

**COMPARISON OF MOTIVATION, PREPARATION,  
CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENT PROCESS OF  
SELF-INITIATED AND ASSIGNED EXPATRIATES**



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**COMPARISON OF MOTIVATION, PREPARATION,  
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SELF-INITIATED AND ASSIGNED EXPATRIATES**

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Isil Kirkizoglu

## **COMPARISON OF MOTIVATION, PREPARATION, CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENT PROCESS OF SELF-INITIATED AND ASSIGNED EXPATRIATES**

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M.M. (GENERAL MANAGEMENT)

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the differences between the self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and the assigned expatriates (AEs) are investigated in terms of their individual characteristics, family and work situations, motivational drivers, their preparations before the expatriation, the challenges that they have faced and their adjustment process. Previous studies in the literature for international adjustment process of expatriates and the comparative studies of SIEs and AEs are reviewed. Qualitative research is done by conducting interviews with 8 Turkish expatriates (4 SIEs and 4 AEs) who are currently living and working in Thailand.

It is concluded that there are differences between SIEs and AEs in terms of individual characteristics, motivation for expatriation, preparation and the level and mode of adjustment. The similarities are found for the faced challenges and what helped for their adjustment. Recommendations to the expatriates and to the companies who are working with expatriates for a better preparation and adjustment process are summarized. Furthermore, recommendations to Turkish expatriates who plan to move to Thailand are given.

**KEY WORDS:** Assigned expatriates / Self-initiated expatriates / Expatriate adjustment process / Motivation for expatriation / Characteristics of expatriates

60 pages

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Expatriate Adjustment	4
2.2 Characteristics of Successful Expatriates	9
2.3 Cross-Cultural Training	10
2.4 Characteristic Differences Between SIEs and AEs	11
2.5 Motivational Differences Between SIEs and AEs	13
<b>CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Primary Data Collection Method	15
3.2 Interview Method	15
<b>CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Characteristics of the Interviewees	19
4.1.1 Background Information	19
4.1.2 Previous Trip to Thailand	20
4.2 Motivation	21
4.2.1 Motivation of Expatriation	21
4.2.2 Motivation of Expatriation to Thailand	22
4.2.3 Duration Between Decision and Moving	22
4.2.4 Time Plan to Live in Thailand	23
4.3 Preparation	24
4.3.1 Preparation Before Moving	24
4.3.2 Support Received Before or After Moving	24
4.3.3 Cross-Cultural Training	25

## **CONTENTS (cont.)**

	<b>Page</b>
4.4 Challenges	26
4.4.1 Challenges in the Beginning	26
4.4.2 Personal Challenges	28
4.4.3 Cultural Differences/Similarities	28
4.4.4 Work-Related Challenges	29
4.4.5 Family-Related Challenges	30
4.4.6 Networking	31
4.4.7 Current Challenges	31
4.4.8 How to Overcome Challenges	32
4.5 Adjustment	33
4.5.1 Effect of Cross-Cultural Training	33
4.5.2 Thai Language	34
4.5.3 Social Activities	34
4.5.4 Adjustment Levels	35
4.5.5 Reason for Adjustment	36
4.5.6 What Helped for Adjustment	36
4.5.7 The Useful Support/Information	37
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>39</b>
5.1 Conclusion	39
5.2 Recommendations	42
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>47</b>
Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs	48
Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs	53
Appendix C: Common Statements by SIEs and AEs	59
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>60</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
2.1	Differences Between SIEs and AEs (Farcas & Gonçalves, 2016)	12
3.1	List of Interviewees	16
3.2	Open-Ended Question List	16
4.1	Adjustment Scores of the Interviewees to Thailand	35



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1 Emotional Stages Associated with a Foreign Assignment (Noe et al., 2018)	5
2.2 Framework of International Adjustment (Black et al., 1991)	8
2.3 The Purpose of Expatriation (Evans et al., 2002)	13
3.1 Research Framework of the Study	17
5.1 Differences and Similarities of Adjustment Process Between the SIEs and the AEs	40



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, international mobilization of the workforce has been becoming more relevant and more important every day with the effect of increasing globalization. Becoming international increases the competitive advantage globally for both the companies and for the individuals, hence affecting the global economy to be enhanced. For companies, expanding to new countries means reaching to new markets and new customers, lowered labor or raw material costs, or taking advantage of subsidies and tax advantages provided by the governments. Furthermore, international trade alliances such as European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and free trade agreements between individual countries are encouraging and increasing the companies to operate in an international environment.

The demand for global managers and personnel is increasing as a result of these economical internalization movements. The companies need to assign their personnel to work abroad for their organizations or for their international assignments for either short-term or long-term. These personnel need to stay and work in a foreign country, often with their families, in order to execute their assignments. This naturally includes interaction and communication with local people, learning the ways of living in the country, cultural norms, the ways of doing business while understanding the economical conditions, rules and regulations. In the literature, these people are defined as *Assigned Expatriates (AEs)* or *Company-Backed Expatriates (CBEs)* (Doherty, Dickmann & Mills, 2011; Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991).

