the host culture may not result in a teacher remaining in a location. As one teacher said, "Just knowing that there are so many opportunities out there, we were like, okay, let's go somewhere else." (C23/28). Many international educators have previously worked elsewhere, and will continue to work in other overseas locations in the future. Involvement in the host culture may not have an effect on retention overall, but impacts their current experience greatly.

4.2.24 Teachers learned languages at different ability levels by country

International teachers learned the language at different extents in each placement they worked overseas. From the interviews, it seemed that most international teachers fell into one of three categories: a 'survival' ability of the language, an intermediate linguistic level, or complete fluency in the language. Though international teachers had

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lived in countries varying lengths of time, some managed to excel compared with others in terms of language cognition. Linguistic ability depended on the motivation for learning the language and the skill involved to acquire it. Table 4.4 illustrates to what degree each teacher learned the language in his or her current location.

Table 4.4 Teachers' Language Ability in Current Placement

Language Ability in Current Placement		
Survival Language ← Intermediate		Advanced/Fluent →
Number of teachers and their current language level	**Survival Language Ability**	**Intermediate**	**Advanced/Fluent**
China	14/28 = 50%	9/28 = 32%	5/28 = 18%
Germany	8/27 = 30%	9/27 = 33%	10/27 = 37%
UAE	22/25 = 88%	0/25 = 0%	3/25 = 12%
Brazil	9/20 = 45%	4/20 = 20%	7/20 = 35%

The four languages spoken in each of these regions were Mandarin, German, Arabic, and Portuguese. According to Table 4.4, 82% of international teachers in China tended to operate at either survival or intermediate language levels in Mandarin. In Germany, however, 70% of international teachers spoke at intermediate and advanced levels. It became clearer through the interviews that it was necessary to learn some German to operate within the country successfully. The numbers of international teachers learning Arabic was incredibly low in the UAE, as English was widely spoken and learning the language was not a necessity. Brazil had a spread of teachers who learned Portuguese.

Teachers who learned the language enough to survive:

Some teachers mentioned that they learned only enough words to get by in the country in a basic sense. The responses indicated that they made minimal effort:

"I can go buy things in the market and can get home in a taxi. That's about it." (C3/28)

"Before I even came I learned some Chinese. I took two weeks of basics so I could come in and say "ni hao" and "left, right." And then I came here and I was like, "Shui, shui, can I have some [sipping sound while bringing an imaginary cup to the lips] shui." And they were like, 'What?' Any idiot would have known that I wanted a glass of water. Any idiot." (C10/28)

"I can speak transactional in seven languages: Indonesian, Malaysian, Spanish, Kazakh, Mongolian, Russian, and Chinese. Unfortunately when I get tired I can put all of these languages into the same sentence and I'm the only person who understands what I am saying." (C17/28)

Teachers' language skills at an intermediate level:

"The school offered 6 weeks of lessons where we met with another local teacher on staff for 45 minutes after it gave us a base in the language." (B1/20)

"I speak a version of German that most people seem to understand." (G10/27)

"I speak Portuguese with my in-laws. I would say I'm probably at an intermediate level, which this is my seventh year here so I'm a little embarrassed I'm not further along." (B6/20)

Teachers who spoke the language at an advanced level:

"I learned German by living here. I teach it now." (G12/27)

"I learned it by talking and listening and I developed it like that. So now I can read anything. I marked exams in German for the IB." (G5/27)

4.2.25 Motivation behind why some teachers learned the language

Teachers said that they learned the language to communicate with their pupils, out of interest, because they knew they were staying, or because they thought it was important to do so.

Interested in languages and wanted to show respect for culture:

"It might be challenging to learn the language in places that are less familiar to me, but yes, I would always try to learn [the language], yes." (B20/20)

"I always make an attempt to learn some phrases because I feel like it's appreciated by the host country." (G13/27)

Wanted to improve or enhance one's situation:

"I didn't start to invest in Portuguese until a year and a half when I knew I would be here a little bit longer." (B6/20)

"I think it is extremely important for anyone who comes here, because very few people speak English here [Brazil]." (B12/20)

"South America more or less expects you to learn either Spanish or Portuguese. There is not a level of tolerance you would receive." (B9/20)

"Both of us had some language background [in German] … We just said, "Let's go for broke." We sold everything, packed each one suitcase, and got 2 plane tickets. And then we got married two weeks before we left [for Germany]." (G17/27)

4.2.26 Cultural differences and effects on learning the language

Teacher responses indicated that inability to communicate in the host language caused negative experiences for some. They mentioned feelings of isolation, frustration and ostracism.

"I think language is the top one. I think that it can make life feel very isolating. It hinders a lot of my colleagues from wanting to stay when you feel isolated." (B13/20)

"I haven't had the ability to communicate what I want to happen or being frustrated that I'm wanting something to happen and someone is smiling but I'm really upset." (C26/28)

Perception of the language:

"Obviously this language is not look and say. French is very much you look at it and sort of get away. And Spanish is the same, Latin is the same, and even Gaelic is not that far removed. But this guy? [Chinese]" (C26/28)

"I must admit I don't like the German language. I think that has been a barrier for me, too." (G19/27)

"After you get corrected so many times it's like …" (G6/27)

"The Japanese told you that you were fluent if you came out with half a sentence … you actually got quite a bit of encouragement from the people around you." (G3/27)

"I feel very removed from the local culture … As much as I would like to learn Arabic I don't think I need to. I don't think it is going to enhance my experience to learn it." (U9/25)

Perception by the locals when using the language:

"My belief is that if I am in a country that I want to learn the language, but the Germans take quite offense to that. Like they will find out how long I have been here and they are just like all over me. "Oh why don't you know German? You should know German!" So most of the time I have to lie. When I was in the hospital having a stroke, a guy was giving me an IV and he was all over me. He was really mean to me – the meanest person I have ever had in my whole life about learning a language and I was like, "Now is not the time." (G6/27)

"My German didn't really go anywhere. I wasn't motivated there. I would say the same things to the same people everyday and each time they would greet me like they were seeing me for the first time." (C26/28)

"You have to learn it. Many other places I have traveled to they are like, "Okay, let's try to speak English to him." I don't sense that curiosity here. Brazil is such a country in itself, honestly. It's so big they don't know what's outside. Nobody here has traveled." (B1/20)

"I find that survival and ability to interact with locals of any intellectual pursuit and to learn the language and relate more than mutual ascension of language, they don't really care or talk about that stuff." (U23/25)

"I've never faced a situation where I'm stuck to communicate with someone because I didn't know Arabic. So I think learning the language is needs-based." (U1/25)

Demands on time or willingness to learn the language:

"If you have already done a full day of teaching, you don't really feel like going to class to learn the language." (G19/27)

"I started learning Arabic when I got here and then I realized I would rather learn to salsa." (U24/25)

4.2.27 Summary related to language ability and effects on involvement

Those who remained in locations longer tended to learn the language at higher levels, effectively minimizing cultural distance and affording opportunities to communicate more effectively with locals. In relation to cultural distance, China and the UAE had the highest levels of cultural distance, but in terms of needing the language to function in society, German was the most necessary. It was explained in the interviews that although many Germans spoke some level of English, they expected foreigners to learn German.

Although most international teachers were currently operating at a 'survival' level of the language, teachers in some countries were operating at an intermediate level of language ability. In Germany and Brazil, there were more fluent speakers of German and Portuguese than there were Arabic or Mandarin in the UAE or China. In the UAE the number of international teachers attempting Arabic was only a handful. The three participants who did speak the language actually spoke Indian dialects, as Hindi and other Indian dialects were commonly spoken in the UAE alongside Arabic. The language level had the ability to make the international experience more comfortable for the international teacher, which could have an effect on longevity.

4.2.28 Cultural distance and effects on settling in

Table 4.5 shows the lengths of time it took each participant to settle in to their respective countries. What emerged in the responses was that settling in could take a few weeks, a few months, 6 months, a year, or longer. Each number (N) in Table 4.6 stands for the number of teachers who claimed how long it took to settle in by location. For 50% of teachers it only took a few weeks or months but for several others it took longer than a year.

Table 4.5: How long it took participants to settle in to each country

	China N out of 28	Germany N out of 27	UAE N out of 25	Brazil N out of 20	Total
A few weeks	6 = 21%	8 = 29%	8 = 32%	2 = 10%	24%
A few months	9 = 32%	4 = 14%	6 = 24%	7 = 35%	26%
6 months	4 = 14%	3 = 11%	2 = 8%	5 = 25%	14%
1 year	4 = 14%	8 = 29%	5 = 20%	3 = 15%	20%
Still not settled	5 = 19%	4 = 14%	4 = 16%	3 = 15%	16%

In China and Brazil, most teachers settled within a few months, whereas in Germany and in the UAE most took only a few weeks. However, Germany was an interesting split because although many settled within a few weeks, 43% of teachers took one year or longer to settle in. This took longer than for most other countries, but what was surprising about this finding was that Germany in many ways had less cultural distance than present in the other countries in this study. However, in many cases, especially among the categories of 6 months, one year, and still not settled, the data in Table 4.5 were similar across countries indicating it took quite varied lengths of time to

settle in despite location. Moving beyond the locations themselves, the following sections are broken down by how teachers 'settled in more quickly' or 'settled in more slowly' to more clearly understand the specific reasons behind the lengths of time it took to settle.

4.2.29 Settled in more quickly with the culture and in everyday life

Responses indicated there were three main reasons for settling in to a culture more quickly: the school helped the teacher, the teachers had prior knowledge or familiarity with the culture, the teacher was able to build connections with people and had the personality conducive for adjusting. Some teachers felt comfortable immediately upon arrival.

The international school helped:

"I think the school being supportive, helping you hook up your Internet, your bank account, getting your phone, getting cable, all of these things." (U20/25)

"The school taking care of the visa stuff – I think that helps because that is an added stress. Getting into your apartments and it's all set up and it's already furnished and everything is set up – you don't have to think about pillows and sheets and all those sorts of things." (B10/20)

"I felt settled in relatively quickly because you are going to work everyday and that kind of routine adds a lot of consistency to your life and so that part of it is helpful." (B11/20)

"Here we have a liaison and basically her whole job is to support us. Basically it is nice to have somebody available to be there to ask questions to, someone who is responsive. She speaks English and Portuguese so when we need help with the Portuguese stuff, she can do that." (B11/20)

Less cultural distance and increased language ability:

"It only took me three or four months to settle in because I can speak the language." (G14/27)

"We found that it was very easy to integrate - familiar products and materials here at the grocery stores, driving on the same side of the road, so there wasn't a very big adjustment." (U22/25)

Personality of the teacher and ability to transition well:

"I thought it would have been a lot harder because it was just totally different than any other place that I have lived but because we had been expats for a number of years if just kind of felt that we knew what to expect. You knew you had to be respectful of the culture, you knew you had to try and make an effort with the language, and we knew all of these things because we had lived overseas before." (U20/25)

"When we went to Japan people kept telling us culture shock will set in. No, it never did. Tokyo was so different than our experience before that we expected everything to be different. And of course it was. We have much bigger culture shock when we went back to Scotland." (G3/27)

"The first day I just start walking around my neighborhood everyday and learn something new and after 6 to 8 weeks – I know my neighborhood, and then from there every week is just a new adventure." (C17/28)

"I think I was a lot younger and just really excited. I look back and think, 'How did I do that? How did I not freak out and have a meltdown at some point?' Because if you really look at what happened in the way things were, not having traveled an incredible amount in my life and then going into that, it's very, very different. I think I was just ready for it and I was just emotionally prepared for it." (C7/28)

4.2.30 Settled in more slowly in the culture and in everyday life

Half of the participants took 6 months or longer to settle in. Examination of interview responses indicated that there was a degree of culture shock, difficulty with the language, difficulties related to obtaining a visa, general feelings of unhappiness, difficulty in performing basic tasks in the new country, finding one's way around, being too involved in work, or not settling in as a result of direct avoidance with the culture.

General feelings of unhappiness:

"Work overflows into personal life so if you're not happy at work it will affect the international experience." (U25/25)

"I find in international schools that one of the things you don't realize is that many other people are going through the same difficult experiences that you are. Many other people are struggling and sometimes kneeling over and very often no one speaks about it." (G27/27)

Social Interactions:

"The culture itself is difficult to adjust to … part of my decision [to stay] was the fact that I felt like I was still adjusting and that I wanted to give this place a chance. I didn't want to run away if that makes any sense." (B12/20)

"I feel like I need to be careful where I live and how the host culture deals with people of my skin color – never mind my nationality or what my citizenship is, right?" (U21/25)

Cultural differences and adaptations to climate:

"Coming from a small coastal city of Spain of about 200,000 people to the city of about 10 million people in Bogotá, things are different in Colombia. For example, I was used to going up to someone on the street to ask someone something. You would do that in Spain. But in Colombia people would think you are trying to mug them." (C27/28)

"When we arrived [in Germany] there were no light bulbs even hanging from the ceiling. We slept on camping mattresses, we had to furnish everything ourselves. We had not expected that and I reckon I think it was the toughest transition we've done, because we could cook for ourselves–like we were camping in our own apartment until we could get it set up." (C26/28)

"Unless you've lived in a country with winter, you don't always know how the lack of light will affect your mood." (G27/27)

Difficulty obtaining a visa:

"I have been here 16-17 months and I still don't have residency I am not officially settled …. I still have several things I cannot do." (U6/25)

Linguistic ability affecting settling in:

"I think the school itself should be pushing us by offering Chinese lessons to staff – I think it is really important." (C21/28)

"I've never picked up languages. So everywhere I have lived for the last 10 years–to mail a letter would give me some kind of stress. Like if you get something done that a 3rd grader could do in the US, 'Oh yeah, I got that letter done! I mailed a letter, wow! And I sent the right word and I know it!' So I don't think I have ever felt really comfortable." (G25/27)

4.2.31 Point at which teachers felt settled in their locations

"I remember being here for Christmas, I was thinking about heading home. That January–February time, it just clicked." (U2/25)

"As much as you might want to leave after the first 3 or 4 months, I know that it does get easier I guess it probably took me 6 months before I felt like I was sort of comfortable. You find your way around, things to do, people to hang out with." (U9/25)

"I would say it probably took at least two years before I felt like I really knew enough about the culture and I knew enough of the language to really feel comfortable, which our contracts are initially for 2 years and you have to make a decision whether or not you will renew in the middle of the second year and I almost think maybe we should increase it to a 3-year contract just because I think if people stayed that third year they would have a different, maybe better experience." (B6/20)

4.2.32 Summary of settling into the culture and into everyday life

Reasons for settling in were often complex and not as simple as, "If one does this then one will be settled in." (C5/28) Adjusting to another culture was difficult because there was often a language barrier, differences in cultural norms, and even shifting the perspective of "home" to where one was living now. Many teachers said they wanted to feel independent but in a foreign country they also needed help. Location played less of a role in making the transition easier. Transitions were more related to time. Settling in

more quickly or slowly seemed to be more about peripheral factors and individual experiences of teachers within each location than about the location itself.

4.2.33 Length of time it took teachers to settle in to their schools

Interviewee responses regarding length of time it took to settle in professionally were grouped into time periods and represented in Table 4.7. The table shows wide variation from settling in after only a few weeks to feeling they were still not settled. Each number (N) in Table 4.6 stands for the number of teachers who shared the response per country.

Table 4.6 How long it took participants to settle professionally

	China N out of 28	Germany N out of 27	UAE N out of 25	Brazil N out of 20	Totals:
A few weeks	5 = 18%	4 = 15%	6 = 24%	3 = 15%	18%
A few months	10 = 36%	5 = 19%	5 = 20%	8 = 40%	28%
6 months	4 = 14%	4 = 15%	3 = 12%	3 = 13%	14%
1 year	7 = 25%	8 = 30%	6 = 24%	5 = 25%	26%
Still not settled	2 = 7%	6 = 22%	5 = 20%	1 = 5%	14%

In all cases here, there is a wide spread of international teachers in terms of when they settled in professionally. Teachers in China and Brazil seemed to settle in at faster rates. In some cases, especially among the categories of 6 months, one year, and still not settled, Germany seemed to have more teachers compared with other regions of taking longer to settle in. These numbers suggest it may come down to the schools more than the regions themselves. More specific responses are discussed in this section.

4.2.34 Settled in more quickly into the workplace

Responses indicated that the reason most teachers settled in quickly was because of the staff members on their teams and the availability of resources.

Felt supported by both staff and administration:

"It depends on the team – I've had teachers that I have worked with the first two years that had a philosophy that was different than mine. They were very traditional, stand in front of the class, everybody does the same thing and I'm not. And so it was very difficult to build a curriculum." (B15/25)

"I thrive so long as I can make a contribution." (C16/28)

"Before I came here they allowed me to order all of the resources so I had everything that I wanted so that makes a difference (C28/28)."

Formed bonds with different groups of colleagues:

With incoming colleagues:

"Try and keep in close contact with the people [colleagues] that you have arrived with. That does help quite a bit because if you speak to somebody from the previous year or from year before, usually they cannot feel your frustrations. They forgot what you have been through, they are already settled in." (U16/25)

"Making friends here I think is huge. I'm connecting with colleagues and I'm connecting with other people who are going through similar things at similar times." (B13/20)

With other colleagues in the school community:

"I think if you have a coworker that has been here for an extended period of time, like even one year–it means they have had one year up on you, right? A person you can go and talk to." (U18/25)

"We have a mentor program where they connect us with people when we arrive and that's so helpful, so that one teacher is sort of your go

to. (B11/20)

"Career is huge for us. If you've got a good team and if you feel a part
of a good team and you do things with your team outside of school …
to me that is important." (U11/25)

"There has been so much within the school community going on that I
haven't really needed to look outside that community very much."
(C14/28)

Embraced cultural differences with students:

With students from many countries represented culturally within a single
classroom, having numerous perspectives and worldviews in the lessons was found to
be a positive for teachers.

Cultural differences enhance instruction:

"In one class of 20 I can have 15 nationalities … They have experiences from
different parts of the world. For me, it's a positive." (U3/25)

"I integrate cultural differences into what I am teaching." (G2/27)

"I'm extremely flexible and I do try to incorporate the local culture into my
classes." (B9/20)

Cultural differences promote acceptance:

"They end up being incredibly accepting towards each other." (C7/28)

"It's a positive difference for the classroom because I've got people from all over
the world and we are having to look at each other from different angles and
different perspectives and be really, really sensitive to the fact that everybody in
the classroom has different religious views, different philosophies, different
perspectives and stereotypes. And we all have to teach a lesson without hurting
any feelings or letting stereotypes interfere with relationships." (G4/27)

4.2.35 Settled in more slowly into the workplace

Some comments indicated it took longer to settle in because of changing
positions, intentionally taking time, changing curriculum, feeling that there were constant
changes in the school, or changing schools entirely.

Changing positions:

"I was a first year teacher so I think that was part of it." (C10/28)

"I was teaching math and science for the first time rather than language arts and social studies." (B17/20)

Changing curriculum:

"In one school I taught the British curriculum. In another I did the PYP (Primary Years Program), and here it's the play-based curriculum. So I haven't experienced moving from one school to the next where it was the same curriculum." (G2/27)

"The teaching and learning is evolving, it's getting better, which I like because I can be a part of it. I worked in a previous school in London where everything was very subscribed to, 'This is how we do it.' There's no room for being creative." (U4/25)

The feeling of constant change within the school:

"I still feel like I'm not really prepared. The school year started off so poorly, schedules changed again 6 weeks after school had started. I had planned everything up to scheduling changes and then all of the sudden … I haven't recovered." (U8/25)

"The school changes so I don't need to go to other places to find change. I just have to stay here and the change comes to me. You have to be ready to deal with new ideas and new approaches to teaching, to education in general, and I think if you settle in, you are in trouble." (G5/27)

"This school is always undergoing so much change. Maybe I would prefer to be in a school without so much change." (G15/27)

"I have literally taught every subject in the secondary school except Arabic. I have taught things I have no business teaching like chemistry and algebra. I have taught things I have never taken, like French. I co-taught PE last year, and I was qualified to do that according to the vice principal because I had biked across Iowa the December before. I'm not even kidding." (U6/20)

Changing schools:

"You get into your comfort zone and you feel comfortable in what you are teaching. Then you pack up and go to a new place and I always feel like a first-year teacher

again. Like everything is just new. The first year is always so hard to get your roots down again and I find it's always such a challenge." (U20/25)

"In all three cases I was at a start-up school, so being an experienced teacher going in, I was involved in writing the program." (C17/28)

"I was just thinking, "Okay, I'm just changing schools, no big deal. Yeah, I took a year, maybe even the year after that. The first year it just kind of spun by … the third year I felt finally in control." (C12/28)

4.2.36 Differences between teachers and time it took to settle in

While most teachers were settled within a few weeks or months, other teachers took six months or longer to settle in professionally. Reasons had to do with how comfortable the teacher felt in his or her teaching assignment and also the amount of time they stayed at the school in the same assignment.

Teachers who settled almost immediately:

"When I changed countries it [settling] was straightaway. I was very familiar to the role, it was a role I had done before." (C13/28)

"I was very confident about the subjects I was teaching because I've taught them for 16 years so it was pretty easy for me to just jump in." (U10/25)

"I think the harder the adaptation my everyday life was, the quicker my teaching adaptation was." (U13/25)

Teachers who settled in a few months:

"If you make it past the first round of parent conferences and report cards, so basically end of October/beginning of November, that is a huge kind of bump." (C5/28)

Teachers who took 6 months or longer to settle in:

"In terms of being really comfortable and feeling like you are a full contributor with the team, I think that's in the second year." (C26/28)

"I would say towards the summer term you start to feel settled… It's not until you come back the second year I feel most confident having settled into what I am teaching and what's expected of me at the school." (C25/28)

"I think teachers who stay for 2 years, I think it's a shame because actually the third year you are more comfortable." (B19/20)

"Because we are a small school, the course load that you teach can differ greatly from year to year. This is my seventh year here and I am prepping two new courses that I've never taught before…. This is my seventh year and I've had a different schedule each year." (B6/20)

4.2.37 Summary of findings for settling in professionally

International teachers settled in at different rates in their international schools. Those who settled in more quickly attributed it to feeling supported by staff and administration, forming bonds with other colleagues, and having the ability to embrace cultural diversity within their lessons. Those who settled in more slowly attributed it to changing positions, changing curriculum, having the feeling of constant change within the school, or simply as a result of changing schools more often. Teachers wanted to settle in quickly to feel like fully contributing members of their teams and within the greater context of the school, but it took varying lengths of time to settle. Some settled in almost immediately, while others took almost the length of their initial contracts to settle in to their professions.

4.2.38 Experiencing phases of transition when changing locations

Many teachers experienced transitional phases when arriving in their new posting, consisting of a 'honeymoon' period, a 'depression' period, and finally contentment. The majority experienced the phases in that order. Others experienced a depression phase on arrival and later became content without much of a honeymoon at all. The phases lasted varying lengths of time for each individual. Pinpointing the causes of the dip or depression phase and identifying the lengths of time spent in the low point could help in terms of the support and assistance needing to be provided by the school.

Cultural differences did seem to have an impact on teaching and learning. While some teachers embraced cultural differences and how they enhanced instruction, others felt that because of the differing thought processes by students, parents, and colleagues, cultural differences impacted instruction even more. Cultural differences noted in the workplace included students focusing too much on grades or getting the right answer, levels of independence shown by students, the involvement or lack thereof of parents, the level of respect on the part of both students and parents, and the level of work ethic shown by colleagues.

4.2.39 Experiencing phases of honeymoon, depression, and contentment

Joslin's (2002) model of cultural adjustment where there are three phases: honeymoon, depression, and finally, contentment (see Figure 4.1). International teachers transitioning between countries and cultures may experience a range of feelings and emotions related to the transition. These are not unique to international educators; other expatriates also experience transitional phases. Some emotions may be triggered based on how long it takes one to settle in to his/her everyday life or into the job. Others may experience highs and lows related to the culture or through cultural interactions. Learning the language (or not learning the language) could also be cause for stress in a new environment. Moreover, cultural frustrations in a new location could set someone back in terms of experiencing a smooth transition or potentially foreseeing a long-term existence for themselves or their families in the location. Each international teacher's experiences are so uniquely different it can sometimes be difficult to fit them into a model. Figure 4.3 shows Joslin's (2002) wave of experiences when she transitioned from her home country of England to teach abroad for the first time.

Figure 4.3 Joslin's Model of Transitional Phases of Moving Abroad

Transitional Phases of Moving Abroad

Honeymoon   Depression   Contentment

Joslin, 2002
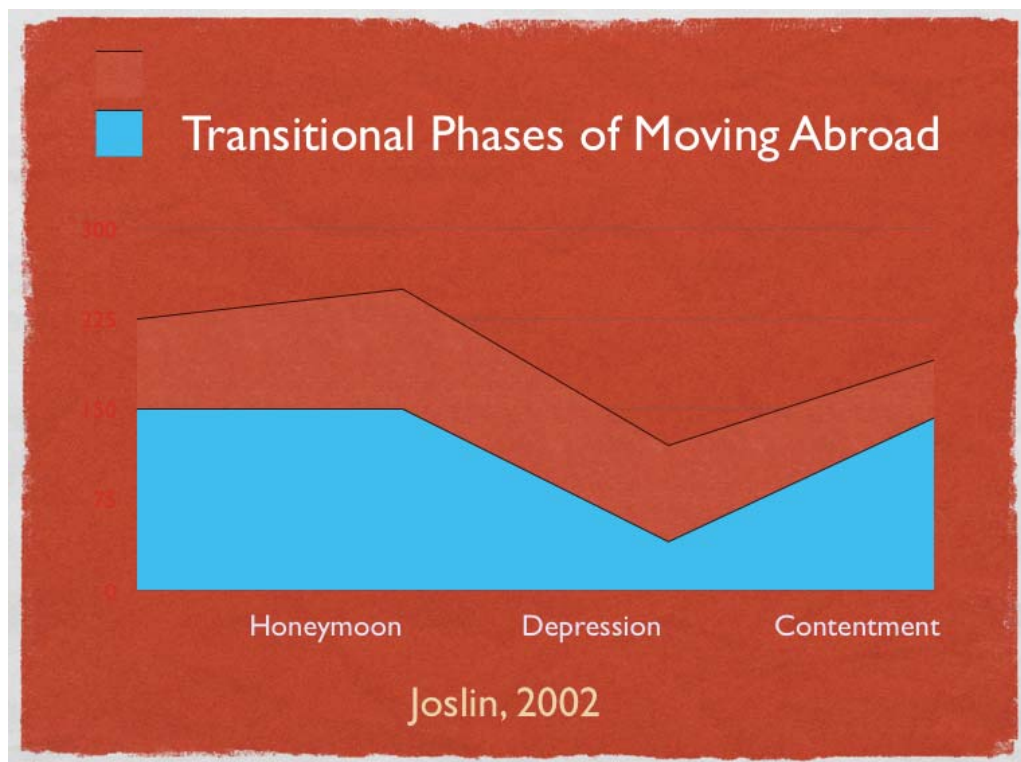
Three transitional phases:

Joslin's (2002) model suggests that many overseas teachers experience a wave of emotional highs and lows when transitioning to a new country. Many (though not all) experience a honeymoon period upon arrival. Life feels positive, cultural differences are fascinating, and opportunity lies ahead. After a period of time, the next phase, as depicted in the model as 'depression', which often occurs at some point within the first year. As expatriates find their rhythm and begin to thrive within the culture and in their overseas experience, some finally arrive at the 'contentment phase'.