On the other hand, for individuals, the trend of globalization makes people to move abroad, to get an international experience, to enhance their skills and career and to fulfill their life expectations while becoming a global citizen of the world by understanding and appreciating the different cultures and nations. These individuals often find jobs abroad by themselves, without depending on an organization, or set up

their own business in the foreign country. These individuals are called *Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIEs)* in the literature (Doherty, 2013). Same as AEs, SIEs also need to understand the country norms in all aspects, how to do business and how to interact with the locals.

Although being global is important and increasing in the 21st century, there are some major challenges associated with becoming global for both types of individuals. Gaining the cultural intelligence to relate with and understand the mindset of the people from different cultural backgrounds, being able to speak the local language while communicating with them, adapting to the culture of working and everyday life and adapting to the economic and educational conditions of the country as a foreign individual can be some of these major challenges of living and working in a foreign country. As the motivations of AEs and SIEs are different to move to another country, the level of challenges perceived by both types of expatriates and their reactions could be different. This is also dependent on the characteristics of the individuals and how they have prepared themselves to living and working abroad.

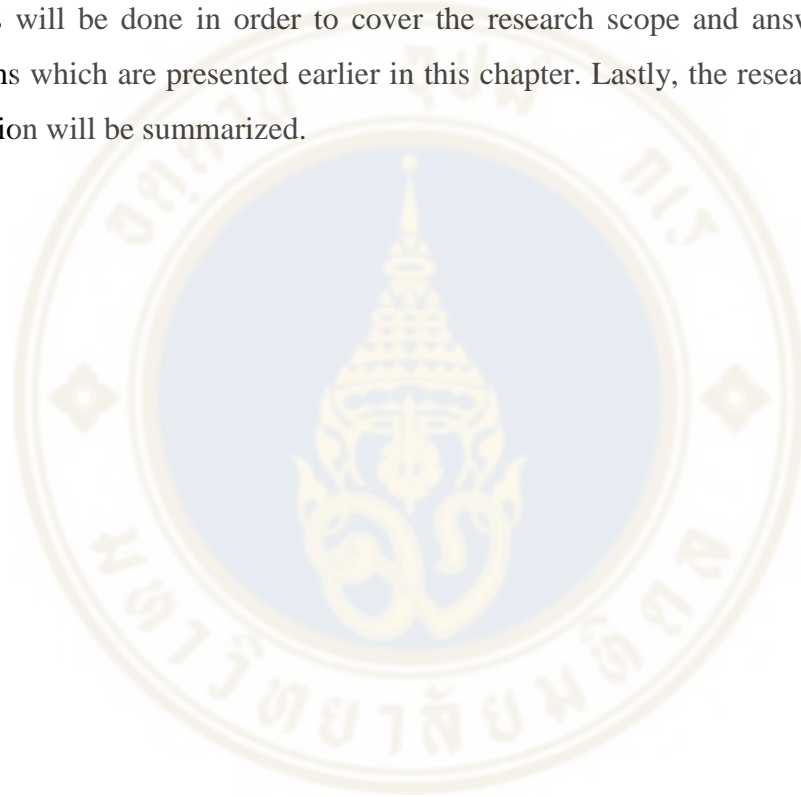
This study aims to focus on to understand the differences between the assigned expatriates and the self-initiated expatriates. The individual characteristics, family and work situations, life stage, motivational drivers to move to another country for both types of individuals will be explored. Furthermore, the answers of below research question will be sought:

*“What are the challenges that both types of expatriates are facing? What are the preparations that these expatriates made or received for moving to another country? And, how these preparations helped them to overcome the challenges that they have faced?”*

The reason of selecting this topic mainly comes from the author’s own experience as being an assigned expatriate and seeing the differences between self-initiated expatriates. Living in a globalized world gives an increased importance to the international experience and finding ways to ease the challenges associated with internalization would help individuals to be encouraged to pursue their experience to become a global citizen.

The context of this study will focus on the expatriates who are currently living in Thailand, who have moved to Thailand either by company assignment or by their own initiative.

This paper will firstly gather the information about AEs and SIEs from the literature by focusing on their differences and similarities from the aspects that this study is focusing on. Secondly, in-depth interviews with several AEs and SIEs will be conducted in order to find out their cross-cultural experiences and challenges from their real-life stories. These experiences will be treated as primary data and further analysis will be done in order to cover the research scope and answer the research questions which are presented earlier in this chapter. Lastly, the research findings and conclusion will be summarized.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The individuals who relocate to live and work in a different country than their native country for at least one year is called expatriates (Littrell et al. 2006). Company-backed expatriates or assigned expatriates are the employees who are assigned to work in an international assignment while supported by a company, whereas self-initiated expatriates are individuals who are undertaking international working experience without any organization support (Doherty et al., 2011). Self-initiated expatriates move to another country by their own volition and personal funding and personally oriented to development and career goals (Doherty, 2013). On the other hand, assigned expatriates move to another country by the company initiative and often motivated by opportunity in career advancement and higher salary levels (Light, 1997).

This chapter is intended to give insight about the literature researched related with this study. Firstly, expatriate adjustment, successful expatriate characteristics and cross-cultural training will be discussed and research results from the literature will be presented. In the literature, these three topics are mainly focused on traditional expatriate definition, i.e. the assigned expatriates. However, most of the concepts and models can be applied to the self-initiated expatriates as well. Later in this chapter, differences in the characteristics and motivational factors between the assigned expatriates and the self-initiated expatriated will be provided.

#### **2.1 Expatriate Adjustment**

Expatriate adjustment is an important notion for the success an expatriation process. It includes “to adjust to new behaviors, norms, values and assumptions” (Evans, Pucik & Barsoux, 2002, p. 126). The adjustment would be fully

achieved once the expatriate shows respect and appreciation to the new culture while keeping his/her own roots (Evans et al., 2002).

Oberg (as cited in Noe et al., 2018) explains four emotional stages that effects the expatriates when they are working in a foreign country (Figure 2.1). The expatriate enters into *honeymoon stage* when s/he first arrives to the new country. In this stage, the novelty of the new culture feels interesting and fascinates the individual. S/he compares the new culture with his/her own to find the similarities and differences. Overall, honeymoon is an enjoyable stage for the foreign expatriate. However, soon after, s/he will start to see more unpleasant differences between the cultures and faces some negative experiences such as criticism, isolation and stereotyping, which are associated with the *culture shock stage*. The expatriate will feel unhappy and discomfort while adjusting to the new culture and its norms and values. The *recovery stage* starts if the individual endures to stay in the new environment and have more understanding about the culture and develop a support network. If the expatriate's language skills and living comfort increases, his/her mood will start to be uplifted and eventually the "adjustment" will be reached when s/he will be happy to live in the new country. In other words, the expatriate has reached the psychological comfort of working and living in the new country (Evans et al., 2002).

Littrell et al. (2006) also explains these stages with "the U-curve of adjustment theory", where the expatriate adjustment is defined as a function of time. At different times of the adjustment process, the reactions hence the needs of the expatriate are different. Therefore, appropriate training and preparation should be made, while having the right personality and mindset, in order to have a successful adjustment process.



**Figure 2.1 Emotional Stages Associated with a Foreign Assignment (Noe et al., 2018)**

Evans et al. (2002) describe three dimensions for adjusting to the expatriate role, which are adjustment to the work, general adjustment and interaction adjustment.

1. *Adjustment to the work* relates with the job clarity, job discretion and whether there is conflict or not. As the job is clearer, the discretion is at a high level and no conflict is evident, the adjustment will be easier (Black et al., 1991).

2. *Adjustment to the general environment* refers to the adjustment to the housing, weather, food, education, transportation, shopping, recreation, safety and health conditions, business practices and political systems in the new country. This dimension is related with the physiological comfort of the expatriate, and his/her family. Similar or better conditions compared to the expatriate's own country facilitates general adjustment to be faster. Sharing time with the other expatriates who are living in the host country will ease the general adjustment process as the expectations will be shaped to a realistic level. Family adjustment to the general environment which includes family support, communication and adaptability, is also important for the overall expatriate adjustment.

3. *Adjustment to interaction with locals* is the hardest dimension and increases with the cultural toughness or cultural novelty, i.e. the level of cultural differences or distance between the new culture and the expatriate's own culture (Black et al., 1991). Differences in behavioral norms and cultural values, communication patterns, relationship style and conflict management may lead to frustration and even anger. Not being able to speak the local language also have an effect to face a misunderstanding during the communication with locals. This dimension relates with the culture shock stage of the foreign assignment process. Evans et al. (2002) and Gomez-Meija, Balkin & Cardy (2016) suggest that the personality of the expatriate is important for this aspect. Cultural intelligence and willingness and motivation to learn the new culture play important roles for the cultural adjustment process. Furthermore, receiving a cross-cultural training, learning/knowing the local language and having a support network, which is including locals as well as other expatriates, in the host country positively effects the level of adjustment.

Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) identify four dimensions as components of the expatriate adjustment process which are the self-oriented dimension, the others-oriented dimension, the perceptual dimension and the cultural toughness dimension.

1. *The self-oriented dimension* has three aspects. First one refers for the expatriate to find new activities that s/he gets pleasure in the host country which will substitute the activities that the expatriate was doing in his/her own country. Second one refers to the ability of the expatriate to handle stress, i.e. finding ways to retreat oneself, since being in an unfamiliar environment causes stress of the individual. Last one refers to the technical competence of the expatriate in order to successfully handle the job that s/he is assigned or taken to do. The higher abilities in these aspects will lead to easier adjustment for the expatriate.

2. *The others-oriented dimension* is related with developing relationships and willingness to communicate with the locals. The research suggests that having a close relationship with the locals can act as having a mentor in the new culture. This mentor can guide the expatriate in the work and non-work-related situations for him/her to establish appropriate behaviors in the new culture. On the other hand, willingness to use the host country's language, even though not fluent, and confidence in interacting with the locals has a high impact in the expatriate adjustment process.