International teachers have described their experiences as often starting with either the honeymoon point or depression phases. One teacher commented, "I don't know if I've ever gotten out of the honeymoon phase. But I guess the unknown is that if I ever stay somewhere longer than 3 years, what then does that look like?" (U23/25).

Most respondents experienced these transitions or variations of them. The transition patterns identified were:

1) honeymoon-depression-contentment

2) depression-contentment

3) honeymoon-contentment (with no depression phase experienced)

The figures on the following pages represent a handwritten coding scheme to represent honeymoon-depression-contentment patterns among interviewees in China (Figure 4.4), Germany (Figure 4.5), the UAE (Figure 4.6), and Brazil (Figure 4.7). Each person's descriptions of their experiences were graphed to show the patterns of transition experienced. The length of the lines indicated roughly how long each phase lasted. For some the honeymoon phase lasted a short period of time, a week or less, for others it lasted much longer, sometimes up to two years.

The honeymoon-depression-contentment (HDC) pattern applied to 71% of respondents in China, to 52% in Germany, to 52% in UAE, and to 95% in Brazil. Figures 4.4 - 4.7 also show notes on respondent comments about each phase. For example, in the honeymoon phase there were comments about the nice weather and the opportunity to explore and travel. In the depression phase there were comments about the cold, dark, and rainy winter, the isolation, the pollution, cultural frustrations, or feeling homesick. In the contentment phase there were comments including acceptance of being in the location, realizing they were lucky to have the job, changes in weather patterns, temperatures, and seasons, making friends and finding over time that they enjoyed their locations.

Figure 4.4 H-D-C in China   Figure 4.5 H-D-C in Germany
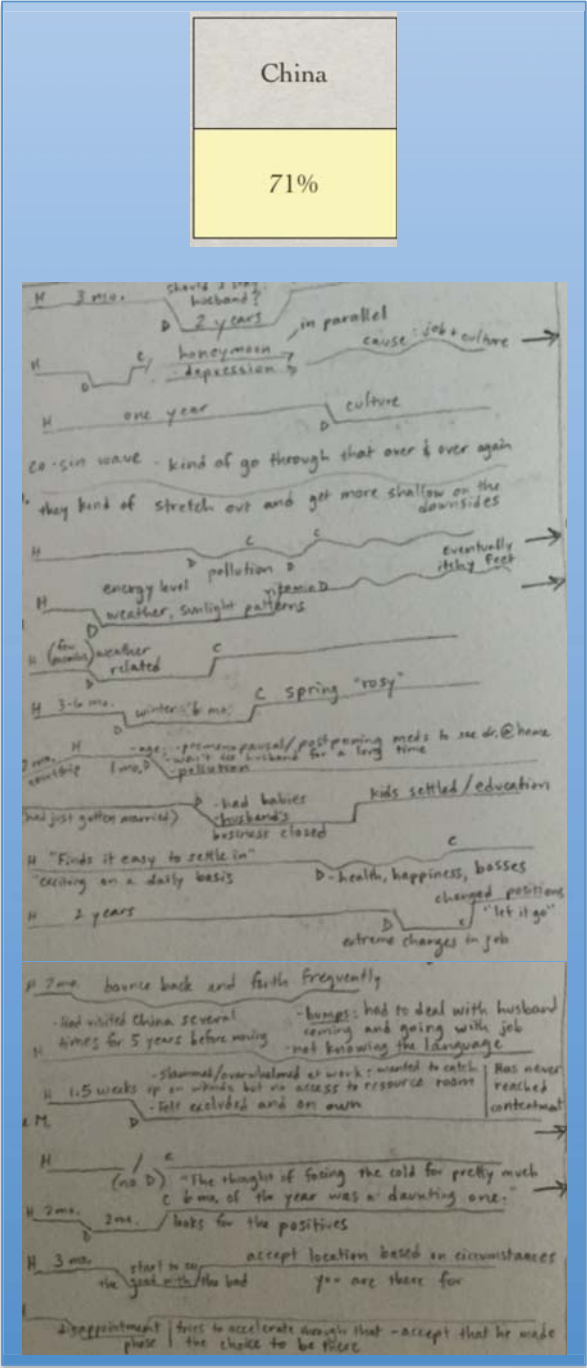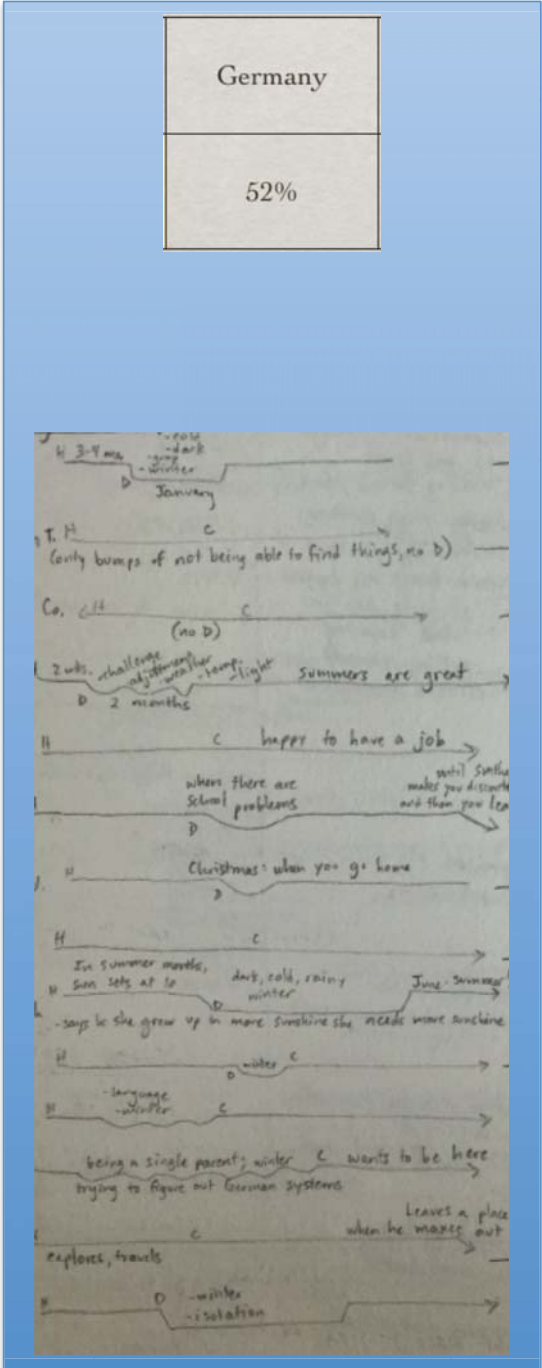
Figure 4.6 H-D-C in the UAE
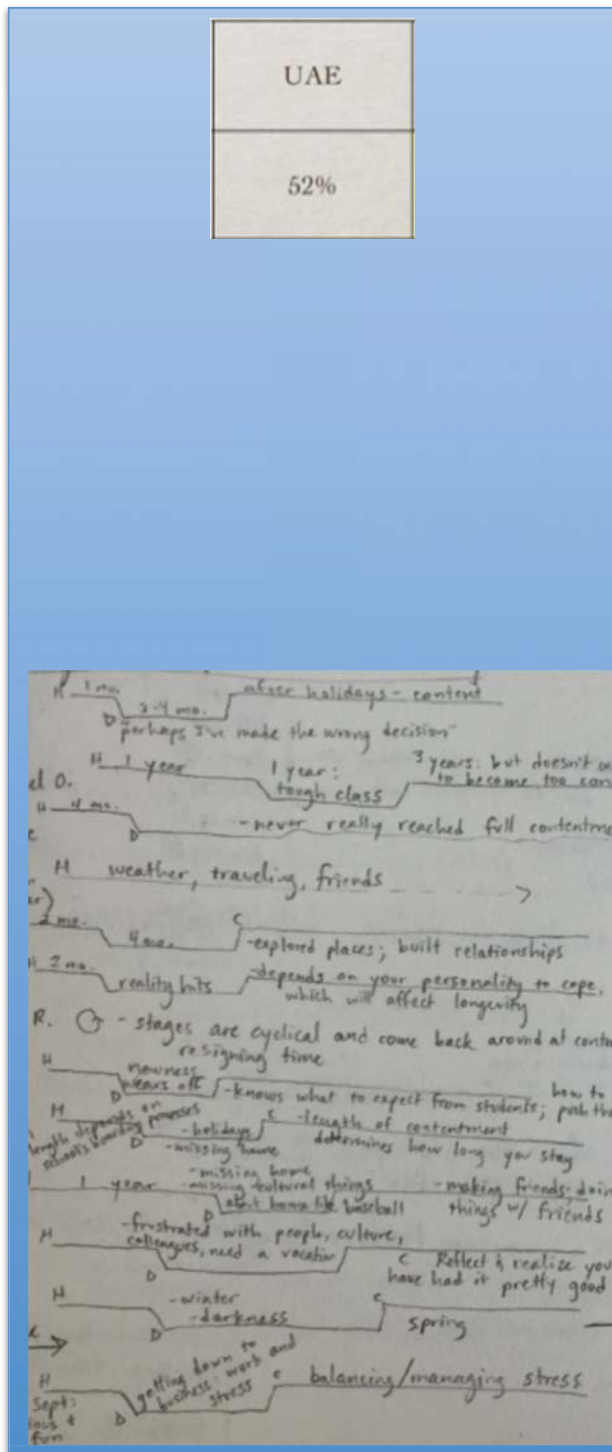
Figure 4.7 H-D-C in Brazil
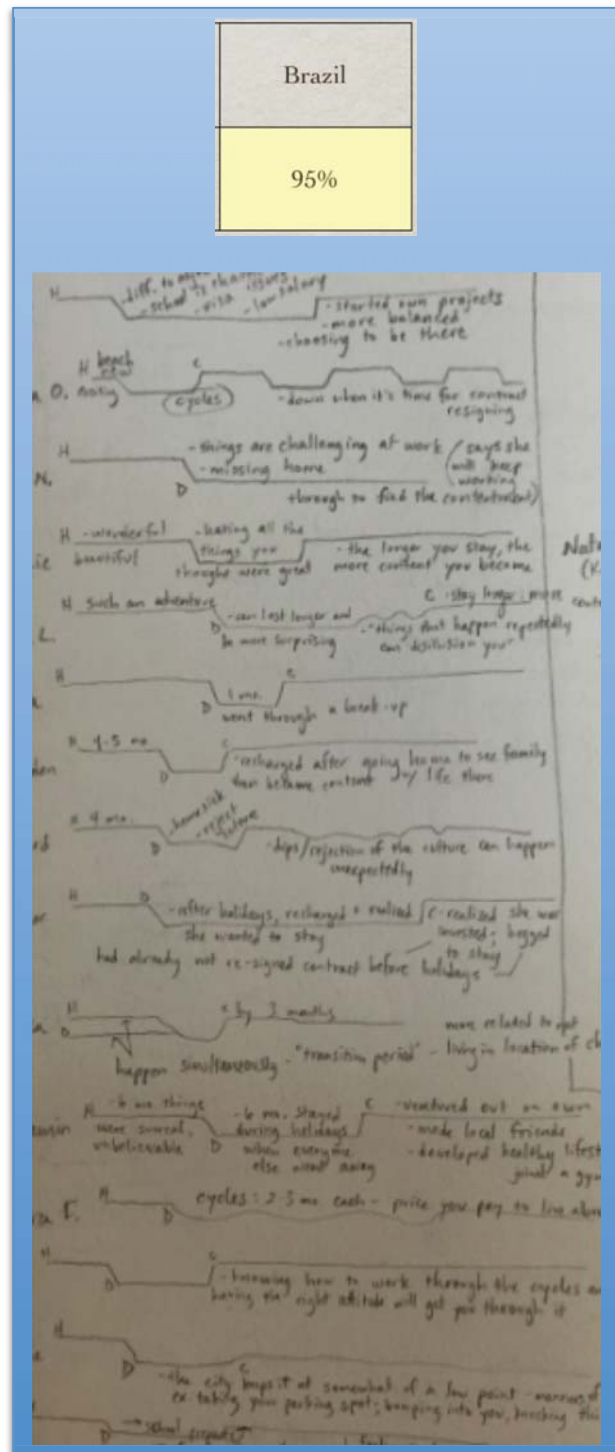
4.2.40 Experiencing the honeymoon phase first

In describing the phases, one teacher said, "They're probably pretty accurate for just about anybody who goes through this. And if you go into it with the right attitude then you will work your way through the process," (B14/20).

The honeymoon for most international teachers ranged from two months to two years. The honeymoon phase seemed to reflect attitude, openness to experience, readiness for moving to a new place, smoothness within the transition as well as other factors. One teacher described his arrival in his third overseas placement as really positive, "Wow, look what we've hit!" (C3/28). Another described the novelty of her first days in the UAE: "I remember when everything was so refreshingly new. Everything from like seeing the novelty of the sands crossing the road, right?" (U14/25). Another described her first impressions of the Middle East by reflecting, "My first couple of months everything was so exciting and brilliant, just all of those new things. Like driving past the Grand Mosque every day… now I don't recognize those things as much. They just become part of our daily landscape."

For another teacher the honeymoon phase reflected her recent experiences prior to moving: "I mean there was no work in Ireland. You had to immigrate basically in those days unless you were going to work in the civil service or as a farmer or something like that. So I was very pleased to be here and have a job so it [depression] didn't really hit me. I skipped that altogether and went from being pleased to be here and very happy to be living and working here. I don't think I went through a depression phase. Maybe it's still to come," (this was after 33 years of work in Germany: G5/27). Another teacher said, "I don't think I had too much of the dip. I was definitely nervous in the beginning– but it was interesting - first job and new country. Everything was just kind of an explosion of experiences." (G16/27).

The interviewees also commented that over time, the honeymoon gradually wears off and it seems like a normal life with ups and downs. One teacher said, "It doesn't go perfectly – you kind of move back and forth between stages and you get to a point

where you are content. I have the feeling that I would probably be able to adjust no matter where I was," (G15/27).

4.2.41 Experiencing the depression phase first

While some teachers experienced a honeymoon upon arrival, others went into a dip or depression phase first. This pattern of depression followed by contentment can be seen in Figure 4.8. The length of the depression phase varied, as shown in Figures 4.9 - 4.12. Sometimes this phase lasted for months, sometimes years. Reasons for the depression phase included feeling isolated, extreme temperatures, lack of health benefits, a negative feeling toward the school, or having unfulfilled expectations.

One international teacher thought it wasn't really depression: "I wouldn't say there's been a depression, just kind of acculturating," (C20/28). These low points or acculturations experienced early on sometimes reflected other things happening in their lives beside the adjustment to a new culture. One teacher said, "I don't know if the dip happened because I was in Brazil or just because of where I was at in my life at the time. I felt like life was a roller coaster." (B7/20).

Figure 4.8: Depression-Contentment Phases of Transition
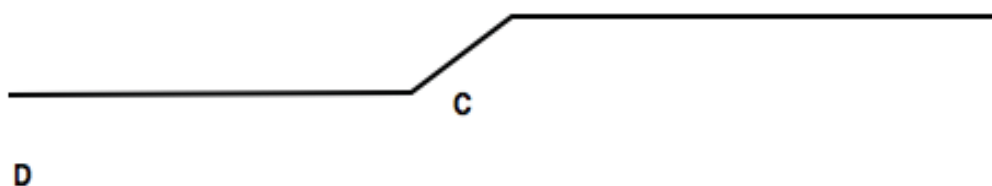
Figure 4.9   D-C in China
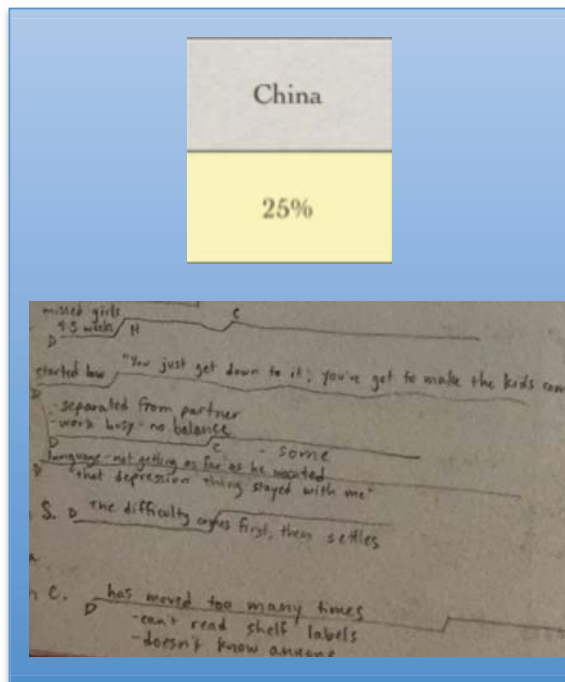
Figure 4.10   D-C in Germany
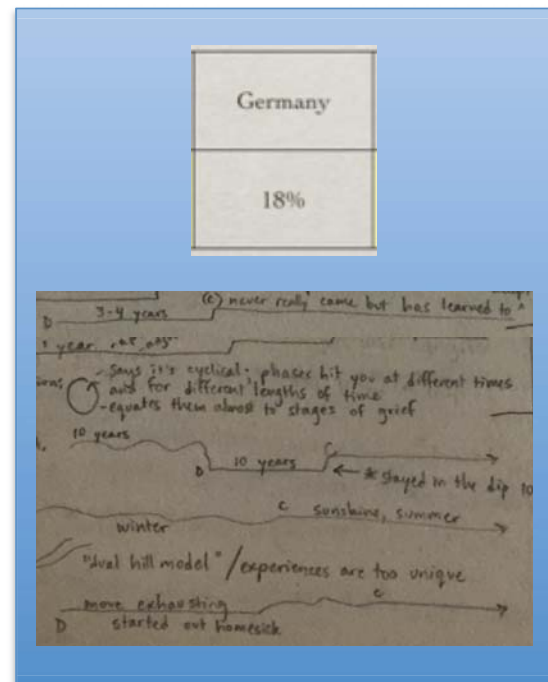
Figure 4.11 D-C in the UAE
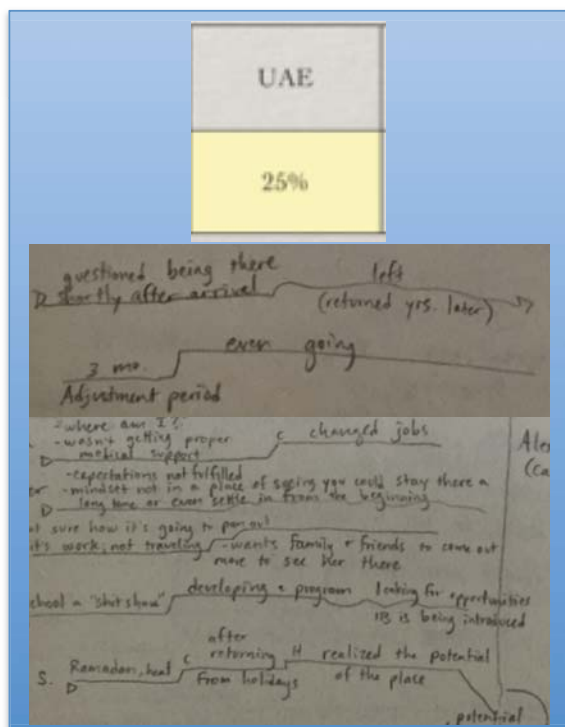
Figure 4.12   D-C in Brazil
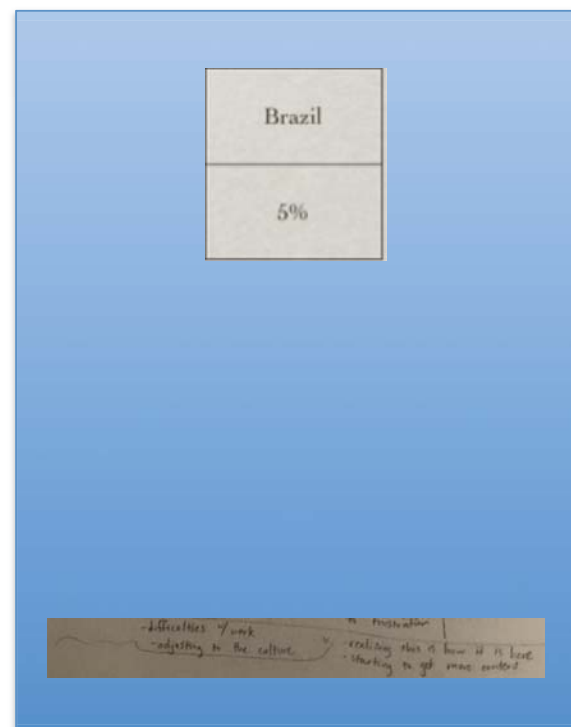
Figures 4.9 (China), 4.10 (Germany), 4.11 (UAE), and 4.12 (Brazil) represent the number of teachers who initially experienced a dip instead of a honeymoon. More teachers in China (25%) and the UAE (24%) experienced an immediate low point upon arrival than international teachers in Germany (22%) or Brazil (5%). The dip seemed to be related to location, the school, the family, and some other reasons, including temperature, confusion in the new environment, or contributions the school was or was not making toward helping teachers settle in.

One teacher recalled her experiences of when she first arrived in the Middle East. "When I got here it was Ramadan and it was 80,000,000 degrees and I was in a hotel and I thought–this is no honeymoon, it's a nightmare." (U10/25). The apartments were not yet ready for the teachers, the school was still under construction, and restaurants were closed during the day for the holy month. In contrast, another teacher said that low points were inevitable. "When I get to a new place, I am on a high and everything is wonderful and beautiful. And then there is a time when I definitely went down as I started noticing all the terrible things and just hating all the same things I used to think were great." (B4/20).

One teacher came to the realization that no matter how good the initial transition, the location was never going to suit her needs:

> The pollution… all these things were carcinogenic… they were going to be a huge cause related to cancer of all types… I don't actually smoke. And I don't drink heavily. And I don't really do the things that are conducive of me heading in that direction toward cancer. And then my husband says, 'You are living in it. Although you don't smoke and you don't do things like that, this is worse'. (C15/28).

Despite the time and energy given to settling in China, she realized it wasn't the transition she was struggling with, it was the pollution which was unlikely to go away.

One teacher in the UAE recalled, "Our very first night here was like, 'What are we doing?' Because they [the school] dragged us into a new place without a lot of things there and then we were supposed to be at orientation at 7:30 the next morning. And we got there the night before at 10:00?" (U14/25) There was no time for that family to settle in with jetlag or getting the houses ready before work started early the next morning.

There were also no dishes or food in the apartment either. Another teacher said, "The honeymoon really depends on the onboarding process. It's hard to stay in that, 'Ooh, everything is new,' when a rough start kind of takes you out of that mindset," (U18/25).

Teachers in Germany and China both mentioned that the winters were long and brutal. In the northern cities in China, the heat was only turned on between November 15 and March 15 annually, even though winter sometimes began several weeks before and often extended several weeks after the fixed dates. In Germany, teachers mentioned how they went to work in the dark and came home in the dark, that the sun was setting while they were still at school: "Winter was the most surprising because I didn't expect my moods to shift." (G27/27). Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) came up as a topic among international teachers in Germany and China because they experienced less sunlight and increased amounts of grayness throughout the year. For Germany this grayness was caused by weather, for China it was also a result of high levels of pollution.

In Brazil, the dip or depression phase seemed to be related mostly with the culture. The cultural aspects that teachers found difficult related most to language and making friendships. Foreign goods were also expensive making the cost of living high and the savings potential low. Turnover in Brazil was high.

Table 4.7 presents a list of why teachers experienced a depression phase. There were different reasons depending on the countries teachers worked in, though some were unrelated to the country.

Table 4.7 Reasons for the Depression (or low) Phase

Specific to China	More related to school	Related to Family Matters	Other
- pollution - politics - culture - weather/winter - lack of manners with the local people - lack of acquiring the language	- expectations from the school - in new school when you feel everyone else hasn't figured out - separation of foreign hires and local hires - clashes with people you work with	- husband's job coinciding with international teacher's schedule -family life in order - balancing family through the transition - missing friends and family back home - having young children	- missing previous work placements/Comparing - Inability to balance work and personal life - seasonal affective disorder - not being prepared for long, cold winter - detriments to health - racism from the locals - how easy the basics of living in that country are or not
Specific to Germany	**More related to school**	**Related to Family Matters**	**Other**
- winter/dark - settling into a German apartment - learning the language/ not acquiring the language	- school bumps in the road - problems in developing schools - if the school is too dominated by one particular nationality and as a result the culture is more representative of that nationality than of the culture of the school or country itself - segregated colleagues	- Christmas, when you go home it's hard to return - being a single parent for the first time - started the experience homesick - marital problems - having fewer supports - aging parents	- exhausting to settle in again: moving too many times - distance of apartment to school - living near or far to other foreigners - cultural distance
Specific to UAE	**More related to school**	**Related to Family Matters**	**Other**
- expectations in mind not matching reality - realizing there is not a lot to do - personality differences with the host culture - supermarkets not having food your children love to eat - language barrier - weather, darkness/sunlight patterns, seasons, temperature, heat/cold - missing holidays; whether not changing for Christmas	- if the school is not organized from the get go it causes stress upon arrival - having a tough class/little support - learning the students: what to expect and how to push them - earning the expectations of the school - extended periods of time without a holiday - for on boarding processes	- family and friends back home have no idea how to relate to your experiences	- insufficient medical care - it's not traveling anymore, its work - having to rely on others for transportation - questioning if you want to be there from day one
Specific to Brazil	**More related to school**	**Related to Family Matters**	**Other**
- difficult to adjust - beginning to hate all the little things you once thought were great - rejecting the culture - the manners of the Brazilian people: taking your parking spot, bumping you, knocking things out of your hands, impolite	- school is chaotic - visa issues - low salary - down when it is time for contract re–signing - things are challenging at work - not living in accommodation of choice	- missing home/homesick - going home for Christmas and nearly wanting to stay home	- went through a break up - stayed during holidays when everyone else went away

4.2.42 Arrival at the contentment phase

The contentment phase usually came after the depression phase or sometimes it came immediately after the honeymoon, lasting the entire overseas experience. Reasons for contentment included getting involved in the country, getting own children settled at school, getting visits from family and friends and realizing the potential of the location and staying long enough to see it through. One teacher said, "I think I adapt really fast, like I don't think I ever got depressed or got sick because I knew home was the places that we've been. You know, we always have choices … So we have chosen deliberately to go to those places so that's it." (C23/28) Another teacher similarly quoted, "I'm always excited. I've never really had that point where I hated a place or got too depressed based on a place. I think I make the most of it because I like to get out and see things." (G25/27).