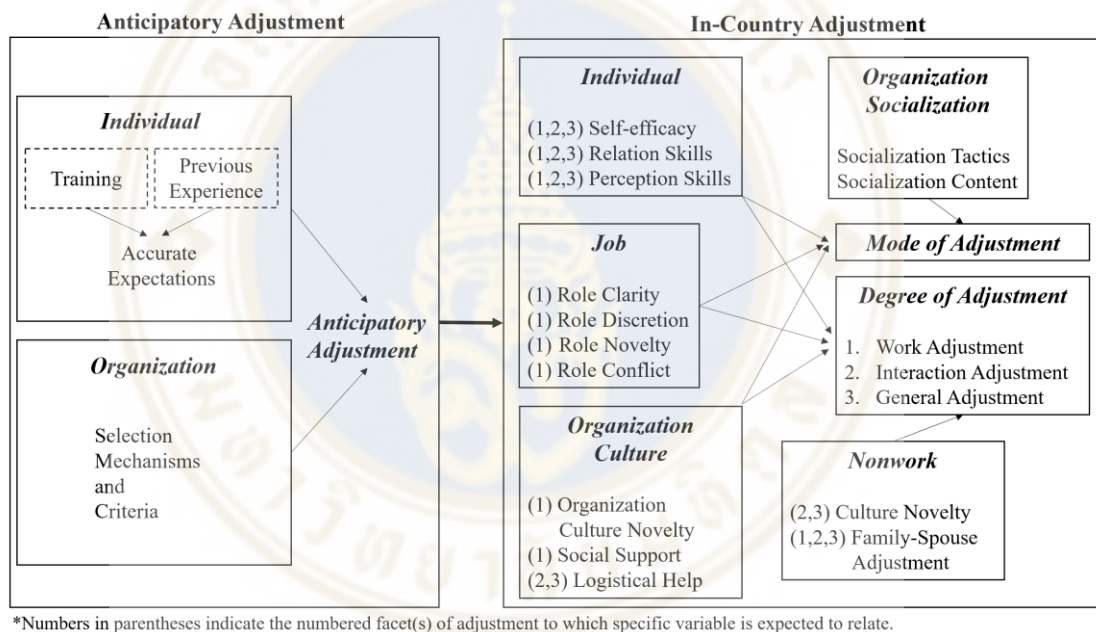
3. *The perceptual dimension* refers to have correct understanding about the reasons of the locals' behavior which will result the expatriate to behave accordingly. Being non-judgmental and non-evaluative for the social behaviors while interpreting the locals and willing to learn the new culture's perception and beliefs are the keys for the successful adjustment.

4. *The cultural toughness dimension* refers to the magnitude of the cultural differences between expatriate's own culture and the host country culture. The higher the gaps between both cultures, the adjustment will be harder.

Discussing these four dimensions, for the success of the expatriate adjustment process, Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) highlight the importance to select the right person and supporting the expatriate with cross-cultural training.

Black et al. (1991) introduce a comprehensive model for the international adjustment (Figure 2.2). The model consists of two stages which are anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment.

The first stage of anticipatory adjustment refers to more accurate anticipations about the international setting to result to easier and quicker actual adjustment since the individual will face less culture shock or negative reactions. Cross-cultural training, having previous work and non-work-related international experiences will lead to more accurate expectations. Furthermore, when corporations select an expatriate, if they use not only the technical competence as the selection criteria, but also use other personality traits which effects the international adjustment as well would result better adjustment of the expatriates. Anticipatory adjustment is emphasized as setting clear expectations from the international assignment by Light (1997) and assigning the expatriate for the right reasons by Black & Gregersen (1999).



**Figure 2.2 Framework of International Adjustment (Black et al., 1991)**

The second stage of in-country adjustment consists of two aspects of the adjustment which are mode of adjustment and degree of adjustment. Black et al. (1991) explains the mode of adjustment as “how an individual will adjust to the change”, either by changing the environment to their needs, i.e. active, or by changing themselves to adjust to the environment, i.e. reactive. On the other hand, degree of adjustment has three facets which are work, interaction and general adjustment, which were explained earlier in this chapter by referring to Evans et al. (2002). The factors



affecting in-country adjustment are individual factors, job related factors, organizational culture factors, organization socialization factors and non-work-related factors. Individual factors were explained by referring to Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) as self-oriented (self-efficacy), others-oriented (relation skills) and perceptual (perception skills) dimensions. Job related factors and non-work-related factors have also been explained earlier by referring to Evans et al. (2002) and Mendenhall & Oddou (1985). Organizational factors are mainly affecting the work adjustment. It includes how different between the organizational culture in the in the host country compared to the home country and the degree of social support received from the co-workers and managers in the organization in the host country. On the other hand, logistical support aspect, such as housing, education, etc., affects the general and interaction adjustment positively. Organizational socialization factors which are socialization tactics and content are related with mode of adjustment, which can be explained as role innovation. Institutional tactics and content will lead to low role innovation, i.e. reactive adjustment, whereas individual tactics and content will lead to high role innovation, i.e. active adjustment.