What happens when teachers become content in their locations? Do they stay in their current international schools? One teacher said: "Contentment – that's where I am now. I don't want to become too content," (U4/25). For some, the answer was yes they would stay in their international schools and current locations. Others, however, argued that when they reached contentment that was the point at which they became complacent and wanted to change schools or locations again. "During the contentment phase is where I start to get annoyed at things," (15/25). Another said, "I don't know if I would agree that if you get content that you could stay forever. I've got to check out what else is out there, you know? I think you'll always have that drive. You'll always want to move on." (U15/25) Another international teacher in Germany said, "If the third phase is contentment, but then if you choose to leave, obviously there must be a fourth stage unless you're going to stay forever." (G11/27) Contentment did not automatically mean international teachers remained in their international schools, but it meant they enjoyed the journey more when they invested themselves in their location. The potential to stay longer was there.

Several teachers in the UAE mentioned that they experienced little or no depression phase. The weather was good, the lifestyle was comfortable, some teachers

still wanted to move on because they were still developing their careers or they were the type of personality who did not remain in a place for too long no matter what was good about the school or location. From the interviews this seemed to be the case in the Middle East for young, single teachers. This group was extremely happy and therefore experienced prolonged phases of contentment, but many still had plans and ambitions for moving on eventually.

4.2.43 Additional models of transition

Another teacher commented, "I think it's fine as a model but I don't think it's as straightforward as that. You can go through that sort of curve in one day," (G9/27). Another said, "I don't think it's a linear progression, I think it's cyclical," (G13/27). Yet another teacher said, "You can bring 10 people here and they are going to have 10 different durations of each one of those transition phases," (C5/28).

> "I feel that might be true for some people but everyone's experiences are so uniquely different depending on the supports they have: Do they have someone at home? Are they dealing with getting their kids situated? Do they have medical or health problems? Do they have a pre-existing condition or a propensity for depression that adds to anxiety?" (G22/27).

Aside from teaching, another participant said, "It has to do with life, anything you do – it's not just a foreign teacher. Everything you do in life you have to go through these 3 steps," (C19/28).

4.2.44 Transitioning out of the school is also an important consideration

As much emphasis as schools put on the arrival at an international school, one teacher expressed an equal importance in assisting teachers in the transition out of the school as well.

> "I would also say that I really think that the leaving transition out of schools is also important … They use their counseling team actually to deal with the social,

emotional, psychological things that you are going through. And they actually provide time out from the timetable for staff to participate in these little mini-transition workshops. That was good." (G22/27)

4.2.45 Summary of findings for honeymoon, depression, and contentment

In summarizing the interview data it resulted that most international teachers experienced transition phases in the order of Figure 4.1 (honeymoon, depression, contentment) or in a slightly different order. The length of each phase or its intensity was different for each person. Nearly all international teachers in Brazil started in on a honeymoon phase compared with other placements, but many experienced longer lengths in the depression phase as well. More international teachers started in the depression phase in the UAE and China than in other locations in this study. Teachers in China and Germany experienced low points particularly in winter. The length of contentment might determine how long an international teacher would stay in a post, but this did not apply to some of the interviewees who were intending to move on even if they were content.

4.2.46 Level of personal support in the transition

Teachers found that keeping some familiar aspects of home when transitioning to a new environment was helpful. Getting involved in the new location, maintaining support networks with others, socializing, developing routines within the new environment, and feeling balanced by maintaining one's own wellness were all important factors in a successful transition. The responses to this question addressed the avenues of taking care of oneself while living overseas.

4.2.47 Maintaining familiar aspects of home

First, teachers commented that they tried to link aspects from their previous environment such as watching television shows from their own country. Another said she brought along a familiar teapot to each country she went to.

"Taking familiar things with you. I always put a teapot with me in my suitcase because there are just certain things that as soon as you arrive in an apartment or house, if you brought the things that you have had in every other country, it just very quickly becomes home." (C18/28)

"We brought a lot of pictures to remind us of where we had been." (G1/27)

"We take our furniture with us wherever we go … it's quite important – all the twigs in the nest." (G7/27)

4.2.48 Getting involved in the new location

Second, teachers said they got involved in a variety of ways by getting out and making friends who were not from their school. Comments included:

"Getting involved in something you enjoy doing is helpful." (G21/27)

"It's very, very important for new teachers to get out into the culture, to make friends and cultural contacts that have nothing to do with the school. You begin to appreciate what you have and learn about where you are." (B14/20)

Getting acquainted with the new way of life in the country:

"Familiarize yourself with the city and with public transportation." (B6/20)
"Where are the best doctors to take your kids to?" (U22/25)

Attending a variety of social events:

"In those first few months you have you got to take every single opportunity you have been given to go out and do something. It doesn't matter how small it is – coffee, drinks, going out for a meal, walking down to the grocery store, anything– because it is the way you build connections with people." (C25/28)

"In our school is a group of people who have been here for 2 to 5 years and then there's that group of people who have been here for 15 years plus. And then there's this kind of weird group in the middle, which is where I am at the moment. It's trying to help all the groups, really." (G10/27)

"I go to a women's group to get my language skills … I socialize with my husband's colleagues." (G17/27)

4.2.49 Building and maintaining a support network

Third, teachers made numerous comments about how that they were able to minimize a feeling of transience by maintaining strong bonds with their colleagues, friends outside of work, and keeping strong bonds in their home countries. Some teachers commented:

"Keep strong ties with both home and friends you have made along the way. I think relationships are the secret to everything." (C17/28).

"It is important to make genuine friendships and keep in touch. I think we as expatriates who have this kind of lifestyle, we are different. Since I think we can relate to each other a lot better than we relate to our childhood friend who has never moved off the street who still lives in the same city kind of thing." (G22/27)

Forming bonds with different groups of colleagues:

With incoming colleagues:

"Try and keep in close contact with the people [colleagues] that you have arrived with. That does help quite a bit because if you speak to somebody from the previous year or from year before, usually they cannot feel your frustrations. They forgot what you have been through, they are already settled in." (U16/25)

"Making friends here I think is huge. I'm connecting with colleagues and I'm connecting with other people who are going through similar things at similar times." (B13/20)

With other colleagues in the school community:

"I think if you have a coworker that has been here for an extended period of time, like even one year–it means they have had one year up on you, right? A person you can go and talk to." (U18/25)

"We have a mentor program where they connect us with people when we arrive and that's so helpful, so that one teacher is sort of your go

to. (B11/20)

"Career is huge for us. If you've got a good team and if you feel a part of a good team and you do things with your team outside of school … to me that is important." (U11/25)

"There has been so much within the school community going on that I haven't really needed to look outside that community very much." (C14/28)

Forming bonds with others in the community outside of work:

"I think it's really a good thing to connect with people outside of education because you can really get sucked into a bubble and it's not good." (C7/28)

"I would like more connection with people from the outside community. That would be helpful because you work with these people all day and you may not want to hang out with them for 2 hours after school after you have worked with them for 8 hours, especially in my position where it's a managerial type of environment, because there can be decisions or things that you don't agree with or they are mad and we try to keep things separated but it can be difficult." (B5/20)

"Find some way to plug in with people – a religious community, a social club, find ways to meet people who aren't at work with you everyday to build external relationships whether it's with expats or locals. I think it's important to have an external support network – even if they are just temporary." (B6/20)

Forming bonds with others from your home country:

"Someone who understands your colloquial expressions or customs is helpful." (C21/28)

Maintaining bonds with friends and family back home:

Keeping both parties supportive of each other's lives:

"I talk to my friends at home because they think the stories I tell them are just so ridiculous that I should write a book about them. So it's kind of funny to hear other people laugh about my real life here." (U6/25)

"I guess in the past I was missing more my country and my family and now it's like when you go back in some ways you have missed so many things that the connection starts to – I don't know – it's something that

changes so I don't feel as homesick as I used to." (C28/28)

"We always have British TV, a) because we like it, but b) because then when you are talking to family in the UK, you can say, "my God, what happened was hysterical last night," or, "in Britain's got talent, they said … (etc, etc)." You know, that stuff actually is important." (G7/27)

Technology and travel influence ability to keep in touch:

"When I first went overseas communication was awful because to call my parents it was too expensive. And I would have to write letters and it was so difficult–I really suffered. But now I can get that, I Skype my mom this morning, I'm going to meet my mom in London with my daughter this summer, it's not like it was before when I first went overseas 17 years ago, it was really difficult. Problem, what problem? You can go home for Christmas for 3 weeks, you can go home in October break if you want to, you can go home again spring break–you can go for 8 weeks in the summer time, and your family can even come visit you. It's not that much of a problem." (C19/28)

"It's amazing what Skype can do." (C27/28)

4.2.50 Developing routines in the new location

Fourth, some teachers said it was important to build routines to avoid feelings of transience such as going out and doing things on a regular basis. Comments included:

Getting acquainted with the new way of life in the country:

"Familiarize yourself with the city and with public transportation." (B6/20)

"Where are the best doctors to take your kids to?" (U22/25)

Trying to maintain similar routines as you would at home:

"I suppose I just tried to do more everyday things like I would normally do in my country like watching movies, and doing cooking at home and doing shopping and just normal things like that." (C13/28)

"I guess it's work-life balance. I think it's trying to continue to do some of the things that I do back home, so going to the gym, and at the same time experiencing things that I'm not able to do back home." (U8/25)

4.2.51 Balance and Wellness

Fifth, in order to balance the time spent working abroad, international teachers shared how taking time out for oneself, confiding in others, and processing the overseas experience could also balance out the international lifestyle. It was important for international teachers to take time out for themselves, listen and be heard by others, reevaluate if the experience fits the phase of life they are in, evaluate if they are involved to the extent they want to be in their current situations and locations, and analyze if they have the appropriate support networks and channels of communication to remain feeling positive about the experience.

Taking time for oneself:

> "I feel that my health could be a lot better if I involve myself more in social events, more in sporting … basically like the Greeks, looking out for your body, your mind, and everything else like that." (C11/28)

> "I feel like I have been introverted which has helped me because I need my quiet time or some alone time to just kind of separate myself. I just sort of pull away and spend time alone." (B3/20)

> "I read books and travel." (G1/27)

> "I have the chance to exercise, like go to the gym." (B19/20)

Taking time to listen to and be heard by others:

> "Having a partner helps because then I can have someone to vent to and let things go." (B1/20)

> "Coming here with someone else, someone you can get to talk to with all the nuances. My wife and I kind of see that in a lot of singles who have a harder time transitioning." (B8/20)

Processing the overseas experience and continuing to make an effort:

> "A sense of isolation should not be allowed to develop. If that develops, then it's a downward spiral." (U1/25)

"I think it's just dedicating yourself to time. You need to stay in place for more than two years. I don't think you can get a really good experience anywhere if you are only there 2 years–that's my perspective." (G25/27)

"My friends keep leaving, my international friends especially, but you just have to keep trying to build those connections." (C24/28)

"My faith and religion. I feel like where ever I go, God's got it. So whatever I encounter, whatever I deal with, that has definitely helped me get out of any situation." (U21/25)

"Concentrate on what really matters." (G11/27)

4.2.52 Summary of personal supports in transitions

There were certain things teachers could do to help themselves during transitions. They could maintain familiar aspects of home by bringing items with them, connecting with aspects of home within their foreign environments, and ship important items to their new locations. They could also get involved in social events upon arrival and build support networks with those around them. Additionally, it was important for international teachers to maintain support networks with family and friends back home as well as with friends made in previous placements. Finally, teachers who made an effort to balance themselves in terms of their profession with a life outside of work were better able to adapt amidst the transition to a new location.

4.2.53 School orientation processes and overall support

The goal of an orientation week was to make the transition smooth for the international teacher and to help minimize cultural distance so that he or she would be able to settle in to the school, location, and ultimately, become more effective as a professional. The orientation is an opportunity for the school to showcase their ability to provide support for the teacher and make the transition within the country more comfortable. One teacher said it was helpful to have, "a social orientation followed by a professional orientation usually spanning 10 to 14 days." (C18/28) Many international

educators remember both positive and negative details from their orientation experiences, highlighting the importance of these impressionable experiences and the impact they leave upon international educators (both upon arrival and throughout the initial contract period). Orientation weeks are important because, "Work overflows into personal life so if you're not happy at work it will affect the placement or experience." (U25/25)

4.2.54 Important aspects of an orientation process

What should be included in an orientation process? Teachers' responses included the need social opportunities to build connections with others, help in settling into everyday life in a foreign country, culture and language support, and professional support.

Social opportunities to build connections with others:

> "Just going out to the beer gardens, that was nice for making friends and just having a good time." (G25/27)

> "We had a team building weekend where they took all the new staff and they said forget about the issues with housing and this and that. Let's just wait, let's go explore the country and see the beauty in it. Let's all just get to know each other in a vacation type of setting." (U16/25)

> "My orientation was really good and I felt like I bonded really well with the teachers. The group of teachers that started when I started are a pretty tight group and I just think that if I thought about what makes me stay in the school, it's colleagues." (G19/27)

Support with settling into everyday life:

> "Orientation, when it is done well, allows you space to ask questions and figure out stuff." (G13/27)

> "They had a printout with the days ahead and what I really liked is that the school put such an emphasis on making sure your personal life was settled." (C4/28)

"They had food in the refrigerator. They helped us with the banking and fixing things in the apartment." (B20/20)

Cultural and linguistic support:

"Language, orientation to language, in order to help you set up stuff within your orientation period." (G13/27)

"I think the school itself should be pushing us by offering Chinese lessons to staff – I think it is really important." (C21/28)

Professional support:

"In the induction program we were shown the school's curriculum, the way things work, rules and regulations, policies, expectations for teachers, expectations for students." (U1/25)

"It was very clearly laid out, the procedures. And I think that helps a tremendous amount because I think it makes you feel like I'm not alone here. I don't have to search for information." (C4/28)

4.2.55 Positive and negative experiences upon arrival

Often teachers remembered their first days and experiences in their countries. While some international teachers' experiences were positive upon arrival, others' experiences were less positive. In any case, many international teachers still remember the details of their onboarding experiences fairly clearly, highlighting not only the importance of the orientation, but the additional forms of support could that be provided in the future to make arrival experiences smoother.

Positive experiences in the orientation process:

Positive aspects of the orientation experience included support before, during, and after arrival. Positive feelings, emotions, and opportunities to form strong bonds with other entering colleagues were all found to be important. If the school helped provide practical details such as picking the teacher up from the airport and helping with the transition and living quarters, teachers seemed to have a smoother entrance.

Support in first weeks:

Pre-Arrival Support:

"I mean before I even got there I was in touch with the group I was going to be working with." (C8/28)

"Oh my gosh – my welcome packet was 20 pages full of everything, everything. It was actually amazing. They have a website set up for teachers who are selling things, contracts with a maid, how to respect your maids, it's amazing. And shopping lists like, 'Bring a cooler'. That's something you would never think to tell somebody. 'You will use it on safari. Make sure you have a cooler in your car. Get a car. We're going to help you finance you car for 11 months." (C10/28)

"When I was initially hired they put me in touch with one of the teachers who is currently here so we were able to communicate back and forth. She gave me some helpful ideas of things that if I wanted to bring from the States that would be helpful." (B7/20)

Day of arrival:

"They had a bucket of things waiting for us with all the things we would need – sugar, corn flakes, milk, all of that was in the refrigerator." (C2/28)

"I think being put up in a hotel was all exciting and romantic. And having someone pick you up and show you apartments was incredible." (G25/27)

"It was more the kindness they showed in the beginning that made it pretty good in all the schools." (G11/27)

"I did have a welcoming family whom I got to meet. They assigned a family to me. They were just a German family who had their children at the school. That worked out really well." (G5/27)

Support in terms of acquiring basic goods:

"They really went out of their way to make sure that they would get our house set up. They took us to IKEA and the media market." (C4/28)

"They sent a car over to take me and my husband shopping." (C2/28)

Constantly checking in with new teachers:

"There was an orientation team that was always checking in with you." (C7/28)

"There was a lady and her whole job was new starters and then she looked after us all year. Then the second half of the year her job was recruiting and helping the next year of new starters." (C8/28)

"It didn't stop over the whole of the first year. They just kept checking on us to make sure we knew what we were doing and we were alright." (C8/28)

Negative experiences from the orientation process:

As international teachers recalled positive experiences from their arrivals, they also remembered negative ones. Some expressed they needed help on arrival with basic needs such as getting food, water, and housing. In some cases at the beginning of the year, basic resources and furniture were not available in the teacher's classroom or apartments. Some felt like the experience was a blur because of how the time was spent during their orientation periods. Often there were many meetings scheduled and very little time for preparation.

Day of arrival:

"When I first arrived it wasn't very good. I didn't get picked up at the airport. I had to find my own way to the apartment, I wasn't met at the apartment. It was Sunday in Germany, which meant that nothing was open. I was drinking tap water for whole of that day and wondering why on earth I had come here." (G9/27)

"In another international school I was picked up [from the airport] and they just dropped me off at my apartment and I was kind of left on my own. I didn't have a phone. It didn't work. There was no Internet. I was just like all on my own. I wasn't with anybody and couldn't contact anybody so that was just really not great." (C7/28)

"When I arrived at the airport in Rio the person who is supposed to get me forgot about me so I was there for like a couple of hours and I didn't have a phone … I had to buy bottled water and I didn't even know where the grocery store was, stuff like that." (B4/20)

"They actually took us to a supermarket as soon as we left the airport. We went to a supermarket before we got to the apartment so we could stock up on the basics of what we needed but there was no sort of inventory." (C27/28)

First weeks after arrival:

"We were living in a hotel for the first 3 weeks … A lot of things associated with getting your personal life set up were not available to us. There were parts of the school that were still being built and they were still trying to figure out who had what classrooms and where to put desks and chairs. We didn't have resources. In terms of being given information about life in this country and life in this area, setting up a bank account, setting up phone service, Internet service, those kinds of things. It was very difficult if not impossible. Information was not given to us. Since visas weren't done for anyone when we first arrived, we couldn't do a lot of things like open accounts – just couldn't do it." (U6/25).

"I arrived and was just shown where my classroom was. I was given my class list and my time table and that was it." (U1/25)

How some teachers felt about initial experiences:

"I find that most of the orientation weeks tend to be lots of tasks that could be better organized. I realize that you have the cultural as well as the administrative activities, but it was so much down time. I find myself sitting most of the time when really I would like to find myself being able to get started on what I need to get ready for that first week of school … But those first one or two weeks you are generally tired and I would actually rather use the time in a different way." (C17/28)

"The down side is that from the teachers' perspectives, they get so much information in those first couple of days that I think they are just completely overwhelmed." (U1/25)
"I think what works out best would be an orientation where the first couple of days are planned out but after that there is an increasing amount of free time given toe people so that they can explore their surroundings." (B14/20)

"I left my family and friends and my dog at home, and to come here and have such a rough landing, it was kind of like screw this. I hate this place. It sucks." (G10/27)

"They do a very good job of when you first come to the school and after that the infrastructure seems to fall apart." (B9/20)

"I have been here 16-17 months and I still don't have residency I am not officially settled …. I still have several things I cannot do." (U6/25)

4.2.56 Orientations, additional support, and links to retention

While orientations did not always directly link with retention, they did make a smoother transition for the international educator personally, culturally, and professionally, helping set the tone for the experience that would lie ahead.

4.2.57 Additional considerations regarding orientation weeks

School size and culture can make a difference on orientation:

"The second school, in Doha, was a lot smaller. So it was actually very informal and involved a lot of going out for lunch and chatting with other members of staff and we pretty much got straight into it." (C8/28)

"Here in China that was by far the worst, miserable kind of experience of any kind of orientation that I think I've ever had. It was embarrassing. I think maybe because I am holding them to European international school standards and maybe they can just do a lot better. But I think this school has a lot of gaps where they don't know how to deal with international teachers. I think because of the cultural gap. And I think it's very Chinese the way they are trying to – they don't know how to treat foreigners in the way that might be expected. I hope I don't sound so much a jerk saying that." (G25/27)

"Those top-tier schools really have it down." (G6/27)

Mid-year arrivals or local hires:

"We missed the whole week of orientation … that was baptism by fire … the collegiality was unbelievable." (C2/28)

"Coming in in the middle of the year meant that you were taking on all these new things on your own. You weren't doing it with other people. I think if you come in as a group, you all tend to face similar situations together and you can discuss them with each other." (C21/28)

"I was offered not to do the orientation since I've already been in Dubai for 4 years." (U2/25)

"And I think part of it is that you're proving your salt. Part of it is being able to show that you are adaptable and that you can blend in. And that you can deal

with whatever comes your way with as little fuss and huff and puff – that sort of thing. And that you are a problem solver and can think on your feet." (C15/28)

Teachers want support to be ongoing:

"The orientation tends to slip from my mind but the ongoing support has a big impact on staying in a place." (C9/28)

"The school did sit teachers down and mention that they go through specific phases – 'The first week you feel like this, the second month you feel like this, after 3 months you feel like this – depressed, you know. It was really good." (U13/25)

"For me it's less about the way they look after you when you first arrive – it's what they do after you arrive." (C25/28)

How the school could better prepare you:

"They gave me pasta sauce and pasta but no pan to cook it in. You have no water. I was like what's the point of this welcome if you can't function with it?" (C10/28)

"The school should be up front and say, 'This is going to be hard. If you want to have a nanny, it's going to have to be illegally, like just tell us that when we come in so we know what is going to happen." (U18/25)

"There was no recognition that we needed to get to know the returning staff … And they all went and socialized and then we were left floundering a little." (C25/28)

"The more challenging of a place it is, the more effort the school puts into the orientation." (C9/28)

"My partner and I wrote a new teacher orientation guide to help them settle in because I noticed a lot of new staff were coming in and were just left to themselves except to be taken to get registered and the basic things." (G1/27)

4.2.58 International school orientations and links to retention

The interviews did not show any clear link between orientation and retention but some teachers expressed value in how orientation weeks helped them transition more

smoothly. Some even expressed they stayed longer in places where they felt more welcomed. While smooth beginnings are not always crucial, orientations do link to longevity for some teachers.

Beginnings and links with retention:

Some international teachers directly came out and stated that orientation weeks and smooth transitions were what made them want to stay longer.

> "I think it shows the school is really pleased to have you there and to share their – what's good about them to you." (C8/28)

> "The orientation really sets the tone for your experience in a school. The better the orientation programs that we have seen, we definitely stayed longer in schools compared to other places who didn't make us feel welcome." (U20/25)

Beginnings not crucial on retention:

Successful transitions may depend on how many transitions the teacher had experienced previously or where they had lived and worked before. If they came from highly stressful situations or countries reflecting larger amounts of cultural distance, they may find their current placement easier to settle into compared to where they just came from. Conversely, if they had settled quite well into their previous placement, the act of starting over may be somewhat of a shock. However, in some cases, difficult experiences or being in countries with greater amounts of cultural distance had a way of bonding international teachers within certain locations.

Mindset made one look at orientation differently:

> "In Zambia it's a Third World country and the school can provide some support but it's going to be a bumpy ride anyway. And actually that fosters, at least it did in us, a greater sense of connection with the place because it was more tough in the beginning." (G7/27).

"After Kazakhstan … Turkey … Poland … my threshold for patience – I would consider it a little bit more [than others] sometimes." (U23/25)

"The more schools you've been to, you don't really need that [the orientation]." (U11/25)

"That [the orientation] didn't necessarily influence me because I was already here indefinitely either way." (G15/27)

Time erases the memory of the orientation week:

"It was nice. They did a great job. But in the long run I don't think it will affect much about my longevity." (C6/28)

"I know I'm in the right place. I love it here. But at the same time, we are leaving at the end of our contracts, so I don't know if it made a difference." (C23/28)

"After awhile the orientation sort of slips by so it's not on your mind really. I guess the ongoing support does impact how long you stay in a place." (C9/28)

Teachers leave for reasons other than the orientation:

"The reason people don't stay here is because of the money and the taxes – not because of the welcome you get." (G6/27)

4.2.59 Summary of findings regarding orientation processes

Teacher responses to school orientations were varied – there were no clear indicators that orientations were crucial in terms of retaining teachers. Some teachers suggested that orientations were linked with ability to settle in and make a smoother transition, but most did not say anything that would suggest orientations linked directly to retention or turnover. They are important in making the transition smoother in hopes that, in turn, teachers will settle into their schools better.

4.2.60 Overall summary of Chapter 4.2

Cultural distance and school support were two emerging themes that held influence in mediating difficulties for teachers when transitioning to other countries.

Cultural distance refers to the relative distance of the current culture to that of the expatriate's home culture. The ability to integrate and adjust often had to do with the cultural distance between the two cultures.

International teachers had to adjust to new cultural norms and behaviors, which included adjusting to different ways of thinking, different views on ethnicity, differences in driving etiquette, transportation, cultural norms and attitudes towards women, communication and personal space, and differences regarding values and approaches to punctuality and work ethic.

In terms of adjusting to the host culture, one-seventh of the sample interviewed in Germany explicitly said Germany was harder to settle into compared with other locations. Interview responses indicated aspects as basic as not knowing that a German apartment did not come with a kitchen or light fixtures, not knowing the shops were closed on Sundays, the language barrier in that Germans won't always use English even when they know it, and the perception that the culture was less friendly and welcoming than other cultures.

Fewer cultural frustrations were expressed about acclimating in the UAE and Brazil. However in the UAE, some teachers had difficulty settling in as a result of visa issues. Without a visa, an international teacher there could not drive legally, receive a shipment, buy alcohol, open a bank account, and had to do 'border runs' every 30 days to renew their tourist visa status.

In China, some teachers indicated they had difficulty adjusting to environmental factors, pollution, and to the language barrier. Several international teachers in Brazil said they had difficulty settling in as a result of having fewer expatriates to interact with, a language barrier, and not having enough salary to sustain a desired quality of life. Cultural frustrations impacted longevity in all four locations, but retention was impacted most by cultural differences experienced in China.

Cultural involvement was sub-divided into three different levels: being substantially involved, being peripherally involved, and being involved with other expatriates. Responses suggested that involvement in the host culture was probably not a factor in teacher retention and that most of teachers became involved to some extent in the host

culture regardless of location. The only country with minimal cultural involvement by international teachers was in the UAE and this may have been because the country was made up of more expatriates than locals.

Some international teachers, however, connected more in certain cultures or countries over others. This seemed to weave in 'cultural fit' that expatriates may or may not have with their location. Whenever an international teacher seemed to have the best cultural fit in that location, the involvement tended to increase. Cultural fit could be linked with having the desire to learn the language, having the personality to integrate, the proximity of living among locals, and taking into account the demands on one's time related to workload or having a family.

Responses also indicated that inability to communicate in the host language often caused negative experiences for them. An expression or gesture that may have meant one thing to an individual or culture sometimes represented something entirely different to another. Teachers from varying backgrounds sometimes did not realize that when they said or did something it sometimes held different connotations in the host country. They mentioned feelings of isolation, frustration and ostracism related to language barriers. Over time, however, many international teachers became better adjusted to their international contexts.

The effects of settling into a new culture depended on the ability of participants to bond with incoming colleagues, to embrace change, to not compare previous experiences with their current transition, to have the ability to connect with new cultures and have the willingness to learn the language, and to have adequate preparation and assistance provided by the school.

Reasons for settling in were often complex and not as simple as, "If one does this then one will be settled in." (C5/28) Adjusting to another culture was difficult because there was often a language barrier, differences in cultural norms, and even shifting the perspective of "home" to where one was living now. Many teachers said they wanted to feel independent but in a foreign country they also needed help. Location did not always play a role in making the transition easier.

International teachers settled in at different rates in their international schools. Those who settled in more quickly attributed it to feeling supported by staff and administration, forming bonds with other colleagues, and having the ability to embrace cultural diversity within their schools. Those who settled in more slowly attributed it to changing positions, changing curriculum, having the feeling of constant change within the school, or simply as a result of changing schools more often. Teachers wanted to settle in quickly and feel like fully contributing members of both their teams and within the greater context of the school, but it took varying lengths of time to settle. Some settled in almost immediately, while others took nearly the length of their initial contracts to settle in to their professions. Many experienced phases of transition including a honeymoon period, followed by a depression phase, before finally reaching contentment.

There were certain strategies teachers could use to help themselves during transitions. They could maintain familiar aspects of home by connecting with aspects of home within their foreign environments and shipping important items to their new locations. They could also get involved in social events upon arrival and build support networks with those around them. Additionally, it was important for international teachers to maintain support networks with family and friends back home as well as with friends made in previous placements. Finally, teachers who made an effort to balance themselves in terms of their profession with a life outside of work were better able to adapt amidst the transition to a new location.

International schools provide levels of support through orientations. Some teachers suggested that orientations were linked with ability to settle in and make a smoother transition, but most did not say anything that would suggest orientations linked directly to retention or turnover. They are important in making the transition smoother in hopes that, in turn, teachers will settle into their schools better and stay longer.

Chapter 4.3: Results for Research Question 3

4.3.1 Research Question 3

3) What factors ultimately guide international teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their locations?

4.3.2 Themes related to future decisions of international educators

International teachers reflected on what basis they made decisions related to remaining in their international schools. They expressed their preferences between the school or the country, opened up about personal and professional reasons on which they based decisions, and forecasted their future plans if they were to remain in international education or return to their home countries in the foreseeable future.

Figure 4.13 Themes related to future decisions of international educators
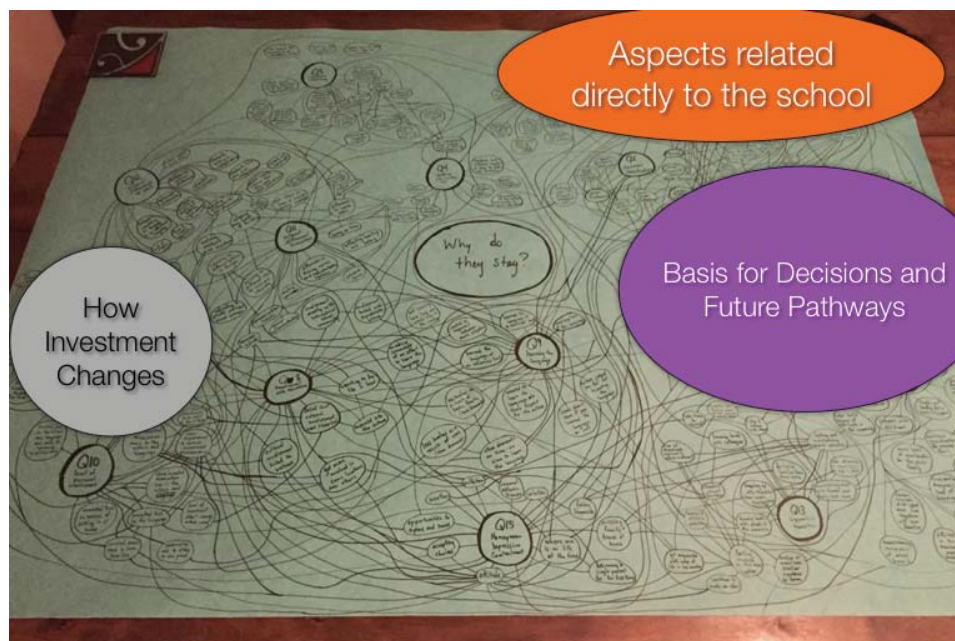
4.3.3 School, country, or combination as key motivators for remaining

International teachers are different in some regards from other expatriates in that they chose when and where they work abroad. They are not sent or sponsored by a company to a specific location like most other expatriates and after their initial contract most international teachers have a choice on whether they remained in their job and location or whether they choose to go somewhere else next. Some teachers expressed more specifically that it was the school, country, or a combination of factors that motivated them to remain in their locations. Table 4.8 represents a breakdown of participant responses on priorities for remaining in a location.

Table 4.8 Numbers of teachers who said it was the school, the country, or both that affected their decision to stay in a country
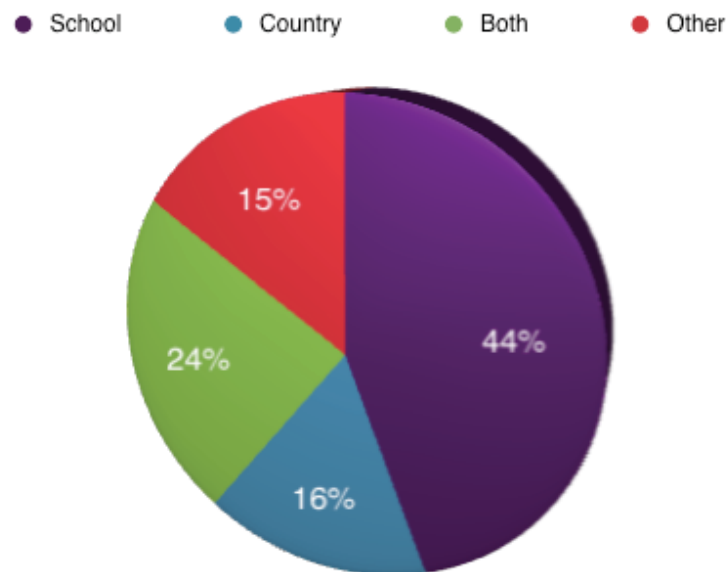
	China	Germany	UAE	Brazil	Totals
School	10/28 = 36%	11/27 = 41%	10/25 = 40%	12/20 = 60%	43/100
Country	6/28 = 21%	3/27 = 11%	5/25 = 20%	2/20 = 10%	16/100
Both	3/28 = 11%	8/27 = 30%	7/25 = 28%	6/20 = 30%	24/100
Other	9/28 = 32%	5/27 = 18%	3/25 = 12%	0/20 = 0%	17/100

From the 100 participants in this study, 43% said they remained for the international school, 16% stayed for the country, 25% remained for both the school and country combined, and 16% stayed for other factors not related to the school or country. Examples of teachers who remained in a location for 'other' reasons included to finish a Masters degree, to pay off debt or student loans, as a result of being married to a local of the host country or as a result of their spouse's job among other reasons.

4.3.4 School was the most important reason for staying

For a large percentage of international teachers (43%), the school was the main motivator for staying in a location. Reasons included school vision, mission, and philosophy in alignment, supportive administration and a positive school culture, professional opportunities and support from colleagues, and that the school affects one's daily life as a result of being at work for more hours of the day.

School vision, mission, and philosophy:

> "The philosophy of the place has to mean something to me. I have to get it. I suppose I had come from an American curriculum and while it was an excellent school, a great school, I never felt like it was the perfect fit. Coming here it was like, "Ah, I fit here." (C26/28)

> "The mission of the school seems to really be something I weigh into my decisions. It is very out of the classroom oriented, hands-on, very service-based and all that." (C14/28)

> "I want to be in a school that is very focused on the students, but also has a huge respect for the teachers. I also have to feel that I can support the policies that the school is having." (G11/27)

> "A non-profit, smaller school." (U20/25)

> "A clear sense of vision and direction so you know where they are going and you have the big picture." (B16/20)

> "Visible administration." (U10/25)

"A school that is going in a good direction, that's supportive, and that you feel like you can make a difference." (U9/25)

"A school with high hopes and big dreams." (B7/20)

A school with supportive administration:

Follow-through:

"If even from the get-go everything that was discussed in my interview were implemented. I wasn't told I was going to be teaching grade 6. I was told I was actually going to be teaching grades 8-9. I wasn't sure what subject I would be teaching – like either English or social studies and when I arrived here no one knew what I was going to be teaching, which was a little disappointing. And again, I'd like to prepare." (U8/25)

"Just keeping up with what the school proclaims to be, its intentions and mission statements and focus to the people. And if those don't necessarily align with what their processes are or allow for the funds for that to happen, then it seems a bit dichotic." (U23/25)

"We have stuff all over the place. We are waiting for cubbies for 3 months, so we don't have an organized system … We are running out of writing journals and we don't have any more." (U22/25)

"I came here and I was told that I was going to be able to get admin and that's why I came. There was nothing about the UAE that attracted me. A start up school wasn't really ideal for me unless I could be in that administrative role… As much as I'm here for the kids, I'm also here for me. And if that gives something back to me, then that gets me to where I want to be. That's what I want." (U10/25)

Sufficient resources:

"One where I felt my work was valued. One where I had my residency at the beginning of my time working here. One where policies and procedures were in place and there was a clear line to follow if I had questions about anything. One where I was given professional development. One where administration communicated with us. One where I was paid what I was worth. And one where I had resources and proper materials I needed to teach my class." (U6/25)

"We are waiting for cubbies for 3 months into school, so we don't have an organizational system … We are running out of writing journals and we don't have anymore." (U22/25)

"Positive, healthy, supportive, proper resources, meeting the needs of the students, proper professional development and training, good accountability, I want to be challenged and pushed and I want everyone to do their job properly." (B3/20)

Support with curriculum:

"A collaborative environment." (U11/25)

"I have worked in a couple of schools where there was no curriculum and so you spent a lot of time developing curriculum just to be able to teach to do your job. So that was very frustrating. In [another school[the curriculum was already developed so it was very easy to do a good job teaching – I didn't have to spend all the time making it. I could spend all of my time making it better." (G2/27)

"I would prefer to work somewhere where the support services are a bit more established. I think it would have been nice for my career development if there had already been a program in place. I would have been able to join in and had that foundation. Having a team and a school that was a bit more established would be more ideal." (G15/27)

"I like the way my job has developed – it's supportive, I have great professional development, a wonderful budget, a good location, a comfortable salary, the school is really developed – it wasn't always this good." (G17/27)

Positive morale:

"The school is dynamic. As staff changes, if the people here are passionate about something then we just say okay then, let's change it; let's do it differently. And there is a lot of freedom, which I appreciate." (B6/20)

"I guess one where I have a good relationship with just the whole community – the administration, the teachers, the parents and the students." (G16/27)

"A good working environment in terms of colleagues." (U16/25)

"I think probably a bit smaller or close knit in terms of how the staff work together, like cooperatively and as well as cross curricular so that you get a good chance to work with lots of different people. I think I like that better." (G21/27)

"One where the kids have a good, strong work ethic." (G26/27)

"Excellent working relationships, the school has a positive relationship with the people, the dynamics just mesh, and the leadership is clear." (G27/27)

School climate and organization:

"The school … the culture in the school, how comfortable I feel in my teaching environment, and with my administration to be able to want to stay." (U22/25)

"When I went to one school in Korea I found the school to be a lot of unnecessary work because things were not well organized so I didn't like the school." (G2/27)

"I am comparing the level of the school now with what we used to have 7 years ago. So for me the comparison makes it feel like, 'Oh my God the school has grown so much. It's so much better. It's improved so much.' It's something for people who come now they compare it to their last school or another country, so it's all relative." (B19/20)

Support from colleagues:

"It really comes down to the school and the people that you work with. As long as people are willing to work hard and ensure those same principles in education, you could be in any country." (U17/25)

"The school and the people I work with. I feel like in my time here, the school has made vast improvements and I feel privileged and honored to have been part of these improvements because some of them include my blood, sweat, and tears." (B7/20)

"The outside factors of the country can be frustrating and hard and difficult. If my work environment is supportive, I would stay. So probably more the school actually." (B3/20)

"I would say the school because you've got your support system. Sometimes it's almost like an alternative family if you develop those close relationships with people. For example, when I was sick, knowing that there were people who cared – especially being in a foreign country where your family is all hours away." (G27/27)

Degree of autonomy and voice:

"A place where my ideas were heard and allowed to implement programs that I thought would be beneficial to the school and the student body." (C20/28)

"I feel that being in smaller schools you can kind of have more opportunities to stand out and contribute. So that's big for me." (C23/28)

"I've had a problem with authority all my life actually, and I think I finally realized that. I need a job that allows me to have a certain amount of independence and also be a leader." (G22/27)

"I will stay in school as long as I feel like I can contribute new ideas." (C24/28)

"The school if you have enough support, autonomy, and freedom." (G14/27)

Professional or promotional opportunities:

"All of the opportunities for professional development are really, really important." (C28/28)

"It's really the school for me. You can make tons of money elsewhere, I know that, where you won't get taxed by the German government – I mean they take it all away, but yeah, the opportunity to develop here has been wonderful." (G11/27)

"I progressed into management at the school." (U1/25)

"The opportunity for advancement." (B14/20)

"I've been given opportunities to try new things. So that's important. I feel connected in the school. I love what I do. Professionally I am stimulated." (G13/27)

"If there's change and if there are opportunities for doing different things within the school. I mean I've done a 1,000 different jobs if you life – I have been faculty association president, leading the faculty on a teacher's union, have been IB diploma coordinator, has helped found a sports club where our school can participate against other schools, which puts our school on the local map a little bit and gets us into the local consciousness." (G5/27)
"I'm a math teacher. And then I was offered the position of International Baccalaureate (IB) coordinator, and I had the chance to take some philosophy class as part of Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and I'm thrilled. I really enjoy the opportunity to go in different directions like that." (B14/20)

"At this point, I would like to be out of the classroom. I'm ready for that. I would love to be a librarian." (C22/28)

"We didn't want an established school again. We wanted to find something where we could bite off our own piece." (U15/25)

"Career wise I don't want to take a step backwards." (G10/27)

Time and benefits provided by the school affects day-to-day life most:

"I'm going to go with the school on this one because they are providing housing, flights, and all the benefits. And if you are not happy with that, how can you be happy with the country?" (C23/28)

"The school, because you are there more hours." (U25/25)

"Probably more the school because it is what I'm doing most of the day, most of my week, and so I think that's more of a factor than the country." (B13/20)

"Probably the school. It's really where your community is socially, where you spend most of your time." (B2/20)

"I would say the school. If you have a bad life day-to-day then it's pretty hard to justify staying (C14/28)."

4.3.5 Country was most important factor in decision to remain

Some international teachers prioritized wanting to live in a specific country over choosing to be at a specific international school. Some felt they would not fit in if they went to other countries or regions so they wanted to stay put in their current country. Others said the country was a good location for family or had a good scene for singles, providing a lifestyle for their current life phase.

Location fit:

"You might be happy in Europe but accept slightly lower pay." (G4/27)

"I enjoyed it very much from the first day. I felt very stimulated and very happy in the setting. Everything I did was exciting." (U1/25)

"I mean if the school is good, I think that helps…but if I was making a decision to do a third year, I would rather stay at a school in a fantastic place than a school in a location I didn't like." (B11/20)

"I couldn't see myself living in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Africa, or the Arab world. I think I have missed the boat on that. You need to be quite young if you are going to go there." (G5/27).

"For me, we've considered going to other schools. The biggest factor for us is that my husband doesn't speak another language so moving around is difficult for us." (C1/28)

Lifestyle and entertainment in the country:

"The lifestyle. The weather. Because of the location, it's a hub. You can travel everywhere." (U2/25)

"You need to have a life outside of school, so I would definitely say the country. Because if you don't feel comfortable or you don't feel safe, the school may be wonderful but you can't live and breathe and sleep in the school." (U16/25)

Safety and comfort in the country:

"The fact that I could walk out anywhere at night at any time and not worry about being killed or mugged." (C16/28)

"The country – if you felt comfortable in the culture and your location and your living situation." (B5/20)

"That's a good question because the school takes on the country in some ways…. It would probably be the country that will determine how long we stay." (C4/28)

"Don't be afraid of what you hear on the Department of Defense website. There is always going to be someone that says a country is not safe, but you never know unless you are there." (U17/25)

Country fits life phase and/or family circumstances:

"I couldn't see myself living in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Africa, or the Arab world. I think I have missed the boat on that. You need to be quite young if you are going to go there." (G5/27).

"For me, we've considered going to other schools. The biggest factor for us is that my husband doesn't speak another language so moving around is difficult for us….We bought a house here, this is really home for us." (C1/28)

"Now that I am a couple, it has to be the country and not the school. It has to be a place that's good for both parties." (C10/28)

"The country is obviously important … when women got pregnant [in Ukraine], they always went back home to give birth if they were foreign. They wouldn't have the child in that country." (C27/28)

4.3.6 School and country were equally important in decision-making

Some international teachers could not answer this question for the school or the country. They reflected on their current situations and decided that they were remaining for elements of both.

Combination of both school and country:

"I would say it's more 60–40%. 60 to the school, 40 to the country." (G13/27)

"I think the combination of the two. I mean, work, that's the reason you came so it needs to be good. The environment, the people you hang around with, the things you do socially, I think it's a combination of the two." (U9/25)

"I think both are important. If you feel supported and if you are enjoying the people that you work with, if you have enough money to travel and experience the surroundings in whatever location you are in, I think that is important as well." (B18/20)

"The school should be a big part of it … where I want to go at this point in my life. I also choose a place that I feel comfortable living." (B20/20)

"I'm kind of looking for the best of both now. Whereas before it was okay – I think I was kind of willing to work in any school as long as it was in a country that I was interested in working in." (C8/28)

Quality of life:

"I think the school … The place is very important, too, because if your quality of life outside the school is terrible, then you are not going to want to stay." (B4/20)

"The school is very important because I love my job. The country is equally important because if you are living somewhere where it's hard to have a life outside of work then I think it makes it easy to leave. For example, Kazakhstan was really cold, Beijing has air quality issues – I'm finding that it's starting to wear on me." (C17/28)

"I would say both. You want to be in a school where you are going to be able to use that on your CV … If you are not comfortable with your lifestyle then that aspect would potentially cause me to think about leaving." (U8/25)

"I think for us it's probably been the school at least as much as the country. We really like the school – we have invested a lot of time into it. But the country has got something to do with it – this is a very comfortable place to live. Tokyo was very exciting and was an exciting place to travel from, we did lots of traveling when we were in Tokyo." (G3/27)

Location and school fitting current life phase:

"It's a good country, a good school, a good school environment." (B1/20)

"The school should be a big part of it … where I want to go at this point in my life I choose a place that I also feel comfortable living." (B20/20)

"That's hard to say. You know that can vary over time. Sometimes depending on what's happening it can be more the school and it could be more the host country. I don't think I can say it's one way or another all the time because it's just not." (C5/28)

"I'm kind of looking for the best of both now. Whereas before it was okay I think I was kind of willing to work in any school as long as it was in a country that I was interested in working in. (C8/28)."

An environment that provides balance:

"I think work-life balance is important. In Europe it was more like, 'It's 4:00 you can leave', whereas in Asia there is more emphasis on work. I would want to be in a location where there are a lot of things to see and do and is a good base for traveling." (G1/27)

"If you are working in an environment that is nice, and you like where you are living, and you can make friends, and you are happy with the lifestyle around you and who you are happy with, that would be the ideal." (G4/27)

"I could stay here for a long time. I feel safe and I feel challenged and life is very comfortable." (G20/27)

"I want to enjoy my teaching, feel fulfilled, and develop professionally and also enjoy where I am living." (U24/25)

"If you have a good quality of life and get time to relax. Feeling good about your job, but having a good quality of life and the ability to travel and see new things." (C27/28)

"I want to feel a home away from home." (G18/27)

4.3.7 Other reasons for remaining in one's current location

When asked this question most respondents immediately said, "school," "country", or "both". However, 15% elaborated on other factors as to why they remained or changed locations. Some remained in a location for friendships, healthcare, or kept to the philosophy that it's not good to move too often. Comments also included the feeling that they would only stay for a certain time period no matter what, or that it was too difficult and not what they wanted:

Friendship:

"I have worked for principals who have been shocking, but I have had great friends. And I would have stayed there in a heartbeat." (C25/28)

Healthcare:

"One of the biggest reasons we left China was the healthcare. We loved the school. But then one of the reasons we left the here the first time was that we didn't like the school. So I think it just depends." (U18/25)

For periods of time regardless:

"I have a personal view that you should stay in place for a longer period of time– at least 3 to 5 years whether you like it or not." (C11/28)

"It might just be 2-3 years." (U23/25)

Spouse's employment:

"I actually have to say on this one it's my husband's job. But in every country I have lived in I have been happy there. There's no country that I could not go back to." (C18/28)

"My wife and I have a child and she is working in a German school so she can't just take off [to another international location]. She is a civil servant, which means she is guaranteed a job for life…it's hard to know what job she could get in an international school…. So that would be an enormous gamble." (G12/27)

Remaining for contractual obligations:

"What's keeping me here is my professional and ethical commitment to the school. I do not enjoy living in this city in any way, shape, or form. I like my housing situation. I like having an apartment on the beach and I know I could never have that lifestyle in the States, but I am ready to go and move on from here." (B10/20)

4.3.8 Reasons the teacher would want to leave the school or country

As teachers listed the reasons related to the school or country in wanting to remain in a location, they also listed some factors as to why they would want to leave. Some reasons included not feeling comfortable in the host country, not wanting to tolerate certain environmental factors, the exchange rate or cost of living drastically affecting the quality of life, experiencing a negative morale within the school, or that it was right to leave.

Not comfortable in host country:

"The host country is important. That's part of the reason I'm leaving is that I'm feeling I'm not fitting in with China." (C7/28)

"This job is very hard here and the country is even harder, I'm not going to stay." (C10/28)

"I got bored of the country before and that's why I left…It depends on what the country's conditions are like." (G20/27)

Environmental factors:

"I think it has been a bit of a challenge for everyone. This past year has been rough as far as the environmental side of it (C26/28)."

"I think a lot of the teachers here, quality of life for them becomes attached to the financial package. And for me it's more than that. My oldest son has asthma that has gotten worse since we've been here, so I have to think about that. I'm scared to even get an X-ray. I don't want to think about what our lungs look like." (C4/28)

"You couldn't clean out my lungs enough to keep me here." (C10/28)

"I chose to leave because of the air pollution…. Then moving to Germany I have fresh air again but there's not that much happening socially so I'm a bit bored here… I think it's just you need a balance." (G24/27)

"I don't think I can do another winter here. It's brutal, it's so long and gray." (G19/27)

Exchange rate, cost of living, and cultural differences affecting salary:

"One of the reasons I entered international teaching was actually the ability to save and we are not able to save as much here because it is an expensive city." (B17/20)

"Making about twice what I do. The dollar exchange rate is killing us right now." (B10/20)

"A little more comfortable. The cost of living is a bit high for us here, so a place that's more affordable." (B2/20)

"Helping pay for moving costs … and flights to go to the country and return. That's huge because it's costly. You are moving your entire life over and you don't know if it's going to be a perfect match for you at the school." (G26/27)

"Your pay, like in Eritrea we got half in local currency and the rest was US dollars. So those things you cannot negotiate. And we were just like, okay, I might never spend all this money that we got in the local currency and what are we going to do with all of this? It was really difficult to exchange it and then you would get a really bad exchange rate." (C23/28)

"We are having a lot of problems with the bank here. And so we can't get our money. We don't have access to our money. That's nothing the school can do, it's part of the infrastructure of Brazil." (B11/20)

Rent and other benefits less than satisfactory:

"A school that subsidizes our rent." (B7/20)

"Your living arrangements can have an effect … because it's not like we find our own places. Our accommodation is allocated for us. I found the living arrangement in one country quite stressful – we were living in a compound just for teachers." (U5/25)

"The benefits and bonuses that we get as international teachers expire after 7 years. …I know there are families here who have to leave for a couple of years to restart their international contract and then they come back. And then their benefits start over from year one." (B19/20)

Negative morale in a school:

"In my last position the principal didn't really even know my name – they didn't know who I was and I kind of felt like I was just floating through the corridors everyday." (U19/25)

"I think it's the school and the working conditions that are kind of key features. We had a falling out with administration in another school and it was a bit unfortunate because she [the administrator] only lasted a year more than we did. Who knows how things would've turned out. But if that disagreement hadn't happened, we wouldn't be probably stayed there a bit longer." (G3/27)

"The school's morale has gone by the wayside a little bit because there are so many basic things that I think have been forgotten. And if you want to keep good teachers you have to keep a positive atmosphere at the school. You've got to make sure everybody is reasonably happy. And I don't think people are." (C21/28)

"I think in a school where it's a real team effort than the top-down decision making model. Where professional development and professional learning are valued. And a school where teams will truly work as teams and plan together as teams… That would keep me there." (C24/28)

"I think for me it's the people that I'm working with more than anything. I think that's one of the reasons I want to leave is that I have struggled a little bit with different personalities. The school, there's faculty who have been here for a very, very long time so that can be difficult in some ways." (G9/27)

Ready for a different experience:

"There is a need for the school to support their staff and I don't think that support is as forthcoming lately as it has been otherwise. So that's a worry here. I think now I am ready for a different country. I need to try a different culture (C21/28)."