## **2.2 Characteristics of Successful Expatriates**

Different research articles emphasize different characteristics for a successful expatriate experience (Noe et al., 2018, Brimm, 2016, Black & Gregersen, 1999, Gomez-Meija et al., 2016, Littrell et al., 2006, Evans et al., 2002). However, the following are the most common characteristics that almost all of these references have in common:

- Professional and technical competency
- Communication and developing relationships with locals
- Cultural sensitivity, flexibility and awareness
- Embracing changes and challenges and tolerance for ambiguity
- Support from family

Furthermore, ability to maintain self-image and well-being (Noe et al, 2018) and having self-confidence (Evans et al., 2002) are emphasized as the

characteristics of a successful expatriate, which relates to having a good capacity to deal with stress (Brimm, 2016, Evans et al., 2002, Light, 1997, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985).

## 2.3 Cross-Cultural Training

The importance of cross-cultural training is emphasized in all references regarding the expatriate adjustment process since it increases the likelihood that the expatriate to have accurate expectations from the international assignment. Cross-cultural trainings should provide the knowledge, skills and abilities to adjust to the new culture, to maintain interactions with locals and to deliver an effective business performance (Littrell et al. 2006).

From research results of Noe et al. (2018), Littrell et al. (2006), Light (1997) and Evans et al. (2002), the cross-cultural training can be categorized into four groups based on the timing of the training:

**1. Pre-assignment visits:** Visiting the host country, accompanied by an experienced manager, to see how the expatriate behaves in the host country culture and environment and how the expatriate evaluates the conditions of the country so that s/he can adjust his/her expectations accordingly.

**2. Pre-departure training:** Cultural awareness training where the expatriate learns about his/her own culture and the host country's culture and acknowledge and appreciate the similarities and differences between them as well as recognizing own-culture biases. Information on logistical matters such as housing, healthcare, schools, shopping, etc. should be provided in the pre-departure training. Language training can be included in this stage as well. Providing these trainings to the family members will also be beneficial for the overall expatriate adjustment process.

**3. Post-arrival training:** In-country training which includes some formal trainings and real time mentoring/coaching (Mendenhall & Günter 2000) in order to provide further information about the host country culture, how to behave in business settings, how to avoid conflicts and how to solve problems in the new culture setting. Mentoring style is very important and very effective since it is highly individualized to

the expatriate who is receiving the support based on his/her personal abilities and present conditions that s/he is facing. Post-arrival trainings are effective since the expatriate can understand the cultural differences from his/her own experience, hence can internalize the training even more, which will lead him/her to behave appropriately in the new culture setting.

**4. Repatriation:** For an expatriate who stayed abroad for several years, it is hard to come back to the home culture and time is needed to re-adjust. Providing information about the home country and community situation, as well as the home-country organization and networks will be helpful for the expatriate to understand the current condition of the home and to adjust back to it. Providing meaningful career opportunities, giving emotional, logistical and networking support upon return of the expatriate are important aspects of repatriation adjustment process. Furthermore, Mendenhall & Günter (2000) explains that the companies can facilitate global mindset inside their company by utilizing from the repatriates' experiences through seminars, panel discussions, blogs and assessment centers.

## 2.4 Characteristic Differences Between SIEs and AEs

From the literature reviews on self-initiated expatriates conducted Farcas & Gonçalves (2016) and Doherty (2013), the differences between SIEs and AEs are summarized into six categories as motivational drivers, geographical mobility, demographics and individual characteristics, career, employer, job and task variables and compensation. The summary of the research findings can be seen in Table 2.1. In these literature reviews, the findings shown in Table 2.1 are gathered from the empirical studies conducted between 1997 and 2014 in the literature from the researches are focused on SIEs and AEs.

Regarding the *motivational drivers*, it is found out that assigned expatriates are mainly focused on career advancement within their company, so that they move to abroad by company assignment. On the other hand, self-initiated expatriates have the motivation to become more international. For self-initiated expatriates, the host country location and reputation more important to select which country to move to, hence, considering the *geographical mobility*, they move from

less-developed countries to more developed countries where they can obtain better economic conditions compared to their home country, whereas the assigned expatriates generally move to less developed countries to support the subsidiary companies of their organizations' headquarters in these locations. When the *demographic and individual characteristics* compared for the self-initiated expatriates and assigned expatriates, it is seen that self-initiated expatriates are generally younger, more females and singles, whereas the assigned expatriates are older, more males and married. Since the self-initiated expatriates give more emphasize to the host country, their ability to speak the local language are higher and they have more experience in the host country than the assigned expatriates.