Knowing when it feels right to leave:

"It just kept coming down to not being happy enough with other things. Life is short and there are opportunities out there." (C7/28)

"If there were more bad times than good times then you know it's time to go." (C20/28)
"In our experience it comes a point to where it is right to leave. You've done enough, had enough. We've always been quite sad to leave, but we always knew it was the right thing. You've maybe changed as a person on a level and it's just time." (G7/27)

Decision changes over time:

"That's hard to say. You know that can vary over time. Sometimes depending on what's happening it can be more the school and it could be more the host country. I don't think I can say it's one way or another all the time because it's just not." (C5/28)

"I'm kind of looking for the best of both now. Whereas before it was okay I think I was kind of willing to work in any school as long as it was in a country that I was interested in working in. (C8/28)."

4.3.9 Summary of findings for remaining in location for school or country

Some teachers expressed more specifically that it was the school, country, or a combination of factors that motivated them to remain in their locations. The majority of international teachers remained for the international school (43%), though a significant number also remained for a combination of the school and the country (25%). The reasons many attributed staying in a school specifically included the school's vision, mission, and philosophy, supportive administration that followed through on what they said they were going to do, sufficient resources, support with the curriculum, positive morale, professional development, promotional advancement, support from colleagues,

and a degree of voice and autonomy. Reasons for staying in the country (16%) specifically included the location fit, quality of life, feeling safe and comfortable within the culture and country, and location fitting family and life circumstances at the time.

Twenty-five percent attributed both the school and country as reasons for remaining because the school had a direct impact on other aspects of life, including quality of life, location of school and proximity to home country, work-life balance, and having better opportunities for own family overseas. Sixteen percent had other reasons for staying, including friendships, healthcare and benefits, spouse's employment, or contractual obligations. Though reasons were varied in this section, information can provide insight into the personal motivations of international teachers related to retention.

As teachers listed the reasons related to the school or country in wanting to remain in a location, they also listed some factors as to why they would want to leave. Some reasons included not feeling comfortable in the host country, not wanting to tolerate certain environmental factors, the exchange rate or cost of living affecting the quality of life, negative morale within the school, and timing for when it felt right to leave.

4.3.10 What more specifically guides decisions to remain in location

The reasons that guided international teachers to stay or go were grouped into school-related reasons and personal reasons. Salary and benefits remained in a separate column to isolate it as a factor. Table 4.9, breaks down the motivators more specifically about what guides teachers' decisions to stay or go.

School-related responses for remaining in an international school included: aspects of the job such as having a supportive team, receiving adequate professional development, having supportive administration, and being able to support the philosophy and vision of the school. Personal reasons were broken down more specifically, including taking family into consideration, taking into account one's own age, lifestyle, personal growth, level of happiness, or opportunities elsewhere. The reasons were broken down as specifically as possible to discern which reasons

international schools had any influence over or whether or not the reasons were out of the school's control entirely.

Salary and benefits were left in their own column as to remain separate from other professional reasons directly related to the school. An additional 24% noted that salary and benefits were important.

Table 4.9 What guides teachers' decisions to stay or go

Location	Professional Reasons		Personal Reasons					Separately those who added salary and benefits in addition to one of the other reasons on the left of this table
	The job, school philosophy, administration, professional opportunities	Professional opportunities elsewhere	Partners, Children, or Aging Parents	Age	Quality of Life	Personal growth; Right 'fit'	Happiness Level; Time to move on	Salary/ Benefits/ Retirement
China	10	0	11	1	6	1	4	6
Germany	4	0	16	1	3	3	1	4
UAE	8	1	5	0	3	3	4	7
Brazil	4	1	4	0	4	2	0	7
Total	26%	2%	36%	2%	16%	9%	9%	24%
Total: 100%								**Additional 24%**

According to Table 4.9 and in conjunction with demographic information collected on the participants, 26% of people who ranked "the job" as what guided their decisions were all mid-career and had worked at previous international schools before their current posting. Thirty-six percent said their families guided their decisions, including partners, children, aging parents or family in their home countries. Family was the largest single factor for what guided future decisions on whether or not to stay or go

(total 4%). Not many were factoring in age or professional opportunities elsewhere as reasons to stay or leave a location. For 16%, lifestyle within a location was important. Most international teachers in this category were without children, with the exception of two (married to each other) who said lifestyle because they wanted their children to be in a less-polluted environment. Fewer than 10% said they either based their decisions on personal growth and happiness level. There was no majority response with regards to personal growth or happiness level, the range of responses included best fit for self and family, wanting to develop professionally, or that it was time to move on.

In a separate category to what guided decisions, nearly one-fourth of participants added that, in addition to one of the reasons in the professional and personal columns of the table, salary and benefits were also a main motivator for making decisions, making it the third highest-ranking behind family reasons and professional reasons.

4.3.11 Key decisions made in relation to the job and school administration

When asked on what basis were decisions made to remain in a location, one teacher said, "I think ultimately the job. Friends come and go." (U9/25) Administrative support, growth and challenge, and being in a well-run school were listed as aspects of the job worth staying for.

Mission and Vision:

"I really feel like I can get behind the school's mission and vision and values. I believe we have good programs in place. My working environment is important. I stay here because I believe in the school." (C1/28)

"Professional opportunities and constantly assessing where the school is at, if it is going in the right direction." (U15/25)

Support or lack thereof from administration:

"I think it comes down to people in the end. The kids, colleagues, and administration. And if that's not turning some sort of harmony then I want to leave." (U24/25)

"Workload, appraisal, the feel of community, and our contract – which seems to be falling apart with our contract." (C22/28)

"I think a lot of it is if the school is that they say they were going to be when you took the job – that's a big one. Has that changed from what it started as?" (C25/28)

Growth opportunities and career focus:

"There are enough challenges here. Although we've been here a long time, this school has gone through a lot of changes, development, so it's never ever been boring or complacent. There are new challenges coming out all the time. There's always something to look forward to." (G3/27)

"Some type of promotion or going up. I wanted to be principal. I'm really wanting to enjoy the teaching and I don't want to leave it so quickly." (G16/27)

"We want to go to a school that is not struggling to find itself." (U18/25)

"As long as I feel like I am at a school where I am valued, and can make a contribution, I try to wake up and feel happy about where I am. I am trying to live in the present as much as possible." (C27/28)

"I wouldn't consider another German school. Here, I have tenure." (G11/27)

4.3.12 Key decisions made in relation to professional opportunities elsewhere

Some international teachers were simply looking for different opportunities elsewhere. Whatever they are looking for is not currently available in their international school or location and therefore they need to move on to take advantage of a professional opportunity.

"My future plans are to get a doctorate, become a rock star, and take over the world. And if that happens to include international teaching, that's fabulous, but that's not my ultimate life goal at this time." (U6/25)

"In some ways I'm a little bit scared of going back to my country. It's been quite a number of years I've been out. And so therefore, there is going to be a transitional stage of learning to be back in my own culture again." (C11/28)

4.3.13 Key decisions made in relation to family

Some responses focused on the family. It seemed that a teacher stayed if their partner and family were happy. "Family is the primary thing. School is secondary." (G5/27)

Related to spouse or partner:

"What keeps me in Shanghai is my husband and that we are settled here. We considered going up north because his family is there, but I'm actually happy further from my mother-in-law then closer to my mother-in-law just because of the pressure of being married to the only person the family and not having children. So that's a whole other cultural issue." (C1/28)

"My husband's contentment with his job–we tried it because he loved his job and I didn't. We separated and lived on two different continents and that didn't work. So the decision, it's a hard one, but we can tell that we both have to be ready to leave." (C2/28)

"I would like to go home but I have the added issue that I've married someone from another country. He's Australian so we are going to have to choose to either live in one of our homes or we'll probably try to stay international because then we haven't chosen one over the other." (C8/28)

"Next year we will have to go back to the US just for my husband's license and then after that we're going to go somewhere else." (B15/20)

Related to starting a family:

"One of the reasons we are staying is because of the maternity policies here. I mean we get 6 weeks before, 8 weeks after – that's all paid by the school. Then I can stay home for 3 years–3 years and my job is guaranteed. And for the first year the government pays me 65% of my salary. My mom was a stay-at-home mom so I know I am still a valuable asset to society whether I am home or at school. I think some women may value themselves on their jobs. I can take some time off of work." (G18/27)

"We will definitely want to look for a place where we can stay at least 4 years with the baby coming." (C23/28)

"Whether or not I could see having children in the place." (C6/28)

"We want to have a big family. But most schools only pay for 2 children's tuition, so when the third one pops out we will go back to France." (C10/28)

Related to children:

"My wife being able to find a job, our daughter as well. It would almost be irresponsible living in Spain with a daughter to grow up to be unemployed." (G12/27)

"If my kids were doing really well and I wasn't happy in my job I would still stay because I am a parent." (C19/28)

"I definitely think this is a life that suits our family. I want my kids to know that the world is this diverse and unique place and not just America. I want my kids to know that the world is their oyster. Travel. I want them to be tolerant of people and know that there are other cultures." (C4/28)

"I'm not sure I want my kids to go to American high school." (U14/25)

"The only motivation for me to do it [return home] at the moment is to make sure that my children have had some kind of living in Australia so it gives them a better sense of identity when they say that they are Australian." (C11/28)

Related to extended family:

"I almost feel like it would be an external variable–like for example if one of our parents got very ill, or there was a job offer that my husband could not refuse, or something externally. Because when you are content somewhere there's no reason to think about moving." (G22/27)

"I definitely want to stay in international teaching until I sort of really need to be at home with parents." (U24/25)

4.3.14 Key decisions made in relation to age

Age may factor into decisions when teachers decide on working in certain parts of the world, changing to different postings, or remaining in their current positions.

"I remember when I started the European Council of International School (ECIS) didn't even want to look at people who were over 40. And they would come right out and say things like that." (G11/27)

"A lot of schools would not want someone as experienced as me because they would have to pay me more. Sometimes the young people they can push around a little. An older person will say, "Yeah, I don't want to do that." (G11/27)

"I think if I had been younger I would be looking for different things. Now it's again about the professional thing and where do I want to experience as opposed to how much money can I make." (U10/25)

"There's a retirement age here. Officially I think it's 60–65 so I've already hit the 60+ mark. It's a question of time before I'll actually have to pack my bags and leave." (U1/25)

"We would like to retire soon so that is going to kind of dictate where we go next." (B16/20)

4.3.15 Key decisions made in relation to quality of life

Some responses focused on the quality of life. For some it was important that they were able to get outside more. For others work-life balance became more important than either the school or the location itself. Pollution became an additional theme that emerged for teachers living in China.

Pollution:

"I think a lot of the teachers here, quality of life for them becomes attached to the financial package. And for me it's more than that. My oldest son has asthma that has gotten worse since we've been here, so I have to think about that. I'm scared to even get an X-ray. I don't want to think about what our lungs look like." (C4/28)

"You couldn't clean out my lungs enough to keep me here." (C10/28)

The pollution… all these things were carcinogenic… they were going to be a huge cause related to cancer of all types. I don't actually smoke. And I don't drink heavily. And I don't really do the things that are conducive of me heading in that direction toward cancer. And then my husband says, "You are living in it. Although you don't smoke and you don't do things like that, this is worse."" (C15/28).

"I would like to go to another international school and try. I think the issue with China has been with my child and the bad air days. It created asthma that didn't exist." (C20/28)

4.3.16 Key decisions made in relation to right 'fit'

Some teachers are looking to be in the right place at the right time for the current phase of life they are in. Certain locations may have been better for singles or for those with children. Each had a different perspective on if their current international school and location fit their current life phase. For some, it was the basis for making the decision to stay or go.

Current experiences fit life phase:

"I'm going to have to say lifestyle, and I would not have said that maybe 10 years ago. Money played a huge factor, but lifestyle for me is important. Because now with me as a family, I need to make sure everyone is balanced. When I was younger I would consider, 'Maybe I'll go for money. Or maybe I'll go to these places because the money is good but it may not be that the lifestyle is a perfect fit. It's just temporary – it's 2 years, it's 3 years, it's 5 years.' Whereas now, I don't think like that." (G4/27)

"I think we have gypsy blood. I don't know if there is a certain person who just, you know, after a while, all the pieces fit just it where it's time to go. There's no one thing perhaps. I've got a girlfriend who has lived in the same house for 20 years. She got married, she's in the same house, she never left the country. And I'm certainly not one of those." (U11/25)

"I can't see us going back to Ireland. Economically, Ireland is in really bad shape still since the bank crashed. Things would have to improve there quite a bit." (G5/27)

4.3.17 Key decisions made in relation to level of happiness

Some teachers simply go by how they felt when making decisions to stay or go. Comments included:

"Happiness – how I feel." (C27/28)

"I should say it's my children's welfare but it isn't really. It's more our happiness. If we are happy together and we are happy in our jobs then everything else follows from that. I wouldn't stay in a place where I was utterly miserable because

I thought it was good for the girls. I think seeing their parents really miserable, of course kids pick up on that. It doesn't make it good for them." (G7/27)

"We know there is not a perfect place. There are issues everywhere." (C28/28)

Knowing when it feels right to leave:

"It just kept coming down to not being happy enough with other things. Life is short and there are opportunities out there." (C7/28)

"If there were more bad times than good times then you know it's time to go." (C20/28)

"In our experience it comes a point to where it is right to leave. You've done enough, had enough. We've always been quite sad to leave, but we always knew it was the right thing. You've maybe changed as a person on a level and it's just time." (G7/27)

4.3.18 Key decisions made in relation to salary and benefits packages

Some comments focused only on salary and benefits as the main reason to stay or go. Comments included:

Salary and savings potential:

"Pay is important to me." (B11/20)

"I think compensation has a lot to do with it." (B20/20)

"And of course a major one is pay because if you are away from family and friends … I think the payoff is that you are comfortable, then you ask yourself why you are not there." (C13/28)

"Pay and retirement. If the school wanted me to stay they would reflect it in the pay." (B12/20)

"I think the value placed on money – especially as the economy changes, to be compensated in a way that makes it a good opportunity for us to live abroad and be able to do things like travel." (B13/20)

"An ideal school would be one that could support our family financially." (B8/20)

"I can have enough pay to do basically what I would want to do to support my lifestyle." (B5/20)

"If they paid a little bit more and were a bit more organized." (B17/20)

Salary should sustain quality of life:

"I don't want to be out of pocket for an experience." (U10/25)

"I don't think it is very transparent to the teachers exactly why we get paid what we do when I feel like our school is very expensive. And some of the other schools in Brazil have about the same tuition but pay teachers a lot more. And it doesn't feel good when I feel like a school could afford to pay us more but they choose not to. So in feeling taken advantage of it makes me very uncomfortable. To feel that I am at a school that is taking advantage of the teachers–that they are not actually interested in keeping teachers for a long period of time makes things a little uncomfortable. That's the general feeling. We have a new director. He has changed the pay scale. It's a little bit, it's something at least. But it demonstrates that there is some investment in wanting to keep teachers for a longer period of time." (B12/20)

"In Germany I hardly made any money. I literally walked home with no savings but I was able to live a good life and travel and do the things I wanted to do and that was enough for me." (U10/25)

"In England I loved my job but it was my life I hated. I couldn't actually afford to leave the house." (C8/28)

"Salary, opportunities, and lifestyle." (C13/28)

"I'm a little worried about the salary and getting along financially." (B2/20)

Looking at salary and the future:

"Anywhere I would go at this point would be a huge pay cut." (G11/27)

"We make enough so that we can retire comfortably and not have to work." (C2/28)

"I think that the job is keeping us here. You get your bonuses, you get your retirement, all those things go up, which is hard to leave. Your salary goes up, everything. So that is hard to leave. We are pretty settled." (C3/28)

Needs more than salary alone:

> "I think a lot of the teachers here, quality of life for them becomes attached to the financial package. And for me it's more than that." (C4/28)

> "How I personally feel about it. I don't know if monetary value is necessarily a huge decision at this point, probably because I am not thinking about things long term." (U16/25)

4.3.19 Ideals of what one wants in their school and location

Location matching current life phase and level of expectation:

> "I think it probably depends on where you are in your life and in your career … Maybe now we are older and we know that the Shangri-La of schools doesn't exist." (G7/27)

> "I'm not looking to travel all over the world. I am looking more to be focused on the career part and to just feel home away from home." (G18/28)

> "A smaller school where you enjoy the people you work with and you have enough money to travel." (B18/20)

> "I think there comes a point where you would be asking yourself, "Would I be happy doing the same thing next year and I actually don't want to. I need a change." (C18/28)

> "I have this ultimate faith that I'm going to be where I am supposed to be. I'm going to get whatever those life experiences are that I'm supposed to have at that moment." (U21/25)

> "My husband and I really want to teach in many different locations and the thought of just staying in one place forever isn't something that we entertained." (B15/25)

> "I need things happening outside of work because my social life cannot be just work. I need to have things happening with the outside community so there can be some work-life separation." (G24/27)

Better educational opportunities for their own children:

> "I want to work somewhere where I feel happy at work but also where I would feel happy for my child to go to that school." (C8/28)

"I definitely think this is a life that suits our family. I want my kids to know that the world is this diverse and unique place and not just America. I want my kids to know that the world is their oyster. Travel. I want them to be tolerant of people and know that there are other cultures." (C4/28)

"I'm not sure I want my kids to go to American high school." (U14/25)

"A school where I know my children would develop to be academically strong." (U13/25)

"I am here because my job is self-fulfilling but also because my children are getting an education worth $50,000 a year or more." (C19/28)

Wants best situation for own family:

"It would have to be, first of all, whether or not I'm happy to be in a place for my family because to me they are the most important things in my vision. Then it becomes, am I happy in the country, then happy in my school." (C11/28)

"I guess one where I felt my children were getting a good education and then salary and benefits comes into it as well. I guess savings potential, professional development opportunities." (C9/28)

"Making sure that our kids are getting the best education… making sure that the people that I work with really care about what they do." (U17/25)

"An older, more established school, and one where my kids are getting a great education…access to some home comforts. I would want to be closer to home next time as far as flight time." (U14/25)

"At this point, proximity [to my children]. But if I am not thinking about my children, the location, then actually it would be climate, air – warmer, cleaner, and Asian lifestyle is easier than Western in the sense that you can have stuff delivered to your house, stuff like that." (C16/28)

4.3.20 Summary of findings for basis for future decisions

The decision to stay or go was linked to several factors. First, the job and the support that came with it, its opportunities for growth, and whether the school was well organized. It was also important that the teacher's partner and family were happy. Additionally, there was reluctance to leave if the teachers thought they were too old to

find a new place to work. For some, it was about the quality of life, how happy one was in the location, or whether or not they had a gut feeling they should move on no matter what – a wanderlust factor. Finally, the decision to stay or leave sometimes depended on salary and benefits and the opportunities this could afford them. In conclusion, a variety of factors keep international educators in overseas schools with personal reasons ranking first, professional reasons second, and salary and benefits ranking third.

4.3.21 Changes in the experience after making the decision to leave

As international teachers made decisions to leave their current overseas placements, aspects of their personal and professional lives began to change. With regards to their professional lives, some international teachers invested less in the school, felt they were treated differently, or began focusing on their next position or the pursuit of a new position. Others continued to make the effort in their current schools even amidst the changes. Regarding the teacher's personal life, some international teachers said they put in even more effort into the location when they knew they had less time left, while others withdrew both in their efforts with the culture and language and with relationships with others.

4.3.22 Negative consequences in the workplace after choosing to leave

Invested less in the school:

"If you were unhappy with the place and you are unhappy with your job and you are unhappy with your personal life, why would you want to coach? Why would you want to go the extra mile? If you are happy you are going to want to do those extra things because you want to contribute to the community and be part of it. But if not you just want to do your two years and get out of it." (U20/25)

"If I know I'm leaving, I don't bond too well." (C20/25)

"I don't care. I think I said I don't care 20 or more times this week. So yeah, I don't care." (C10/28).

"Mentally checking out… You don't put in as much effort. You do what you have to do but don't go beyond. You don't try to make improvements for next year because you know you are not here." (U4/25)

"I think unfortunately when you do know that you are going to another school, it does change your tune, it does. Maybe it's not a good thing but that's the way it is." (C19/28)

Teachers felt they were treated differently:

"It's hard to stay motivated when everyone else sees you as someone who is leaving. They start to talk you out of conversations." (C25/28).

"At the beginning of our second year [of the contract] we were made to sign a declaration to state whether or not we were going to leave or stay. "It's far too early. I find that I was going to leave and from that moment, myself and several others were ostracized within the school." (U2/25)

Teachers focused on preparing for their next job:

"The last couple of years I have been there I didn't know I would stay another year. I was actually applying for different jobs and it took away my concentration. I was spending less time into the job because it took so much of my time to start preparing for the future. Like e-mails, and updating my profile on search Associates, so it was taking so much of my time that I was focused on all this other stuff." (B19/20)

"I see with teachers… they are so focused on their next assignment that they forget they are even here." (B10/20)

4.3.23 Positive consequences in the workplace after choosing to leave

Most teachers knew how to handle the leaving situation professionally. They knew they still needed to work hard, their legacy carried on, and their reference would still come from their current school. Moreover, the majority wanted to do a good job of seeing their students through to the end.

Wanting to do a good job:

To leave a legacy and work hard until the last day:

"I usually try a bit harder because I want people to remember me well." (C27/28).

"I'm committed to the end." (C17/28)

"On the whole I always want to leave on a good note." (U10/25)

Continues to work hard for the students:

"We've always worked from the moment I know I am going – you've got all these kids who are counting on you and other people at the school, and if you don't give it your all until the last day, they are getting cheated. And yes, I know you got all that other stuff going on and you are getting your things organized for the international shipment. I know, I've been there." (G6/27)

"I don't think the school would have let me not put in my all in for the last semester because the sorts of schools they were – they were both quite demanding schools and demanding parents and I actually didn't have time to slack off." (C8/20)

4.3.24 Positive consequences in personal life after choosing to leave

When teachers actively made the decision to change locations, knowing they were leaving often created positive consequences on their lives. They began to maximize the time they had in a location by seeing and experiencing as much as possible. They tended to remember the good times, get more involved with friends and in the culture, accept the decision, and embrace the changes ahead.

Made the most of the time they had left:

"It's made me really see the value. It's really made me see the things I'm going to miss a lot more – like the mountains and the ocean and everything, along with the people and the experiences here. I also try to do the things that I haven't been able to – try to find time for those." (B8/20)

"You start to look at all the good things, like 'I love going there or I love shopping there or I love doing this.' And it's all good, which is a great thing." (C3/28)

Got involved in location more:

"I've got to do this! I've got to do that!" Suddenly you have a burst of energy, every weekend is full of things." (C25/28).

Positive outlook on strengthening and maintaining relationships:

"I would like to spend more time with friends and people I have connected with." (C11/28)

"Even though I'm not going to stay I still feel like I'm trying even harder to make sure these relationships are lasting." (B2/20)

Accepted the decision:

"It's exciting and tough." (U14/25)

"I always got excited when I knew I was leaving. I was happy to leave. I decided to leave. It was not like my contract had been terminated. So I was the one who took the decision to leave. But I was happy when I was there." (U3/25)

"I think we always leave fairly positive. I think because we have had each other so we are not leaving our family, family." (G7/27)

4.3.25 Negative consequences in the workplace after choosing to leave

Some international teachers said that when they knew they were leaving they slowed the pace down on investing in their locations. They didn't have a desire to see and experience as much as they did before and treated the experience as a gradual decrescendo. Some switched off socially or noticed others beginning to treat them differently by distancing themselves, while others even said they went as far as to sabotage the end of the experience in order to make the decision to leave easier.

Begins to look at the experience differently:

"So there's definitely a shutdown in all facets – culturally, socially, emotionally and professionally." (B17/20)

"You are distracted to a certain degree." (C26/28)

"You are letting go of a lot of things." (C26/28)

"Every time something 'China' happens – you get that bad China experience – it's half, 'Oh God, I'm glad I don't have to deal with this after another 6 months.' Or 'Oh, this is why I'm leaving here." (C14/28)

Did not invest themselves further:

"I am here, everybody else moved… You don't want to form a friendship because you have learned along the hard way that nobody is going to stay. You work hard, you put so much energy into a relationship, 2 years later they are gone. Then you start all over again. So I've stopped trying." (C16/28)

"You don't get as involved in things. You have to check back in to stay connected, stay involved. It's the motivation to start new things that leaves you in flux a little bit." (G9/27)

"I definitely didn't feel anymore push to learn the language." (G15/27)

Invested less in the culture and location:

"So I think not quite knowing when I'm leaving but knowing that I am not likely going to stay to play into how much effort I want to put into something." (G21/28)

"If I knew I was just going to be here for 2 years, I probably wouldn't get as involved." (B7/20)

Invested less in the language:

"I would be more likely to study German more if I knew I would be here. Right now it's just very up in the air." (G8/27)

"With having a family and knowing that we are going to leave in a couple of years, I'm not taking 2 hours out of my day to do Arabic language lessons. It's just not a priority for me. I think if we knew we were going to be here for 8 to 10 years, we would definitely do that." (U17/25)

Puts distance in relationships:

"Socially I find myself distancing myself a little bit." (B9/20)

"Personally, I mentally kind of block myself out and instead start thinking, don't get too close to people, don't be too open. And I start separating myself a couple months in advance. Otherwise it's too emotional. I get really upset. So it's like self preservation." (G27/27)

Felt others acted differently towards them:

"I've become more connected and I think it's the other way around because these people know I'm leaving, they become slightly disconnected with you. So it's sort of like a safety thing. Like a switch is going off and you are not making strong connections I suppose." (C11/28)

"The people that you are with know that it's going to come to an end, so nobody is really putting forth that much effort…. The 6 months after knowing you are moving are probably the worst ones." (U16/25)

"It's tough because everybody is looking ahead, you know, you're constantly making future plans. We are going to take this unit and we're going to tweak it and make future plans for next year and you know you are not going to be a part of that. So it's a challenge sometimes not to be in the loop about things." (G23/27)

Planned for move and next location:

"Once you know you are moving on you kind of take your foot off the gas so to speak… To no fault of anyone, your mind is now split because you are already going. As soon as that happens, thinking about this enormous undertaking in transition that you have coming. So part of your thinking is consumed with planning on how you, a) get out of this country, and b) looking forward to how you are going to get into the next country, settle in, all of those things that go along with that." (C5/28)

"It's really stressful to move. All the things you have to tidy up at the end. And there's all those things that you have to take care of in a set amount of time." (C22/28)

"You've got to leave your apartment, pack your bags, get everything ready, turn in your grades – it's like a very long checklist." (B6/20)

Focused somewhat on the negatives:

"For me I wasn't sad to leave the school [in Switzerland], I was frustrated, it was time to go." (G18/27)

"I watched them last year when [some friends] were leaving here saying they start to hate the school, they start to hate their life and actually I think they don't. They are just making it okay with themselves to leave." (G7/27)

4.3.26 Summary of how experiences change upon making decision to leave

Positives related to the workplace included wanting to leave knowing they did a good job and leave a legacy. Positives on a personal level included maximizing time in a location, positively accepting the decision to move, and embracing change for the future. Less positive reasons related to the workplace included teachers putting in less effort, feeling colleagues or administration treated them differently, or focusing more on the job ahead rather than their current job. Negatives on a personal level included slowing down the pace, disconnecting socially, and focusing more on the parts of the culture or aspects of the job they did not like.

4.3.27 Career pathways of international teachers

After decisions have been made to leave their current location, where do international teachers go? What is the likelihood they will remain in international education, their current international school, or return to their home country? Table 4.10 depicts the pathways of international teachers.

Table 4.10 Future Career Pathways of International Teachers

Future Career Pathways	Will stay in international education			Will go into another sector of education	Will return to home country
	Will stay in same school indefinitely	Will stay in schools for stints of time: 3-4 years; 5-6 years	Frequent fliers/move often		
China	4	14	3	2	5
Germany	15	8	0	1	3
UAE	3	16	2	1	4
Brazil	3	7	2	1	7

In Table 4.10, 45% of international teachers said they would stay in different international schools for periods of time. Fewer teachers said they would remain in their international schools indefinitely (22%), though Germany had the highest percentage of teachers in this category with 15 out of 22 intending to stay in the same international school in Germany. This may have been as a result of several international teachers in Germany who married German citizens, or the fact that the German government also offered tenure to teachers who had taught in Germany for more than two years, as they were then considered civil servants at that point and were guaranteed a job for life. In Brazil, although many teachers would stay in international schools for stints of time, an equal number said they would be retuning home or taking time off from international teaching following their current posts. Many teachers in Brazil named financial concerns and not feeling safe as reasons to leave their current placements.

4.3.28 Will remain in international education

Some teachers presume early on that they will remain in international education. One teacher admitted, "I have thought about Canada, but that means I would have to go back and get courses, take more degrees, take more … I'm just way too tired." (C16/28) Some international teachers will stay for shorter lengths of time (2-3 years), remain for longer periods of time (3-4 years or 5-6 years), or will choose to remain in their current international schools indefinitely.

Will change schools more often, every 2-3 years:

> "We are kind of going year-by-year but we have some feelers out for the next school year. But that's one nice thing about this school is that we also feel that if those didn't work out, we'll stay here–great, no problem." (C5/28)

> "That's something we discussed all the time and it changes daily probably from what we are going to do." (C9/28)

> "Don't know. I don't make plans." (G13/27)

> "That's something we discuss all the time and it changes daily." (C9/28)

Will likely change international schools after periods of time: 3-4 years, 5-6 years:

Staying in schools for stints of time related to children:

> "I think we'll definitely do another stint in Asia. I don't know that it will be China. Then ideally when they [the children] get to middle school I would like to go to Europe. I've talked to superintendents from Europe and they say, "it's great once your kids get to the seventh or eighth grade and then it's okay." (C4/28)

> "When my son gets to eighth grade my daughter will have already graduated, then I might leave – I might. I really feel that right now the school has fit my son like a glove – what would happen if we move to another place? If he's doing well here then he's happy." (C19/28)

> "I think it would be cool to go home one day. I think the travel is amazing and I think after a while it becomes somewhat of a struggle because I think ultimately we want to get to a place where it feels comfortable and it feels like home. To keep packing your stuff, selling your stuff, moving and all of that becomes, 'Oh

my gosh this is crazy. It is our first time doing it with the kids so that is brand-new.' That I can see that being damaging mentally." (U17/25)

Will change locations after stints of time related to the job:

"I am looking to get to the next placement and stay awhile as an assistant principal and then stay there longer." (U25/25)

"It would really have to be a job where we can actually make some money that we could save." (B17/20)

"I think I probably have two more placements in me, but probably not more than that. We are targeting Tanzania, Malawi, or Namibia – those three. I think the rule of Africa is that if you have not really heard much about the country then it's probably just trolling along peacefully." (G7/27)

"I'm allowed to leave Ottawa, Canada for two years and maintain my seniority so I have to go back after my 2 year contract. If I don't do that, the competition in Ottawa is fierce. So there's over 1500 substitutes or supply teachers waiting there and it took me 4 years to get where I am now so I could actually have a job next year if I wanted to in Ottawa. I have passed all the interviews and I'm number 50/1500 teachers and they hire about 100 or 150 teachers a year so I'm almost guaranteed a job next year. But to be honest, I don't know if I want to go back." (U8/25)

"We plan to retire from international teaching. The hard part is, we don't enjoy the job pursuit and the whole fair thing. It's not palatable, so we have to get ourselves geared up for that." (C2/28)

Will likely remain in current international school:

"I wouldn't really want to start all over and want to start learning again. At this point, I don't want to say that I am in the twilight of my career because in many ways I feel that I am at my strongest, but it's also true when you've been out of place long enough. You have a reputation and you have considerable sway. I've been here so long that I don't have to prove myself anymore." (G11/27)

"You can be a king in an international school. You can do that, and then you go back to the States and it's like the rung on the bottom." (G25/27)

"You say you are going back to America and you don't get a job until like August, and that's kind of frightening. You don't know where you could even be and that makes you feel all unsettled." (G25/27)

"The thought of moving again … I don't really … because we are still not really set up and it's going to take just little stuff, having to buy all this stuff all the time. It's exhausting." (U15/25)

4.3.29 Will go into another sector of education

Some international educators may remain overseas or return home, but will go into another sector of education such as management or to pursue a different direction. According to Table 4.7, around 10% of teachers from each country will fall into this category. Retention would depend on if the opportunities they would like to pursue are available in their current location or if moving would better fulfill an opportunity.

"I'm trying to go into a bit more management." (U4/25)

4.3.30 Will likely return to home country

Nearly one-third of overseas teachers will return to their home countries at some point in their careers. Reasons may be related to questioning the decision to be abroad, or may be as a result of professional or family reasons.

"I'm not a permanent international school teacher like a lot of people but it's something that will probably always be an option." (C9/28)

"I haven't decided yet whether or not this is all entirely for me, but I'm definitely going to try one more school, hopefully go somewhere where I can earn a better salary and sort of get some sunshine because I really need to be somewhere that's sunny." (G9/27)

"I would say 2 years but as a foreign hire you lose the foreign benefits after 7 years. Long-term I definitely plan on going home, but because I came into international education with the idea of being in a Spanish-speaking country, that is still something I desire to do so I might go to a Spanish-speaking country before I return to the States." (B13/20)

May return home for reasons related to family (or future family):

"Ultimately I do want to be in Australia or New Zealand. And for me the cutoff point is probably about 31, because by then I want to settle down and see where it goes." (U5/25)

"I definitely want to stay in international teaching until I sort of really need to be at home with parents or whatever." (U24/25)

"If I met someone … I didn't come to meet somebody but I just turned 35 yesterday so the clock is ticking. And I have my parents telling me, 'You know, the longer you are in Brazil the less likely you are going to meet somebody.' I also don't want to go back to California with the hopes of meeting somebody there because then I feel like I'm just going to resent my life. So I might as well just live it up on the beach in Rio and enjoy life to the fullest and hope that aspect of life just works its way in." (B7/20)

4.3.31 Summary of findings of future pathways of international teachers

Some international teachers said they would remain in international education (57%), others would go into other sectors of education (10%), and some may return to their home countries (33%). Teachers made decisions to remain or leave based on personal reasons, family reasons, and professional reasons. In some cases it was a combination of all three. A large percentage of international teachers said they would stay in international teaching but would change schools after 3-4 years or 5-6 years. Some of these reasons were based on family, like when their children might finish a milestone such as elementary or middle school, or for reasons related to the location itself. Most international teachers in China and Germany said they would stay; in the UAE and Brazil about half said they would stay while the other half said they would leave.

4.3.32 Overall summary of Chapter 4.3

International teachers reflected on what basis they made decisions regarding retention in international schools. They expressed their preferences between the school and the country, between personal and professional reasons for remaining, and

anticipated their futures if they were to remain in international education or return to their home countries.

Some teachers expressed more specifically that it was the school, country, or a combination of factors that motivated them to remain in their locations. The majority of international teachers remained for the international school (43%), though a significant number also remained for a combination of the school and the country (25%). The reasons many attributed staying in a school specifically included the school's vision, mission, and philosophy, supportive administration that followed through, sufficient resources, support with curriculum, positive morale, professional development, promotional advancement, support from colleagues, and a degree of voice and autonomy. Reasons for staying in the country (16%) specifically included the location fit, quality of life, feeling safe and comfortable within the culture and country, and location fitting family and life circumstances at the time.

Twenty-five percent attributed both the school and country as reasons for remaining because the school had a direct impact on other aspects of life, including quality of life, location of school and proximity to home country, work-life balance, and having better opportunities for own family overseas. Sixteen percent had other reasons for staying, including friendships, healthcare and benefits, spouse's employment, or to see out their contractual obligations. Though reasons were varied in this section, information can provide insight into the personal motivations of international teachers related to retention.

As teachers listed the reasons related to the school or country in wanting to remain in a location, they also listed some factors as to why they would want to leave. Some reasons included not feeling comfortable in the host country, not wanting to tolerate certain environmental factors, the exchange rate or cost of living affecting the quality of life, negative morale within the school, or timing for when it felt right to leave.

Twenty-six percent of participants ranked the job as what guided their decision to remain in their current posting. Thirty-six percent said their families guided their decisions, including partners, children, or aging parents or family in their home countries. Other aspects that guided decisions were age, quality of life, level of

happiness, and salary and benefits. Salary and benefits were the third highest-ranking reason for remaining in an international school behind family reasons and professional.

Once the international teacher had made the decision to leave, positive and negative consequences occurred on both their personal and professional lives. Positives related to the workplace included wanting to leave knowing they did a good job and leave a legacy. Positives on a personal level included maximizing time in a location, positively accepting the decision to move, and embracing change for the future. Less positive reasons related to the workplace included teachers putting in less effort, feeling colleagues or administration treated them differently, or focusing more on the upcoming job ahead rather than on their current job. On a personal level, negatives included slowing down the pace, disconnecting socially, and focusing more on the negative parts of the culture or aspects of the job they did not like.

With regards to the future pathways of international teachers, 57% said they would remain in international education, 10% would go into other sectors of education, and one-third said they would eventually return to their home countries. A large percentage of international teachers said they would stay in international teaching but would change schools after 3-4 years or 5-6 years. Some of these stints were based on family, like when their children might finish a milestone such as elementary or middle school, or for reasons related to the location itself. Most international teachers in China and Germany said they would stay; in the UAE and Brazil about half said they would stay while the other half said they would leave. Teachers made decisions to remain or leave based on personal and professional reasons. In some cases it was a combination of both.

4.3.33 Development of Ritter's model

All of the categories that emerged in chapters 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 were initially placed on a large sheet of paper (see Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14 Categories mapped out with connections
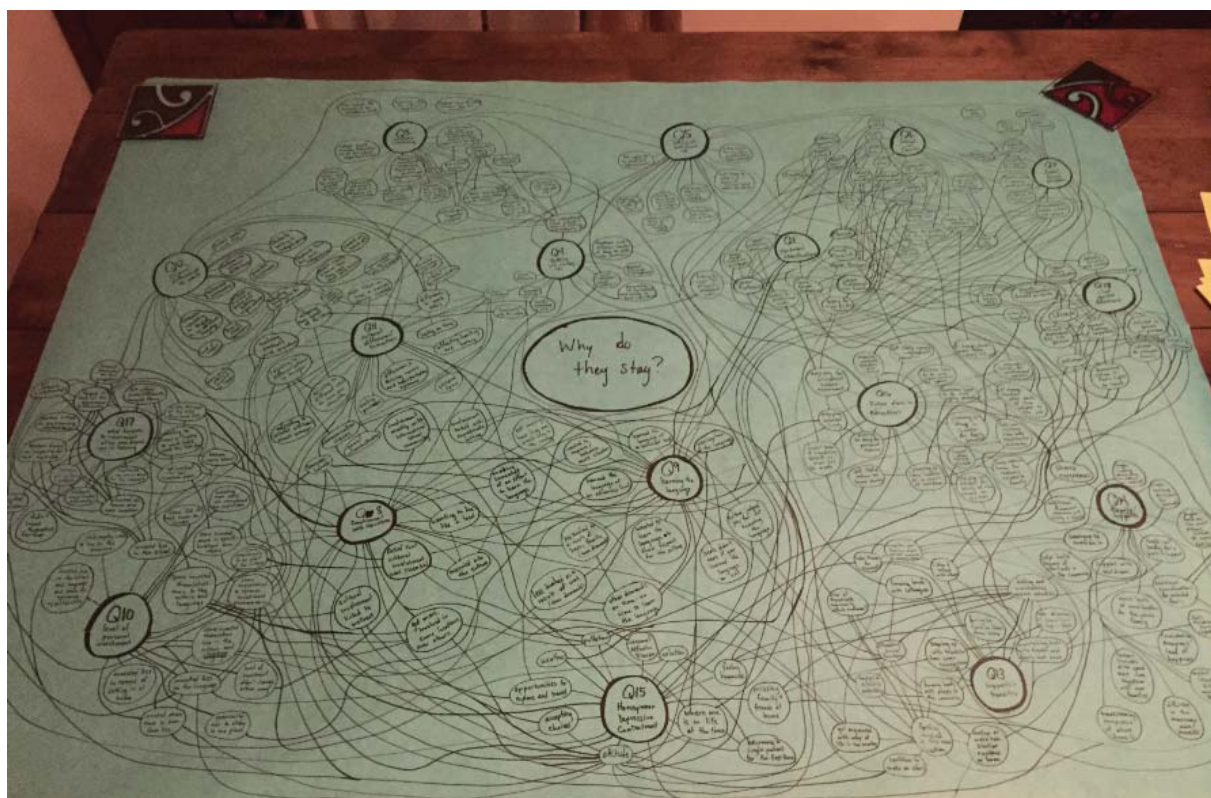
As connections were made between the categories, 12 major themes emerged (see Figure 4.15). These included: school support, length of time it takes to settle in, aspects directly related to the school, personality type and life phase, how investment changes, level of personal investment, cultural distance, cultural involvement, language ability, transitional phases and emotional supports, family, and basis for future pathways and decisions. Themes were determined on the basis of the number of links they had to other categories, thus determining their importance in the research, being firmly grounded in these data.

Figure 4.15 Main themes emerging from the categories
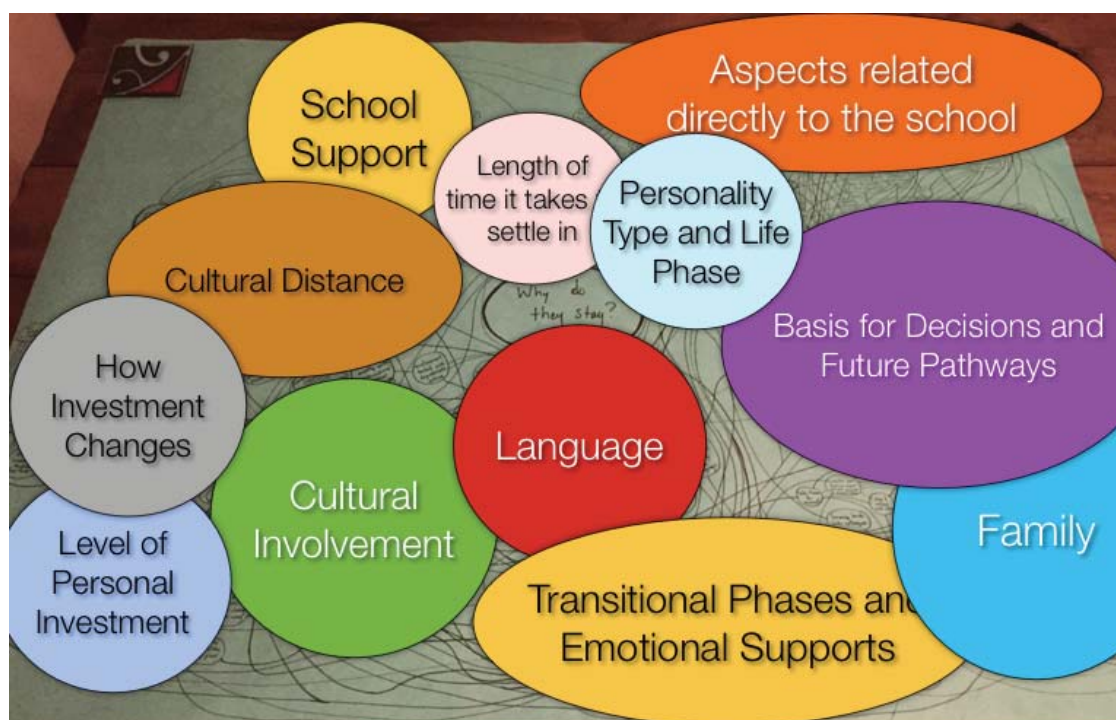
Chapter 4.1 focused on the individual characteristics of the teacher and how they may have the potential to impact retention. Those characteristics included 3 of the 12 main themes that emerged in the research: 1) the personality type of the teacher, 2) the family status of the teacher, and 3) the level of personal investment on the part of the teacher.

Chapter 4.2 addressed 6 of the 12 main themes emerging in the research, including: 1) cultural distance, 2) cultural involvement, 3) ability and willingness to learn the language, 4) length of time it took to settle in both personally and professionally, 5) transitional phases and emotional supports, and 6) support provided by the international school.

Chapter 4.3 examined the remaining 3 themes emerging in the research: 1) aspects related directly to the school, 2) how investment changes, and 3) the basis for decisions and future pathways.

The twelve main themes that emerged in the research were then rearranged to construct the following model of how the themes may impact retention decisions (see Figure 4.16).

Figure 4.16 Reconstruction of the model based on emerging themes
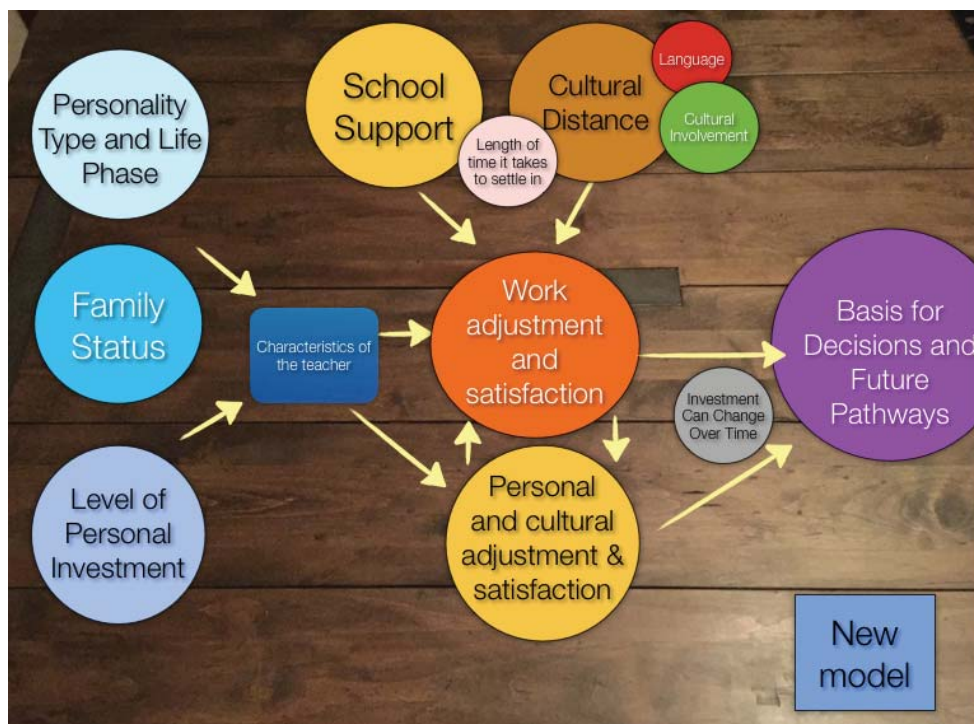
4.3.34 Ritter's model on international teacher retention

The final model developed below is a simplified one of Figure 4.16. Individual characteristics of the teacher shape who the teacher is and from what perspective and angle they will be approaching decisions. Cultural distance and support from the school act as mediators to aspects of the overseas experience that influence both work satisfaction and personal adjustment. The kinds of things the school provides to help support the teacher in aspects of his or her overseas experience are a benefit both to the work place and to the personal adjustment of the teacher. While less can be done

about the cultural distance of the location, the personal motivation on the part of the teacher and the support from the school can mediate the difficulties involved in the experience. The basis for how and why international teachers will make decisions about the future will often be based off of a continuum similar to this model. If there is a breakdown or multiple breakdowns along the continuum, the probability becomes greater that decisions could result in turnover. If aspects fit along the continuum and adequate support is provided, the chances are higher that the teacher would remain in his or her location.

Figure 4.17 Ritter's model of International Teacher Retention
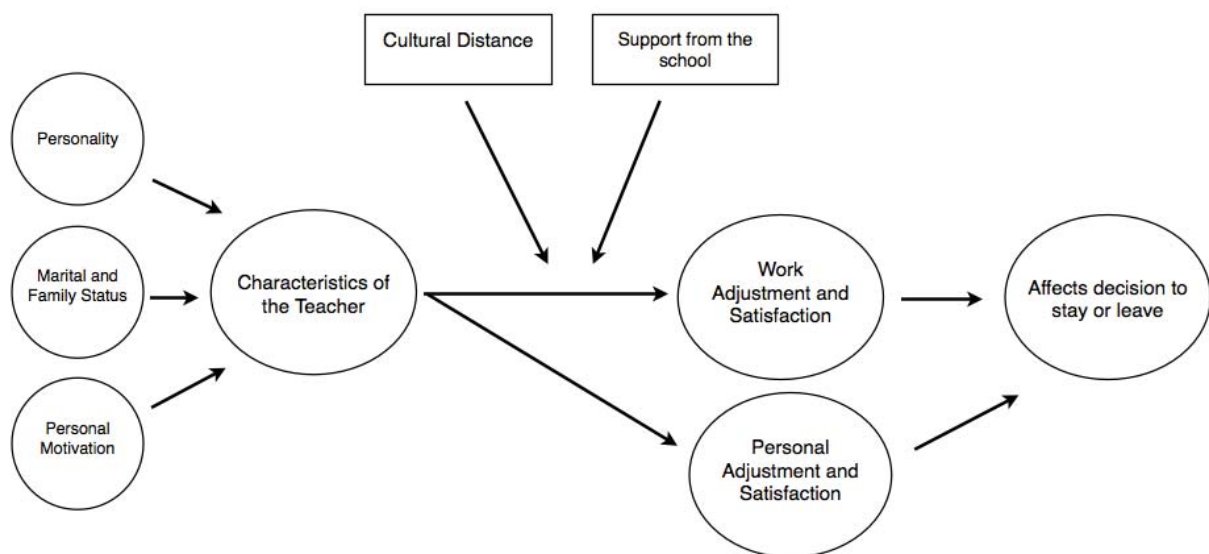
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Organization of this chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the study and summarizes the noteworthy findings, linking previous literature regarding expatriate transition and teacher retention with results from this study. The discussion is divided into three sections and presents implications related to: 1) the individual characteristics of international teachers, 2) the cultural distance, length of time it took to settle in, and level of support provided by the school, and 3) future decisions of international educators. This chapter includes theoretical and practical implications from the outcomes, limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Rationale for the study

Timmer (2003) found that the cost of replacing an international teacher ranged from 20-50% of the leaving teacher's salary. Attrition is costly to schools (Barnes et al., 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Mancuso, 2010) among other consequences. It was therefore important to design a study that would focus on the factors related to international teacher retention in an effort to better understand why teachers would remain in their locations.

5.3 International teachers and the overseas experience

Expatriate teachers have been described as self-confident individuals who value change, self-reliance, and qualities allowing them to adapt and adjust easily. They are good problem-solvers, competent, reflective, motivated, independent, prepared for cultural differences, and tend to adjust quickly if accompanied by a partner or family (Gillies, 2001; Horton, 1987; Zilber, 2009). It seems that overseas adjustment has 3 dimensions: adjustment to the environment, psychological adjustment, and adjustment

to the work situation (Boncori & Vine, 2014). Some expatriates can be well adjusted to one dimension but poorly adjusted in another (Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013; Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005; Puck, Kittler, & Wright, 2008).

5.4 The study

The aim of this study was to analyze influences on international teacher retention and in particular, how factors of culture and language, personal motivations, and other factors influenced the decision to remain in or leave a location.

Basic demographic data were collected on each participant (Appendix C), including gender, marital status, number of dependents, age, highest degree obtained, and how many years the participant had been a teacher both in their home country and internationally. A semi-structured face-to-face interview of 18 questions (Appendix D) was also used to collect data, followed by a questionnaire (Appendix E, F) adapted from a previous study by Mancuso (2010) on international teacher retention (Appendix G).