**Table 2.1 Differences Between SIEs and AEs (Farcas & Gonçalves, 2016)**

Variables	Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs)	Assigned expatriates (AEs)
Motivational drivers	Interest in international experience	Employer assignment
	Location and host country reputation	Career advancement
Geographical mobility	Move from less-developed to developed countries which offer better economic prospects	Move easily to less developed countries to support subsidiary company there
Demographic and individual characteristics	Younger, more females and singles, accompanied with spouses working abroad	Older, more males, married, accompanied with spouses not working abroad
	Better ability to speak local language	Lower ability to speak local language
	More experience in the host country	More international experience abroad
Career	Narrow business network	Wider business network
	Stable career orientation/career progression sustained over time	Career orientation decreases with age
	Security focused	Internationalism focused
	Boundaryless career	Versatile career
Employer, job and task variables	Employed at lower organizational levels	Employed at high organizational levels / managerial positions
	Working at international and private foreign companies	Working at home country companies and their subsidiaries in other countries
	Working in roles which are often below their capabilities	Broader roles with that are challenging and compatible to their capabilities
	Higher mobility and intention to change organization	Lower mobility and intention to change organization
	Less satisfaction with the job	Higher levels of job satisfaction
Compensation	High variations in net salary levels	Less variation in salary
	Less evident additional competitive compensation packages	Very common additional competitive compensation packages

For *career objectives*, self-initiated expatriates are looking more stability and security in their jobs and they are focused on a boundaryless career. On the other hand, since assigned expatriates are secured by an organization, they focus on becoming more international and versatile in their career, mainly within the company. Looking at *employer, job and task variables*, self-initiated expatriates are generally

employed at lower organization levels which are often below their capabilities and they have higher mobility and intention to change the organization. On the contrary, assigned-expatriates are employed at high organization levels which are compatible with their abilities and even challenging and they have lower mobility and intention to change the organization. *Compensation* and salary levels shows high variations for self-initiated expatriates. Assigned expatriates generally receive additional compensation packages.

## 2.5 Motivational Differences Between SIEs and AEs

Evans et al. (2002) explains the purpose of expatriation for the companies with the model given in Figure 2.3. *Corporate agency* refers to long time assignments where the control and knowledge transfer to the subsidiary company is needed. A *problem-solving* role emerges when there is an emergency or initial start-up stage needs to be completed. In both cases, expatriation is demand-driven given the fact of the company needs which can be fulfilled by the expatriate's knowledge and capability, which are not available locally. On the other hand, in order to enhance the global coordination in the company and develop global managers, long-term, learning-driven assignments are done for *competence development*. Short-term assignments are directed to young and high potential individuals in the company for *career enhancement*.

<b>Assignment Duration</b>	<i>Long</i>	CORPORATE AGENCY <i>Control/Knowledge Transfer</i>	COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT
	<i>Short</i>	PROBLEM SOLVING	CAREER ENHANCEMENT
		<i>Demand-driven</i>	<i>Learning-driven</i>
<b>Assignment Purpose</b>			

**Figure 2.3 The Purpose of Expatriation (Evans et al., 2002)**

Even though above model refers to the company motivations to send expatriates to abroad, personal motives of the assigned expatriates are also aligned with these. Career advancement, skill development and challenge of working abroad are top three motives founded by Doherty et al. (2011).

Motives of self-initiated expats briefly summarized in three categories in Doherty (2013): sense of adventure and desire to see the world, i.e. *explorer*, to meet specific career goals, i.e. *goal seeker*, and to escape from an unwanted work or personal problems, i.e. *escaper*.

Doherty et al. (2011) found out that location has a significant effect for self-initiated expatriates' decision to move abroad, whereas it is less significant in assigned expatriates, since they have a little choice on the host destination. Self-initiated expatriates are likely to stay longer in a location. Assigned expatriates are significantly more considerate about career advancement than self-initiated expatriates which shows that their desire to move abroad mainly driven by career development. Lastly, the status of the host country, which refers to its reputation and having more job opportunities, is significantly more important for the self-initiated expatriates.

Self-initiated expatriates give priority to their personal motives when deciding their physical mobility, whereas assigned expatriates are often driven by the work-related issues as a part of their organizational career development (Doherty et al. 2011).

Farcas & Gonçalves (2016) explain that the challenges that the self-initiated expatriates and assigned expatriates face are eventually similar. However, self-initiated expatriates more easily overcome these challenges and find solution to the adjustment problems. Therefore, it is said that self-initiated expatriates more easily adjust and interact with locals and understand the host country's culture and language better.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Primary Data Collection Method**

The analysis of secondary data in Chapter II – Literature Review demonstrates the theoretical data mainly related with the expatriate adjustment process and the factors effecting it. However, the differences between assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates are not evident in terms of their adjustment process and the related factors for each type. Listening from real-life experiences from both types of expatriates would help to answer the research questions that this study is focusing on. Therefore, in order to understand the attitudes, feelings and motivations (McDaniel & Gates, 2015) of the expatriates from first hand, qualitative research methodology is decided to be used in this study. Data collection method will be done by in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the author will also provide her input from international experience in Thailand as an assigned expatriate for 5 years.

#### **3.2 Interview Method**

The main data finding in this study will be provided from the interviews which will be conducted. By this way, in-depth information from interactive question and answer sessions will be obtained. The interview method will be as follows:

**Sample selection:** For this research, the interviews will be conducted with 8 interviewees who are Turkish expatriates currently living and working in Thailand. The interviewees are selected based on their expatriate type, 4 of them will be company assigned expatriates and 4 of them will be self-initiated expatriates.