The researcher contacted international school principals and directors in four countries to see if they would allow their teachers to take part in the study. The researcher paid for travel expenses and additional costs related to meeting the participants, as the researcher felt that meeting each international teacher in person provided a more trusting environment and would elicit more open responses than distance interviews or questionnaires alone might provide. Interviews occurred on school grounds and were during school hours. Audio recordings of these interviews were made and later transcribed by the researcher. A copy of each transcript was sent to each interviewee separately by email. The participant then had the opportunity to cross check responses to add, change, or remove any responses at that time. As the questionnaire did not produce significant findings, only the results from the interviews were reported in the results chapters.

This study used a grounded theory approach as the research methodology and operated within both a mixed methods research paradigm and an interpretive research paradigm. Glaser and Strauss (1968) discovered and developed the grounded theory

method where theory is generated from categories and themes discovered in the data. Using the transcripts, data analyses were carried out by being coded multiple times. Categories were then developed and eventually overarching themes emerged. By using Charmaz' (2009) grounded theory analysis process (see Figure 3.9), open codes from interview transcripts were grouped together into categories, then axial coding (creating structure to the categories), followed by theoretical coding (discerning overarching themes), and finally a coherent theory that was grounded in the data was developed.

Figure 5.1 Inverse Data Analysis Pyramid on Developing a Theory
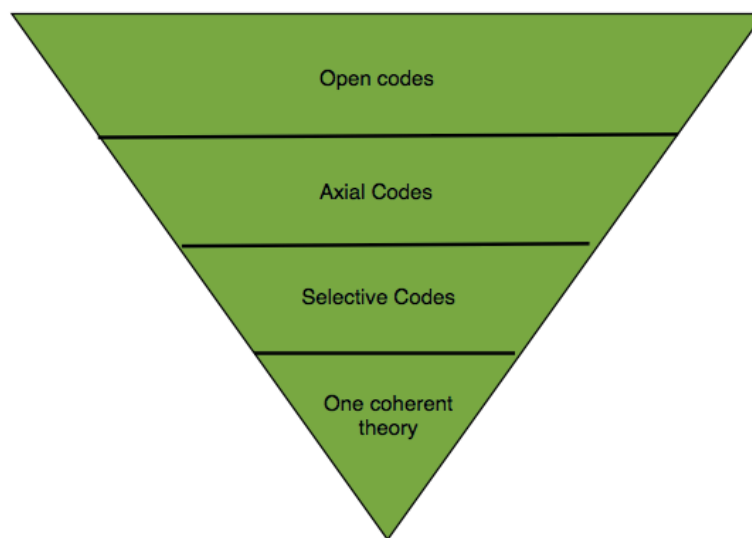
The next part of the chapter will discuss each research question and relate findings with previous literature.

5.5 Research Question 1:

1) How do individual characteristics of international teachers impact retention?

Mavericks versus stayers:

The interviews discussed with teachers whether they were mavericks who changed countries frequently or teachers who stayed longer in their locations. The results showed that more international teachers were stayers than goers. Hardman (2001) initially developed six categories to understand the kinds of teachers he was managing in his international schools. He said there was no classification of international teacher better or worse than another, as each category of teacher had something to contribute. As participants responded to which of Hardman's classifications they belonged to, several believed they fit into either more than one of the categories or changed categories over time. This finding contradicted Hardman that there were only these six kinds of teachers within the international schools. Over time, who one was and what one wanted seemed to change. This was not factored in to the initial classifications. Chandler (2010) found that for most international educators "it's more than sticking pins in a map for their professional future" (p. 225).

This study supports the findings of Mancuso (2010) who found that significant predictors of mobility were age, years of experience in the same school, years of teaching experience overall, wanderlust, and whether their spouse was a teacher. The findings in this study are inconsistent with the findings of Roberts, Mancuso, and Yoshida (2011), who found that international teachers would stay when they feel satisfied with salary and school leadership. Twenty-four percent of participants in this study said salary had an impact but twenty-six percent said the job, vision, and administration influenced their decisions on retention. Another thirty-six percent of participants in this research study said family guided their decisions among other personal reasons, including age, quality of life, personal growth, and level of happiness. Salary and benefits ranked third as the basis for guiding decisions related to retention behind personal reasons and professional reasons.

Family:

Of the 100 participants in the study, nearly two-thirds came overseas with a family or partner. Some of these teachers said this was an immeasurable help in terms of support. Those who had children said it helped them to create a new layer of contacts in the community. These results were in line with other research showing that once overseas, expatriate partners and families relied on each other more than when they were in their home countries (Lazarova, Westman, & Shaffer, 2010). These studies also showed that teachers remained in locations if conditions were suitable for themselves and their children (Chandler, 2010; Zilber, 2009). Richardson (2006) found that often parents wanted to take their kids overseas to enrich their lives, allow them to develop other languages, and have available better educational opportunities. The research in this study supports such previous findings.

Having a family could be a great support but teachers also reported that there were disadvantages of having a family while overseas. Lee & Kartika (2014) found that spouse and family were the major expatriate stresses on foreign assignments. International teachers had to be more considerate of their partners and children's needs than if they were in the comfort of their home country environment with increased levels of support (Brown, 2008). These variables impacted retention if the conditions were less suitable for their families (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).

Personally investing in the experience:

Ho (2012) found that successful expatriates who choose to work overseas contained five qualities: 1) personality characteristics, 2) motivation to work overseas, 3) ability to overcome challenges related to overseas assignments, 4) competency, and 5) understanding their role and identity within their overseas assignment. In this research, findings paralleled some of Ho's findings in that certain personality characteristics of having the motivation to work overseas were also present in international teachers. Those who came with the right personality and motivation invested themselves in their

experiences. The majority of teachers agreed that they invested themselves more if they knew they were staying in the location. If they were leaving, they would tend to disconnect, though some teachers said they gave their best effort no matter what.

Ren, Yunlu, Shaffer, and Fodchuk (2014) found that expatriate thriving occurred when expatriates felt a sense of vitality and energy in both their environment and their workplace. Expatriates who were willing to persist in a culture and who were active participants in their own adjustment processes tended to thrive and stay longer in locations (Friedman, Dyke & Murphy, 2009; Ren et al., 2014; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). These findings were also true in this research. Findings also supported the research of Huang, Chi, and Lawler (2012) who found that living adjustment is positive to his or her degree of extroversion and openness to experience.

5.6 Research Question 2:

> 2) How do cultural distance, the length of time it takes the international teacher to settle in, and the support provided by the school affect the overall experience and the decision to stay or go?

Cultural distance:

Previous researchers have reported that cultural differences can affect both expatriate adjustment and the length of the assignment (Chang, 2007; Froese & Poltikorpi, 2012; Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013; Boncori & Vine, 2014; Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013; Tan, Hartel, Panipucci & Strybosch, 2005). While Coulter and Abney (2009) found that international teachers have statistically lower levels of burnout than teachers in their home countries, cultural differences were present and caused frustration in some cases.

In the present study, some teachers reported a number of differences including driving norms, attitudes toward women, language, personal space, and other cultural differences. Cultural differences were stronger in some locations over others. The most cultural frustrations were recorded in China, which had a considerable amount of

cultural distance. This supports the findings of Boncori and Vine (2014) who also found that expatriates in China experience the greatest number of cultural differences. However, a surprising finding was that international teachers in Germany also recorded a high number of cultural frustrations, a country with seemingly less cultural distance. The frustrations in Germany often had to do with the language, as some felt that although Germans knew a certain level of English, expatriates were expected to speak in German. Other international teachers were less affected by cultural differences.

Cultural differences in the workplace:

Positive expatriate adjustment is significant on expatriate performance (Chen et al., 2010; Lee & Kartika, 2014). Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun & Lepak (2005) found that past international experience moderates the relationship between current assignment and general work adjustment, and that work adjustment directly affects expatriate early return intentions. Some teachers in the study said that cultural differences among parents, students, and colleagues affected them. It was not so much that the cultural difference was difficult in and of itself, it was often that it exposed a difference in values between the people of the host culture and the values of the individual international teacher, which resulted in cultural frustrations in the workplace.

Schoepp (2011) found that the UAE was surveyed to be the second most desirable expatriate location in the world, but that motivations to leave were as a result of matters internal to institutions and lack of voice in institutional governance. This proved true in this study for some international teachers in the UAE. More teachers in the UAE and Brazil had future plans to return to their home countries than international teachers currently working in China and Germany.

Involvement in the host culture:

Nolan and Morley (2014) found that person-environment fit had to do with the degree of fit an individual has with various dimensions of the host environment. The

interviews revealed that most teachers got involved in the culture to some extent except for international teachers in the UAE who had less cultural involvement. Investment had to do with cultural distance, willingness to integrate into the host country environment, and getting involved regardless of the length of time spent in the country. Some teachers wanted to get involved and made an effort to do this, while others did not do this as much. Huang, Chi, and Lawler (2012) found that openness to experience positively correlated with overseas expatriate adjustment. More specifically in an international school context, Chandler (2010) determined that international schools keep teachers longer when they enjoy their locations.

Learning the language:

Learning the language while overseas often had to do with the motivation of the individual teacher, the perception of the language, the support from the host culture when trying to use the language, and how essential it was to survive with it. International teachers in Germany and Brazil learned the language at more advanced levels than international teachers in China or the UAE. Seventy-percent of international teachers learned the language at intermediate or advanced levels in Germany, as well as fifty-five percent of international teachers in Brazil.

German proved difficult to learn, as did Mandarin, but the way the two countries responded to international teachers' language attempts were quite different. In China, the locals celebrated when foreigners attempted the language. In Germany, the locals criticized and perfected foreigners' attempts to use the language. Puck, Kittler, and Wright (2008) said that foreign language has a significant impact on foreign expatriate adjustment, which seemed to be the case in Germany. Chen et al. (2010) found that more expatriate support is needed in places where there is more cultural distance.

Length of time it took to settle in to the culture:

Previous researchers have found that adjustment to a new country varied depending on if the country was more culturally similar or distant to where the expatriate was originally from (Chen et.al, 2010; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). Boncori and Vine (2014) found that China was the most foreign of all locations for expatriates regarding cultural distance. However, results from this study revealed that many international teachers who worked in Germany also had a difficult time settling into the culture even though many came from culturally similar backgrounds. Similar to this study, Shaffer and Harrison (1998) found that living conditions were a significant predictor of cultural adjustment. This may have been a factor in that some teachers in Germany reported that apartments were difficult to set up, the culture was not perceived to be warm and friendly, and the language barrier often prevented a smooth transition.

The interviews suggested that settling into a location was easier if teachers received help from the school and also if they were the type of person who had the personality or ability to settle in by themselves. Those who settled in slowly talked about problems adjusting to the culture, the language, making friends, and experiencing general feelings of unhappiness. These results, especially in regard to language, were consistent with other studies that found learning the language was essential to adjustment and that those unable to communicate in the local language tended to feel isolated, frustrated, or ostracized (Boncori & Vine, 2014). Brown (2008) also found that those who learned the language improved their coping capacities over time and thrived in international environments. International teachers in Germany and Brazil learned the language at more advanced levels than did international teachers in China and the UAE. This might possibly be because Chinese and Arabic were perceived to be more difficult to learn or less like their native language.

The honeymoon, depression, contentment cycle:

The interview data, when analysed, showed that a number of teachers experienced ups and downs during transition, including phases of honeymoon, depression, and contentment as described in Joslin, (2002). This was similar for most of the teachers in each of the four countries so adjustment took different lengths of time regardless of location. The highest number experiencing a honeymoon upon arrival was in Brazil (95% of the sample). The highest percentage of teachers who began experiences with a depression phase were in China and the UAE (25%), though teachers in Germany had expressed it took the longest length of time to settle in long term. This was similar to the findings of Friedman, Dyke, and Murphy (2009) who found that adjustment processes could take many years, the average being around 3 years and that adjustment may not always be a continuous process but instead be a discontinuous process of gains and losses. Some teachers reported that adjustment was easier if they kept a connection with home (e.g., TV shows, emails to family), made friends with colleagues, or got out into the community.

Orientations:

Some teachers in the study settled in quickly and mentioned they felt supported by the school; others said they settled slowly because it took a long time to adjust to the new curriculum and ways of doing things. Some teachers thought orientations were very important in adjusting to the new culture and position but others were not so concerned. Boncori and Vine (2014) found that three levels of adjustment are necessary to adapt to one's overseas environment: 1) general adjustment, 2) social adjustment, and 3) work adjustment. This study supported these findings in that orientations help set teachers up for a smooth transition personally, professionally, and culturally – and teachers desired all three levels of support. While some international school orientations sought to make sure teachers were set up professionally, other orientations were lacking in addressing

teachers' personal needs, which could cause spillover effects into the workplace and vice versa.

5.7 Research Question 3:

> 3) What factors ultimately guide international teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their locations?

Remaining in location for school or country:

Borman and Dowling (2008) found that teachers remain in schools because of the school's structures and norms, not as a result of stipends, bonuses, or salaries. However, the findings in this research suggest that if salaries were too low, there was a direct link with turnover. If international teachers were making enough money, their decisions tended to then shift and focus on other aspects of the job or international experience as the basis for making their decisions on retention. However, if finances were not adequate they had to leave (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Guarino et al., 2006; Hanushek et al., 2001).

Only a small proportion of international teachers in this study remained for the location alone. For most teachers the school (or a combination of both the country and school) was the most important factor in remaining in the location. Many realized there was no perfect school or location, and that idealism was generally not the goal in making decisions in relation to staying or going. It was about what fit each individual best.

The ideal school:

When asked about the ideal school in terms of wanting to stay teachers indicated that it had to have a philosophy that fit with them, a positive atmosphere, and one that

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gave support. Chandler (2010) found that teachers ideally stay if they like their location, Zilber (2009) noted that international teachers remain in locations if conditions are suitable for themselves and their families. Moreover, Odland and Ruzicka (2009) found that international teachers stay not only when their personal circumstances fit with the location, school, and life phase, but also when they are adequately compensated. This study supports Odland and Ruzicka's findings in that schools that did not adequately support teachers with regards to salary and benefits experienced higher rates of turnover. This was true for Brazil and for some schools in the UAE.

Future plans: Decision to stay or go:

Teachers were asked about their plans to stay or leave their locations. Those who planned to stay liked working overseas, liked the lifestyle, some had tenure (Germany), and for some it suited their families. Those planning to leave wanted to stop moving around and settle back in their home countries so they thought it would be better for their family to return. Teachers were more likely to move on in the UAE and Brazil and less likely to do that in China and Germany. It was hard to know why this was the case though the demographics of the teachers indicated that international teachers in those two countries were younger and held fewer qualifications so it might have been that they were earlier in their careers and wanted to gain more personal and professional experiences.

Most participants in this study had remained in international education but changed international schools and locations after periods of time, such as after 3-4 years or 5-6 years. Sometimes the reason for this was that if they had family, they would decide to transition after the children had finished certain milestones or grade levels. Chandler (2010) supported that most international teachers would change locations several times throughout their careers. Teachers made decisions to stay or leave based on personal reasons, family reasons, or a combination of both. Stahl and Caligiuri (2005) found that expatriates who stayed in culturally similar countries tended to remain longer in their

assignments. This seemed to be true of Germany, as the average international teacher in Germany remained there for ten years.

When asked about future plans on a professional level, teachers mentioned reasons related to the job and whether they felt supported or had opportunities to grow. On a professional level, teachers mentioned their family as important, whether their spouse was happy at work, and whether their children's education was adequate. Some claimed that they would stay because they were getting older and might find it hard to move to another position. Others mentioned lifestyle as a reason to stay and still others admitted that salary was also a reason to stay, making the experience worthwhile. Teachers who wanted to move on mentioned travel opportunities or a feeling that it was just time to go.

Regarding future plans and decisions, many of the teachers were planning on remaining in international teaching, supporting the literature which found that international teachers were more likely to remain in the international field than return to their home country to teach (Coulter & Abney, 2009). Teachers who wanted to stay seemed to be satisfied with their overseas jobs and lives. Job satisfaction is significantly crucial on retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Chapman, 1983; Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Dinham & Scott, 1998; Guarino et al., 2006; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Shen et al., 2012; Woods & Weismer, 2004).

5.8 Ritter's Model of International Teacher Retention

Ritter's model developed from this study begins with personal characteristics of teachers: personality, marital or family status, and personal motivations (see Figure 5.2). This model was an adaptation of the Chen et al. (2012) model on job performance. However, instead of analyzing job performance in this study, the current model was constructed to analyze the factors and influences on international teacher retention.

Figure 5.2 Ritter's Model of International Teacher Retention
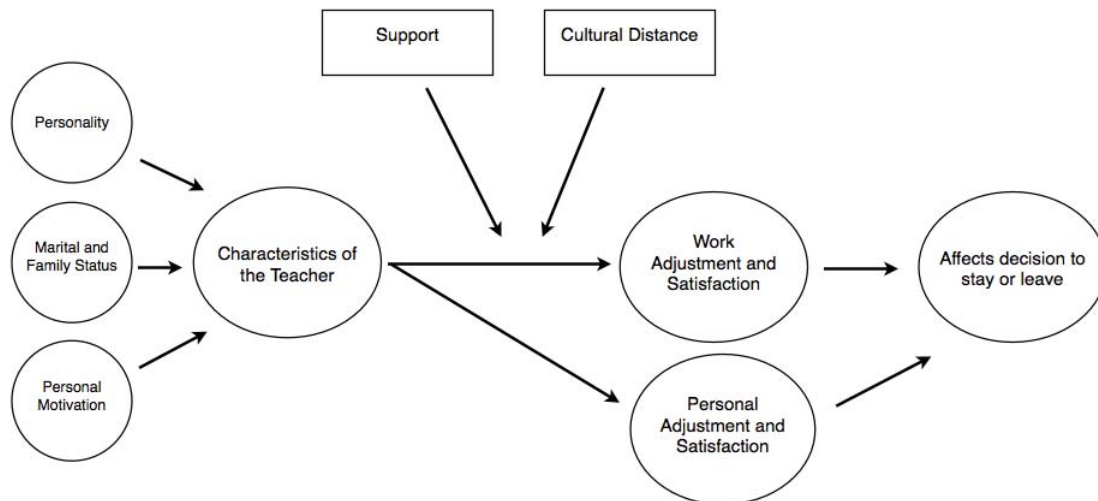
This model argues that factors affecting retention for international employees are at the personal level (e.g., the employee's personality, age, and marital status); at the cultural level (e.g., the extent to which there is cultural distance); at the support level (e.g. the extent to which the employer provides support, orientation to the new position, and adequate working conditions. When these factors are positive then the employee will experience both personal and work satisfaction, predicting the teacher will stay in their international school teaching position longer. If there is a breakdown along the continuum, individual factors could be isolated to determine what is causing the teacher to want to leave. Schools have the most control over the support factor, but cultural distance can be mediated by the school as well, both in terms of support they provide at orientation and throughout the year.

5.9 Practical Implications

Schools and their administration tend to focus on the aspects related to retention that are within the school's control: the level of support they provide and general adjustment to the workplace. However, with so many peripheral factors affecting

decisions related to retention, there is often little focus on the other aspects of settling in. Are families adjusted and happy? Are there ways to minimize cultural distance, whether by providing language training, infusing cultural knowledge, or by helping provide teachers with opportunities to integrate into the culture? Are there enough social opportunities provided where teachers start to feel they fit in? Regarding the personality of the teachers and their personal motivations for being there, if for example, the teacher was a career professional who was career driven, are there enough professional challenges in place to keep him or her there? Did the teacher suffer from wanderlust so no matter what the school did they would leave anyway? This could be looked at through the lens of teacher personality and personal motivation. The characteristics of the teacher are what the schools have the least control unless they were hiring specific types of teachers (e.g. teaching couples with families or singles) who may possess similar personal motivations. Multiple factors can affect the decision to remain in a school or not.

Teachers can also look at themselves through the model and see if they are doing what they can to adjust well. Are they making the effort to get involved in the culture? Are they seeking other forms or support, forming relationships with colleagues, maintaining strong bonds with family and friends back home? Are they making an effort to learn the language? Are they asking for help when there were problems? It should not be overlooked that teachers, too, have a responsibility to make an effort on their own adjustment.

5.10 Limitations

One limitation of the study was that the interview data were mostly collected on teachers. The comments of more school directors and principals may have given a different perspective to those given by the teachers.

Second, the literature on international teacher retention was quite limited so the researcher had to draw from literature on teacher retention in national contexts and

literature regarding non-education expatriate transitions, then bring the two together. It underscores the need for more literature in this area.

Third, this study had a relatively small sample of teachers and this made it difficult to generalize findings across settings. A representative sample was not possible given that there are over 5,000 international schools (Keeling, 2010) and nearly 300,000 international teachers (Gaskell, 2012). The conclusions and theory that emerged from this study were firmly grounded in these limited data. Caution should be used when generalizing the results to a wider population. The findings in this study reflect a mere snapshot in a single school year of what will probably be an ongoing international teaching career.

Fourth, teachers may not have felt they could speak as freely as they might as a result of audio recordings made (for transcription). Responses may not have been as open or accurate as they would if the researcher knew the participants for longer or collected the responses in another way.

Fifth, the data were collected during short visits to countries so that the responses may have been specific to the time of data collection (e.g. having an interview in October versus June) and teachers may have responded differently if interviews were at another point of time in the year.

Sixth, the interviews were usually 45 minutes in length and this may not have been long enough to gain as much in-depth data from participants. Longer interviews or multiple interviews over time could generate different or more in-depth responses.

Seventh, the teachers who volunteered to be interviewed may not have been a representative sample of teachers at the schools. A random sample of schools and teachers could have provided a more representative sample.

Eighth, the teachers in the study were only working in four countries. As this may not have been representative of the range of international schools that are located across the world, it could be interesting to replicate the study in different parts of the world.

5.11 Future Research

This study used a relatively small sample. To better understand the limits and generalizability of the findings, the research should be replicated with different samples. Perhaps have fewer participants but remain longer and become more involved in understanding each teacher.

The data in this study were based on interviews and in that sense indicated trends but not as much causality. To give more certainty about causality it would require a longitudinal study or an experimental study to see which variables were most likely to predict retention of staff. An interesting extension of this work might be to create a longitudinal design and see how international teachers' responses change over time in different international contexts.

Exit interviews are sometimes carried out when an international teacher is leaving a school. It might be interesting to research how conducting exit interviews with teachers at a different point in time, perhaps just before it is time to sign contracts, in order to determine how international schools might retain individuals before they make the decision to change schools to see if the decision is more linked to their current school or if they are leaving for different reasons. It might also be interesting to see how longer or shorter contract lengths could affect both mindset and involvement of teachers and ultimately how contract lengths do or do not link with retention.

Regarding the level of support schools provide and teachers receive, it might be an interesting study to determine perceived support (as felt by the teacher) compared with support provided (by the school) and see how the two perceptions do and do not align. A similar study conducted with principals of international schools would give another perspective on the experiences of teachers and what principals think would be major factors in retention.

5.10 Conclusions

This study extended the literature by underscoring influences of international teachers' decisions to remain in international schools. Reasons were multifaceted and complex, but were often more than just professional reasons alone.

Many of the participants found that working in a new culture was a major challenge. Many teachers went through a three-phase stage of adjustment in a new culture: honeymoon, depression, and contentment. Difficulties to adjusting in a new school and culture impacted how well a teacher settled in. Learning the language seemed to help both in the adjustment period as well as in the long term, and involvement with the host culture grounded the teacher in his or her location. Teachers who stayed connected with home, got involved in the new culture, and connected socially seemed to adapt best. The support schools provided could mediate cultural distance and help the teacher transition successfully.

The decision to stay at a school or leave was also related to personal or intrinsic characteristics of the teacher. Hardman's (2001) model of teacher personalities seemed important in determining if a teacher would stay or leave a school. Some teachers were in the maverick category of moving more often from one country to the next but several others were career professionals who were motivated by professional opportunities or career professionals with family who wanted to settle and tended to stay longer in locations. The working conditions and culture of the school were very important in terms of settling in, especially if there was a good fit between the values of the teacher and the values of the school. Teachers coming in with the mindset to be involved and be connected seemed to thrive better, and those who made it through the first contract and continued to put forth effort were more likely to connect to the school and the culture, potentially increasing the length of time they remained overall. It seemed an advantage to have a partner and/or to have children in that this helped to bring about more connection to work and culture through extra layers of support and contacts, though it was determined that there could be disadvantages with having a partner or family overseas as well.

Theoretical insights include how experiences of these international teachers fitted with the Chen et al. (2010) model of employee retention, and the data also fitted with the Joslin (2002) model of honeymoon, depression, and contentment. Transitional phases seemed to be something that most international teachers went through. Settling into a new location was mediated by the level of help offered, which included good orientation programs, opportunities for teachers to connect with colleagues, and opportunities to connect with the culture. It took time to settle in and the longer teachers stayed the more likely they were to thrive both in the school and in the culture, especially if the country was more culturally distant from their home country.

Salary and benefits were among the main reasons for remaining in a school; however, they tended to fall below personal reasons and job satisfaction. If salary was not enough to live off of, then salary became the driving force behind decision-making related to retention. It was found that approximately one-third of international teachers will return to their home countries over time, ten percent will pursue other avenues of education, and over half of international teachers will continue with their overseas careers, many changing schools after periods of time such as 3-4 years or 5-6 years. Results from this study support Mancuso (2010) who argued that overseas schools should spend less on recruitment and more on retention. International schools can use these findings to become more aware of the motivators present in overseas teachers and levels of support they currently provide in order to focus the support needed in both the school and location.

Overall, the factors that affected retention decisions were the personal characteristics of the teacher, the cultural distance of the country, and the support provided by the school, affecting both work and personal adjustment and ultimately, the decision to stay or go.

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Appendix A: International School Head/Principal Information Sheet

Information Sheet
Principal or Head of School

Date: _____

Dear International School Head or Principal,

Title of Study
Why do they stay? An analysis of factors influencing retention of international teachers in international schools

My name is Alicia Ritter, and I am an international teacher at _____ in Beijing, China. I am a candidate for the PhD program at Massey University in Albany, New Zealand. I am conducting a research study to investigate the reasons for retention of international teachers in international schools.

Brief summary: Background to the study

Research (e.g., Mancuso et al., 2010) suggests that teachers who **stay** in an international school are more likely to be those who:

1. are in early or late career,
2. do not have a teaching spouse,
3. have more than 7 years of experience teaching in that particular school,
4. are satisfied with salary,
5. are satisfied with school leadership,
6. are in schools that encourage staff to share governance (distributed leadership)

Location of the school may also be important (Chandler, 2010). Factors that do not seem to matter are gender, age, marital status, number of children, qualifications, or years teaching overseas. These data suggest practical implications for schools who wish to retain staff. One is to provide financial reward. Another is to provide transformational and inspirational leadership. Another is to sell location to teachers so that they really feel they are working in the best possible place. Another is in terms of hiring, to avoid mid-career teachers, and those with a teaching spouse. While these findings are compelling, there may be theoretical flaws in that the results come from questionnaire surveys rather than face-to-face interviews. In a real-time interview, other factors may emerge that can provide reasons for staying in a job that might not come through in a written questionnaire. For example, while location appears to be an important reason to stay in a school, it might be that this factor is more important in the initial "honeymoon period" of working and not important at a later stage (Chandler, 2010). A real-time interview can tease out these complexities. The value of the present study in terms of theory is that it will give a more in depth coverage of the reasons why teachers choose to say in a school. The present study will serve wither to confirm some of the reasons already known, or may add some complexity to them. The researcher expects the theory to build as she collects data, using a grounded theory approach.

The research question for the study is
1-How do their experiences of living overseas affect their decisions to stay overseas?

Procedure
In this study, I will interview 100 international teachers in China, Germany, United Arab Emirates, and Chile, to ask them why they have stayed teaching overseas in international schools and to find out about their experiences as an international teacher.
Invitation to participate

I would like to ask your permission to interview teachers in your school. If your school would be willing, I would like for you to forward an email to your staff so that you those who are interested in participating may contact you or me directly. I will also ask that if potential respondents reply, that you make your selections of recruitment on the basis of balancing genders, ethnicities, marital status, and ages so that a variety of responses and perspectives can be ensured. I will provide the email for you to forward on to staff so that they may simply respond if they are interested in participating and we can arrange a mutually convenient time. I will also attach a copy of the participant information sheet giving them a clearer understanding of the research aims.

Title of email: Willing to Share Your Experiences as an International Educator?

My name is Alicia Ritter and I am a PhD student conducting a study on why educators remain in international teaching. I am looking particularly at what motivates them to remain in a particular location or country, how they adjust culturally to various international locations and how that impacts their international living and teaching experiences.

Would you be interested in participating in this study? This would involve a one-time, face-to-face interview lasting 30-40 minutes, which would happen before or after school, during your lunch break, or during a single planning period, and would be followed by a 5-minute questionnaire. If you would be interested please see the following attachments and reply to: alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com to schedule an interview time for the week of _____. I look forward to meeting you and hearing about your experiences as an international educator.

Kind regards,
Alicia Ritter
alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com

Procedure
After recruitment, I will respond to the participants with a copy of the questions I will ask them in the interview, and also let them know there will be a 5-minute survey to complete following the interview.

Data management and confidentiality
I assure you and your teachers the strictest confidentiality. The report of the study will have no data that can identify you or your school. When the data are collected, they will be stored in a confidential file until analysis. I will keep data files for 5 years and then destroy them.

I will send you and your staff a summary of the findings of the study.

If you or your staff has any questions about this study, please contact me at alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com. You may also contact my supervisor, Professor Tom Nicholson (t.nicholson@massey.ac.nz).

I would really appreciate your participation, but whether or not you take part is completely up to you. I eagerly await your reply.

Kind regards,
Alicia Ritter
alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 12/078 If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Ralph Bathurst, Chair, Massey University Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone +64 09 414 0800 – 9539, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix AA: Information Sheet for Participants

Title of study
Why do they stay? An analysis of factors influencing retention of international teachers in international schools

Hello, my name is Alicia Ritter. I am an international teacher in Beijing, China. I am also a candidate for the PhD program at Massey University in Albany, New Zealand. The topic of my thesis is an analysis of factors influencing retention of international teachers in international schools.

The survey
The purpose of this survey is to find out why you have decided to stay teaching in international schools and to ask you about your experiences as an international teacher.
Your principal has randomly recruited you to participate in this study. Whether or not you participate is completely up to you.

If you choose to participate, this will involve a one-time, face-to-face interview, either in person or via Skype, which could happen before or after school, during your lunch break, or during a single planning period. Interview questions will cover topics related to why you remain in international teaching, what motivates you to remain in a particular location or country, and how you adjust culturally to various international locations and how that impacts your international living and teaching experience. The interview will take between 20-30 minutes and will be followed by a 5-minute questionnaire. I will record the interview so that I can transcribe your responses afterwards.

Please reply either to your principal or to me at alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com if you are interested in participating in this study and we will mutually schedule a time that is convenient for you.

Confidentiality
Any information you provide will be completely anonymous. I will keep the interview data and questionnaire data in a secure place for five years and then it will be destroyed. You and other teachers may withdraw your responses at any time on or before 8 June 2013. If you are interested after the study is complete, I can email you summary of the findings. I will also offer an email summary of the findings to all the other participants and to the principals of the international schools involved.

If you have any questions or wish to know more about the research please don't hesitate to contact me at alicia-in-new-zealand@hotmail.com. You may also contact my supervisor Professor Tom Nicholson at t.nicholson@massey.ac.nz.
_____
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application   12 / 078 . If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, **please contact Dr Ralph Bathurst, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 X9539**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
International School Teacher

Title of Project: Analysis of Factors Influencing Retention of International Teachers

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of International Educator: _____

Date: _____

Full Name - printed: _____

Appendix C: Demographic Data

First Name: _____   Last Name: _____

Nationality: _____   Current Country of Employment: _____

Gender: ___ Male   ___ Female

Marital Status: __Never Married __Married __Separated __Divorced __Widowed

If married, is your spouse also an international school teacher? ___ Y ___ N ____ NA

Dependents living with you: __ N ___ Y, if yes, how many? ____

Your Age: 20's ____   30's ____   40's ____   50's ____   60's ____

Highest Degree Obtained: ___ Bachelors ___ Masters ___ Doctorate

Personal email address for future contact:

Name of School	Country	Years of Service

How many **years** have you:
____ worked as a teacher
____ worked as a teacher in international schools
____ worked in your current school

Appendix D: Interview Schedule:

Interview Schedule:

1. Please describe for me your experiences so far as an international educator. (How did you end up in international teaching?)

2. Which of the following best describes you? (Use Hardman's 6 classifications).

3. Tell me about the orientations and welcome weeks you've experienced in international schools? (Did that or how did that contribute to longevity in that school?)

4. How long in a new location did it take before you felt settled in both culturally and in your everyday life? (And how long did that affect how long you stayed?)

5. How long did it take you to feel settled in your teaching in each international school you've worked in?

6. What would you say contributes most in your decision to remain in a particular school or location? Is it more the school or the country that keeps you there?

7. What kind of ideal school or situation would make you stay in a school or location?

8. Do you actively get involved in the host culture in the various places you've lived?

9. Do you try to learn the language in each country you've worked in?

10. Do you find that you get more involved with the host culture and invest yourself more when you know you will be in a location longer?

11. What are some of the cultural frustrations you've experienced while living abroad and how have you handled those?

12. How do you find that cultural subtleties and differences affect or challenge your teaching?

13. What supports do you find help the transient lifestyle or help to minimize the feeling of one?

14. If applicable, how does having a family help while living overseas?

15. One researcher noted that cultural adjustment falls into 3 phases: 1) honeymoon, 2) depression, 3) contentment. To what extent would you agree or disagree with this and where do you fall on this continuum both now and in other places you've lived?

How would you say this cycle affects your decisions to remain in a particular location or change schools?

16. What are your future plans in education? Will you stay in international education? Return to your home country?

17. When you know you are leaving a particular location, how does that affect the remainder of your academic year in terms of school ties and cultural ties?

18. What guides your decisions now on whether or not to stay or go?

*Is there anything more you would like to add?
**Follow-Up Questions:
   1) Can you tell me more about that or add to that?
   2) Why is that?

Appendix E: International Teacher Retention Survey Form B (Stayer)

Name: _____ International School: _____

I. How significant a role do the following factors play in your decision to work and live overseas?

		Not at all important 1	Slightly Important 2	Somewhat Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
a.	Travel opportunities for myself and my family.					
b.	Cultural enrichment for myself and my family.					
c.	Desire to experience as many cultures as possible in my career.					
d.	Desire to work in a school with more worldly students.					
e.	Desire to have a better education for my children.					
f.	To pursue better opportunities than were available at home.					

II. Please rank the following items in order of importance for why you would stay in a school or location:

Now, on this side re-rank these based on when you first started international teaching:

_____ salary and savings potential   _____
_____ benefits   _____
_____ travel opportunities   _____
_____ culture and language opportunities   _____
_____ balance of work and personal life   _____
_____ satisfaction with teaching assignment   _____
_____ opportunity for promotion or advancement   _____
_____ professional development opportunities   _____
_____ family opportunities (spouse securing a job; education for kids)   _____
_____ school leadership or school board decisions   _____
_____ personal growth   _____
_____ location   _____
_____ Other: _____   Other: _____

IV. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school?

	Please rate your CURRENT School:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
a.	The principal or head of school lets members know what is expected of them.				
b.	The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.				
c.	I am satisfied with my teaching salary and benefits.				
d.	The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria or student lounge) interferes with my teaching.				
e.	I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do.				
f.	Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.				
g.	Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching.				
h.	My principal or school head enforces school rules and student conduct and backs me up when I need it.				
i.	There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members.				
j.	In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.				
k	I am satisfied with my class size.				
l.	I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers.				
m.	I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.				
n.	The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it.				
o.	The teachers at this school like being here. I would describe them as a satisfied group.				
p	I like the way things are run at this school.				
q.	If I could get a higher paying job I would leave teaching as soon as possible.				
r.	I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.				

On a scale of 1-10, how does **school orientation** affect **longevity** in a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*C*omment box:

V.

On a scale of 1-10, what is your current level of **involvement** with the **host culture**?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you feel that further involvement would impact retention? Why or why not?

What are ways you would recommend for people to get more involved?

On a scale of 1-10, how good would you say your current **foreign language** skills are?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Have you learned some of the languages in the places you've lived, but not in others?

Do you feel language has the ability to affect retention at all? Why or why not?

On a scale of 1-10, how do you **invest yourself professionally** when you know you are **STAYING** in a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

On a scale of 1-10, how do you **invest yourself professionally** when you know you are **LEAVING** a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

On a scale of 1-10, to what degree do **cultural frustrations impact** your **teaching**?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

On a scale of 1-10, to what degree do **cultural frustrations impact** your **teaching**?
Comment box:
Do you have any suggestions for people who experience frequent cultural frustrations?

VII. If **STAYING IN** your current school, indicate the level of importance EACH of the following plays in your decision to STAY at your current school:

	Rate your CURRENT school as to why you are STAYING:	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a.	Salary					
b.	Benefits					
c.	Teaching assignment (subject or grade level)					
d.	Workplace conditions (facilities, classroom resources, school safety)					
e.	Support from administrators					
f.	My job description or responsibilities					
g.	Autonomy over my classroom					
h.	Opportunities for professional development					
i.	Other reason(s) not included above:					

VIII. How long do you plan to remain at your current school:
_____ As long as I am able
_____ Until a specific life event occurs (e.g. parenthood, marriage)
_____ Until a more desirable job opportunity comes along
_____ Definitely plan to leave at the end of my current contract
_____ Undecided at this time

Appendix F: International Teacher Retention Survey Form A (Mover)

Name: _____ International School: _____

I. How significant a role do the following factors play in your decision to work and live overseas?

		Not at all important 1	Slightly Important 2	Somewhat Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
a.	Travel opportunities for myself and my family.					
b.	Cultural enrichment for myself and my family.					
c.	Desire to experience as many cultures as possible in my career.					
d.	Desire to work in a school with more worldly students.					
e.	Desire to have a better education for my children.					
f.	To pursue better opportunities than were available at home.					

II. Please rank the following items in order of importance for why you would stay in a school or location:

Now, on this side re-rank these based on when you first started international teaching:

_____ salary and savings potential _____
_____ benefits _____
_____ travel opportunities _____
_____ culture and language opportunities _____
_____ balance of work and personal life _____
_____ satisfaction with teaching assignment _____
_____ opportunity for promotion or advancement _____
_____ professional development opportunities _____
_____ family opportunities (spouse securing a job; education for kids) _____
_____ school leadership or school board decisions _____
_____ personal growth _____
_____ location _____
_____ Other: _____ Other: _____

III. Indicate the level of importance EACH of the following played in your decision to LEAVE your current school:

		Not at all important 1	Slightly Important 2	Somewhat Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
a.	For better salary.					
b.	For better benefits.					
c.	I had the opportunity for a better teaching assignment (subject or grade level) at my new school.					
d.	I was dissatisfied with workplace conditions (e.g. facilities, classroom resources, school safety).					
e.	I was dissatisfied with changes in my job description or responsibilities at my last school.					
f.	I did not have enough autonomy over my classroom at my last school.					
g.	I was dissatisfied with opportunities for professional development at my last school.					
h.	Although generally satisfied with the school, I wanted to explore other cultural and travel opportunities.					
i.	Other reasons not included above:					

IV. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school?

	Please rate your CURRENT School:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
a.	The principal or head of school lets members know what is expected of them.				
b.	The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.				
c	I am satisfied with my teaching salary and benefits.				
d.	The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria or student lounge) interferes with my teaching.				
e.	I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do.				
f.	Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.				
g.	Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching.				
h.	My principal or school head enforces school rules and student conduct and backs me up when I need it.				
i.	There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members.				
j.	In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.				
k	I am satisfied with my class size.				
l.	I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers.				
m.	I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.				
n.	The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it.				
o.	The teachers at this school like being here. I would describe them as a satisfied group.				
p	I like the way things are run at this school.				
q.	If I could get a higher paying job I would leave teaching as soon as possible.				
r.	I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.				

a. On a scale of 1-10, how does **school orientation** affect **longevity** in a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optional comment box:									

V.

b. On a scale of 1-10, what is your current level of **involvement** with the **host culture**?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do you feel that further involvement would impact retention? Why or why not? What are ways you would recommend for people to get more involved?									

c. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current **foreign language** skills?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Have you learned some of the languages in the places you've lived, but not in others? Do you feel language has the ability to affect retention at all? Why or why not?									

d. On a scale of 1-10, how do you **invest yourself professionally** when you know you are **STAYING** in a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

e. On a scale of 1-10, how do you **invest yourself professionally** when you know you are **LEAVING** a school?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

f. On a scale of 1-10, to what degree do **cultural frustrations impact** your **teaching**?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optional comment box: Do you have any suggestions for people who experience frequent cultural frustrations?									

VI. If **LEAVING** your current school, how would you rate your **CURRENT** teaching position relative to the **ANTICIPATED** aspects of your teaching position in **YOUR NEW SCHOOL** in terms of each of the following?

		Better in **current** school 1	Same 2	Better in **new** school 3
a.	Salary			
b.	Benefits (health insurance, retirement plan)			
c.	Opportunities for professional advancement or promotion			
d.	Opportunities for professional development			
e.	Opportunities for learning from colleagues			
f.	Social relationships with colleagues			
g.	Recognition and support from administration			
h.	Safety of environment			
i.	Influence over workplace policies and practices			
j.	Autonomy or control over your own work			
k.	Professional prestige			
l.	Procedures for performance evaluation			
m.	Manageability of workload			
n.	Ability to balance personal life and work			
o.	Availability of resources and materials/equipment for doing job			
p.	General work conditions			
q.	Job security			
r.	Intellectual challenge			
s.	Sense of personal accomplishment			
t.	Opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others			
u.	Opportunities for travel and cultural exploration			

Appendix G: Comparison of International Teacher Mobility Survey (ITMS: Developed by Steven Mancuso, 2010) and International Teacher Retention Survey (**ITRS: used in current study**)

Mancuso's International Teacher Mobility Survey (Form A: Movers)	**International Teacher Retention Survey (Form A: Mover)**	Mancuso's International Teacher Mobility Survey (Form B: Stayer)	**International Teacher Retention Survey (Form B: Stayer)**
How significant a role do the following play in your decision to work and live overseas? a.Travel opportunities for myself and my family b.Cultural enrichment for myself and my family c. Desire to experience as many cultures as possible d.Desire to work in a school with more worldly students e.Desire to have a better education for my own children. f.To pursue more opportunities than were available at home g.To share western education with the people of other countries. h.My desire to work and live in different cultures often supersedes other reasons to move from one school to another. i.Other reasons not included above: _____	**How significant a role do the following play in your decision to work and live overseas?** a.Travel opportunities for myself and my family b.Cultural enrichment for myself and my family c. Desire to experience as many cultures as possible d.Desire to work in a school with more worldly students e.Desire to have a better education for my own children. f.To pursue more opportunities than were available at home	**How significant a role do the following play in your decision to work and live overseas?** a.Travel opportunities for myself and my family b.Cultural enrichment for myself and my family c. Desire to experience as many cultures as possible d.Desire to work in a school with more worldly students e.Desire to have a better education for my own children. f.To pursue more opportunities than were available at home g.To share western education with the people of other countries. h.Other reasons not included above: _____	**How significant a role do the following play in your decision to work and live overseas?** a.Travel opportunities for myself and my family b.Cultural enrichment for myself and my family c. Desire to experience as many cultures as possible d.Desire to work in a school with more worldly students e.Desire to have a better education for my own children. f.To pursue more opportunities than were available at home

(Not used in ITMS Survey)	Please rank the following 12 items in order of importance for why you would stay in a school or location:	(Not used in ITMS Survey)	Please rank the following 12 items in order of importance for why you would stay in a school or location:
	__ salary and savings potential __ benefits __ travel opportunities __culture and language opportunities __ balance of work and personal life __ satisfaction with teaching assignment __ opportunity for promotion or advancement __ professional development opportunities __ family opportunities (spouse securing a job; education for kids) __ school leadership or school board decisions __ personal growth __ Other		__ salary and savings potential __ benefits __ travel opportunities __culture and language opportunities __ balance of work and personal life __ satisfaction with teaching assignment __ opportunity for promotion or advancement __ professional development opportunities __ family opportunities (spouse securing a job; education for kids) __ school leadership or school board decisions __ personal growth __ Other
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school: a.The principal or school head lets staff members know what is expected of them. b.The school administrator's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging. c.I am satisfied with my teaching salary. d.The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay, or	**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school**: a.The principal or school head lets staff members know what is expected of them. b.The school administrator's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging. c.I am satisfied with my teaching salary and benefits. d.The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise,	**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school**: a.The principal or school head lets staff members know what is expected of them. b.The school administrator's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging. c.I am satisfied with my teaching salary. d.The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay, or	**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about your current school**: a.The principal or school head lets staff members know what is expected of them. b.The school administrator's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging. c.I am satisfied with my teaching salary and benefits. d.The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as

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fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching e.I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do. f.Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff. g.Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching. h.My principal or school head enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it. i.Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes. j.Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be. k.The principal or school head knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to staff. l.There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members. m.In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done. n.I am satisfied with my class size.	horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching e.I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do. f.Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff. g.Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching. h.My principal or school head enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it. i.There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members. j.In this school staff members are recognized for a job well done. k.I am satisfied with my class size.	fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching e.I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do. f.Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff. g.Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching. h.My principal or school head enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it. i.Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes. j.Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be. k.The principal or school head knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to staff. l.There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members. m.In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done. n.I am satisfied with my class size.	noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching e.I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do. f.Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff. g.Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching. h.My principal or school head enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it. i.There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members. j.In this school staff members are recognized for a job well done. k.I am satisfied with my class size.

o.I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers. p.The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching. q.I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher. r.I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.	l.I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of the teachers. m.I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.	o.I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers. p.The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching. q.I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher. r.I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.	l.I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of the teachers. m.I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at my current school.
a.The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it. b.The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe them as a satisfied group. c.I like the way things are run at this school. d.If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible. e.I think about moving to another school. f.I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching. g.I think about staying home from school because I'm just too tired to go.	n..The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it. o.The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe them as a satisfied group. p.I like the way things are run at this school. q.If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible. r. I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.	a.The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it. b.The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe them as a satisfied group. c.I like the way things are run at this school. d.If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible. e.I think about moving to another school. f.I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching. g.I think about staying home from school because I'm just too tired to go.	n..The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it. o.The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe them as a satisfied group. p.I like the way things are run at this school. q.If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible. r. I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.
(Not used in ITMS Survey)	-On a scale of 1-10, how does school orientation affect longevity in a school? -*Optional Comment Box: _____* -On a scale of 1-10, what is your current involvement with the	(Not used in ITMS Survey)	-On a scale of 1-10, how does school orientation affect longevity in a school? -*Optional Comment Box: _____* -On a scale of 1-10, what is your current involvement with the

	host culture? -Do you feel that further involvement would impact retention?Why or why not? -What are ways you would recommend people to get more involved? -On a scale of 1-10, how good would you say your current foreign language skills are? -Have you learned some of the languages in the places you've lived, but not in others? - Do you feel language has the ability to affect retention at all? Why or why not? - On a scale of 1-10, how do you invest yourself professionally when you know you are STAYING in a school? -On a scale of 1-10, how do you invest yourself professionally when you know you are leaving a school? -On a scale of 1-10, to what degree do cultural frustrations impact your teaching? -*Optional comment box*: _____ -Do you have any suggestions for people who experience frequent cultural frustrations?		host culture? -Do you feel that further involvement would impact retention?Why or why not? -What are ways you would recommend people to get more involved? -On a scale of 1-10, how good would you say your current foreign language skills are? -Have you learned some of the languages in the places you've lived, but not in others? - Do you feel language has the ability to affect retention at all? Why or why not? - On a scale of 1-10, how do you invest yourself professionally when you know you are STAYING in a school? -On a scale of 1-10, how do you invest yourself professionally when you know you are leaving a school? -On a scale of 1-10, to what degree do cultural frustrations impact your teaching? -*Optional comment box*: ____ -Do you have any suggestions for people who experience frequent cultural frustrations?

Indicate the level of importance EACH of the following played in your decision to LEAVE your current school:	Indicate the level of importance EACH of the following played in your decision to LEAVE your current school:	(Not included in ITMS Survey: Form B)	(Not included in ITRS Survey: Form B)
a.For better salary b.For better benefits c.I had the opportunity for a better teaching assignment (subject or grade level) at my new school. d.I was dissatisfied with workplace conditions (e.g. facilities, classroom resources, school safety) at my last school. e.I was dissatisfied with support from my administrators at my last school. f.I was dissatisfied with changes in my job description or responsibilities at my last school. g.I did not have enough autonomy over my classroom at my last school. h.I was dissatisfied with opportunities for professional development at my last school. i.Although generally satisfied with the school, I wanted to explore other cultural and travel opportunities. j.Other reasons not included above: ___	a.For better salary b.For better benefits c.I had the opportunity for a better teaching assignment (subject or grade level) at my new school. d.I was dissatisfied with workplace conditions (e.g. facilities, classroom resources, school safety) at my last school. e.I was dissatisfied with support from my administrators at my last school. f.I was dissatisfied with changes in my job description or responsibilities at my last school. g.I did not have enough autonomy over my classroom at my last school. h.I was dissatisfied with opportunities for professional development at my last school. i.Although generally satisfied with the school, I wanted to explore other cultural and travel opportunities. j.Other reasons not included above: ___		
Indicate how effectively your principal and/or school head performed each of the following at your	(Not used in ITRS Survey)	Indicate how effectively your principal and/or school head performed each of the following at your	(Not used in ITRS Survey)

current school:		current school:	
a.Communicates respect for value of teachers		a.Communicates respect for value of teachers	
b.Encourages teachers to change teaching methods if students were not doing well.		b.Encourages teachers to change teaching methods if students were not doing well.	
c.Works with staff to meet curriculum standards.		c.Works with staff to meet curriculum standards.	
d.Encourages professional collaboration among teachers.		d.Encourages professional collaboration among teachers.	
e.Works with teaching staff to solve school or department problems.		e.Works with teaching staff to solve school or department problems.	
f.Encourages the teaching staff to use student assessment results in planning curriculum and instruction.		f.Encourages the teaching staff to use student assessment results in planning curriculum and instruction.	
g.Works to develop broad agreement among the teaching staff about the school's mission.		g.Works to develop broad agreement among the teaching staff about the school's mission.	
h.Facilitates and encourages professional development activities of teachers.		h.Facilitates and encourages professional development activities of teachers.	
How would you rate your current teaching position relative to the anticipated aspects of your teaching position in your new school in terms of each of the following: a.Salary b.Benefits (e.g.health insurance, retirement plan) c.Opportunities for professional advancement or	**If LEAVING your current school, how would you rate your current teaching position relative to the anticipated aspects of your teaching position in your new school in terms of each of the following**: a.Salary b.Benefits (e.g.health insurance, retirement plan) c.Opportunities for professional	**Indicate the level of importance EACH of the following plays in your decision to STAY in your current school**: a.Salary b.Benefits c.Teaching assignment (subject or grade level) d.Workplace conditions (e.g. facilities, classroom resources, school safety) e.Support from	**If STAYING IN your current school, indicate the level of importance EACH of the following plays in your decision to STAY at your current school**: a.Salary b.Benefits c.Teaching assignment (subject or grade level) d.Workplace conditions (e.g. facilities, classroom resources, school

promotion d.Opportunities for professional development e.Opportunities for learning from colleagues f.Social relationships with colleagues g.Recognition and support from administration h.Safety of environment i.Influence over workplace policies and practices j.Autonomy and control over your own work k.Professional prestige l.Procedures for performance evaluation m.Manageability of workload n.Ability to balance personal life and work o.Availability of resources and materials/equipment for doing job p.General work conditions q.Job security r.Intellectual challenge s.Sense of personal accomplishment t.Opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others u.Opportunities for travel and cultural exploration.	advancement or promotion d.Opportunities for professional development e.Opportunities for learning from colleagues f.Social relationships with colleagues g.Recognition and support from administration h.Safety of environment i.Influence over workplace policies and practices j.Autonomy and control over your own work k.Professional prestige l.Procedures for performance evaluation m.Manageability of workload n.Ability to balance personal life and work o.Availability of resources and materials/equipment for doing job p.General work conditions q.Job security r.Intellectual challenge s.Sense of personal accomplishment t.Opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others u.Opportunities for travel and cultural exploration.	administrators. f.My job description and responsibilities. g.Autonomy over my classroom. h.Opportunities for professional development. i.Other reason(s) not included above: ___	safety) e.Support from administrators. f.My job description and responsibilities. g.Autonomy over my classroom. h.Opportunities for professional development. i.Other reason(s) not included above: ___