**Open-ended questions:** In order to understand the challenges that the expatriates faced through their real-life experiences; open-ended questions are prepared and are addressed to the interviewees to give them flexibility in their answers.

**Table 3.1 List of Interviewees**

Code	Expatriate type	Nationality	Position in company	Duration of living in Thailand	Previous International Experience	Marital status	Age	Gender
A	SIE	Turkey	Manager	9Y	Yes (4Y)	Married	40	Male
B	SIE	Turkey	Business Owner	12Y	Yes (6Y)	Married	34	Male
C	SIE	Turkey	Manager	6Y 6M	Yes (4Y)	Married	38	Male
D	SIE	Turkey	Manager	1Y 1M	Yes (14Y)	Married	42	Male
E	AE	Turkey	Director	3Y 6M	Yes (2Y)	Single	30	Male
F	AE	Turkey	Manager	7M	Yes (4Y)	Single	36	Female
G	AE	Turkey	Manager	1Y 4M	Yes (4Y)	Married	44	Male
H	AE	Turkey	Managing Director	1Y 1M	Yes (5Y)	Married	48	Male

**Table 3.2 Open-Ended Question List**

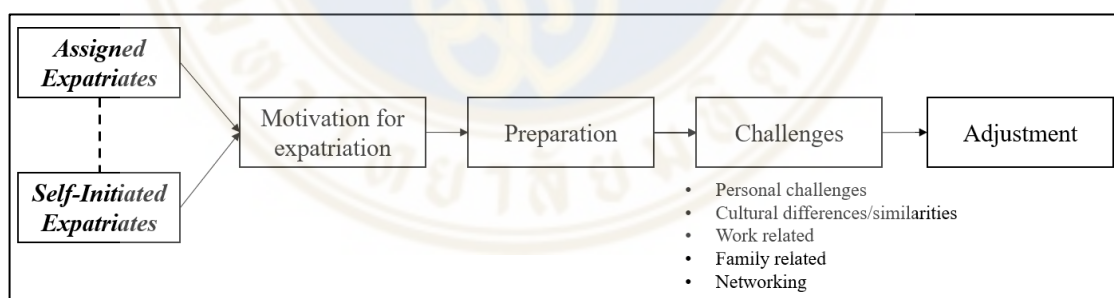
Finding factor	Interview Question
Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was your motivation to move abroad?</li> <li>2. Why did you move to Thailand? How did you decide? When did you decide? (How long between decision and actual move?)</li> <li>3. How long do you plan to stay in Thailand?</li> </ol>
Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. What kind of preparation have you done before you move to Thailand?</li> <li>5. What kind of support have you received from your company (or anybody in Thailand) before and after you moved to Thailand?</li> <li>6. Have you received any cross-cultural training before and/or after you moved to Thailand?</li> </ol>
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What are the challenges that you faced when you first moved to Thailand? How did you overcome them?</li> <li>8. What are the challenges that you are currently facing? How do you deal with them?</li> </ol>
Adjustment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. If you have received cross-cultural training, how did it help you to adjust living in Thailand?</li> <li>10. Did you learn to speak Thai? How is your communication with Thai people? Do you get along with locals easily?</li> <li>11. How do you socialize in Thailand? Does your company have any social activities?</li> <li>12. Do you think you have adjusted to live in Thailand and to the Thai culture? Why do you think so? Could you please rate from 1 to 5 as 5 fully adjusted?</li> <li>13. What has helped you in your adjustment (e.g. personal mindset, support from friends/company/family,...)?</li> <li>14. Looking back, what kind of support/information would have been useful (before moving, after arriving in Thailand)?</li> <li>15. What advice would you give someone who wants to move to Thailand for work?</li> </ol>



**Probing technique:** To ensure the validity of the data, the probing technique is adopted. Probing technique is getting deeper into the subject by using the replies of the interviewee for asking further questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2015) by asking real examples, result or reason of the given answers. In order to be able to use this technique, two-way communication used in the interviews.

**Interview:** The interviews are conducted by having an interactive face-to-face conversation with the interviewees. The venue of the interview has been selected as the office of the person and a coffee shop where the interviewees can feel comfortable and relaxed and the conversation can go smoothly. In addition to what the interviewees explain, their body language, gestures and facial expressions have also been observed and reflective note-taking is used to record the observed data. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour including introduction, open-ended and probing questions.

**Research framework:** The research framework will cover to find out the differences between assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates in terms of motivation for expatriation, preparation, challenges faced during the expatriation and adjustment to the host country (Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1 Research Framework of the Study**

In order to collect and analyze the data, mainly Black et al. (1991)'s framework of international adjustment (Figure 2.2) is adopted. Black et al. (1991) suggested this framework for assigned expatriates, however, in this study, their framework is extended to be used to compare the adjustment process of assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. This framework divides the adjustment process to two stages as anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Effect of

matching the expectations before moving to the host country and the real experience after moving and the effect of factors such as individual characteristics, job, organizational culture, organization socialization and non-work issues into the expatriate adjustment process are structured into this framework. Furthermore, following the previous study of Doherty et al. (2011), the differences in motivations of the self-initiated expatriates and assigned expatriates will be explored.

This research aims to combine the primary and the secondary data collected through both the literature search and in-depth interviews and to present the results by identifying and categorizing the significant similarities and the differences.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

After concluding the qualitative research by conducting interviews, the obtained data is analyzed and summarized in this chapter by grouping into 5 main topics as characteristics of the interviewees, motivation, preparation, challenges and adjustment.

#### **4.1 Characteristics of the Interviewees**

In this section, personal characteristics of the interviewees are summarized and the comparison with the literature about SIEs and AEs is conducted.

##### **4.1.1 Background Information**

The interviewees were on average 39 years old within the range between 30 to 48 years old. Within this interviewee sample, no significant age difference between SIEs and AEs has been found. 7 out of 8 interviewees were male. All of the interviewees were in middle and higher management positions within the companies that they are working for. The average duration of living in Thailand for the SIEs were 7 years 1 month, whereas, the average duration of living in Thailand for the AEs were 1 year 7 months. Before Thailand, in average, the SIEs had 7 years of previous international experience and the AEs had 3.75 years of previous international experience, i.e. living, studying and/or working abroad from their home country. All 4 respondents of the AEs and 2 respondents of the SIEs had working experience abroad. On the other hand, from the remaining 2 of the AEs, Mr. A lived abroad when he was a child at 9 years old and Mr. C lived abroad after university for studying English language and master's degree. Mr. E of the SIEs also had the experience to study master's degree abroad. For their marital status, out of 4 SIEs, 3 were married with

spouses who are from South East Asia and 1 of the SIEs was married with a Turkish spouse, same as 2 of the AEs. The other 2 of the AEs were single.

The demographic and individual characteristics (age, sex, marital status and previous international experience) of this interviewee sample of SIEs and AEs were not consistent with the results highlighted by Farcas & Gonçalves (2016) as given in Table 2.1. However, regarding the positions in their companies, it is seen that the AEs are working in higher levels of their companies than the SIEs, which is in line with the literature reviews conducted by Farcas & Gonçalves (2016) and Doherty (2013).

#### **4.1.2 Previous Trip to Thailand**

In order to understand whether a previous experience in Thailand has an effect of the expatriates' motivation to move to Thailand and their adjustment process or not, the interviewees were asked if they had a previous trip to Thailand.

Before moving to Thailand, 6 out of 8 interviewees had visited Thailand. 2 interviewees that had never visited Thailand were AEs. It is significant that all the SIEs had experienced Thailand before they made a decision to move to Thailand. 2 of the AEs had come to Thailand for pre-visit (or information trip) where the company supported them and their family to see the country, select the house that they will stay and arrange schools for their children. Mr. H, who had come for pre-visit, had visited Thailand as a tourist and for a business trip before which results that 3 out of 4 AEs had not had a chance to see Thailand before the moving decision was made. This result follows the findings of Farcas & Gonçalves (2016) that SIEs have more experience in the host country whereas the AEs have more experience abroad. During the interviews, all of the SIEs stated that their previous visit to Thailand had a positive effect on their decision to move and to adjust to this country. The AEs who had visited Thailand as pre-visit also mentioned that this visit was helpful for them, especially for their understanding of the country and their adjustment process.

It is understood by the interviewer that by their visit, the expatriates were able to see and evaluate the living conditions and adjust their expectations about their life in the host country accordingly. During the interviews, it is seen that the adjustment process of the 2 AEs who had never visited Thailand before their

assignment, took longer time than the other expatriates. It can be concluded that, the previous trip to the host country has a positive effect for the SIEs decision and all expatriates' adjustment process.

## **4.2 Motivation**

In order to understand the reasons why the interviewees decided to be an expatriate, why and how they have selected Thailand as the host country and how long they plan to stay in Thailand, several questions were asked and the results are summarized as below.

### **4.2.1 Motivation of Expatriation**

As stated earlier, all of the interviewees had previous international experience. Regarding this, their motivation to move abroad had been asked to them. All of the respondents answered their main motivation to be the career improvement, where 2 of them had also mentioned business opportunities in South East Asia. As Mr. E stated, the respondents believe that "having an international experience and working with different cultures would help [them] to improve [themselves] and to widen [their] vision." 2 of the respondents, 1 of the SIEs and 1 of the AEs, answered that having better economic opportunities was also an important motivation for them. 3 of the AEs mentioned that it is important for the managers to have international experiences for their company, and while climbing the career ladders in their company if they don't accept an assignment to move abroad, their career prospect in that company would not have a future. On the other hand, the SIEs were mostly focusing on the location about the opportunities that the region has for their career. In other words, the SIEs were flexible about the companies that they are working with, whereas the AEs were focusing on the career within their company only. These findings are coherent with Doherty et al. (2011) that AEs are more driven by the career advancement than SIEs and for SIEs, the location has a significant effect on their decision to move.

4 of the SIE interviewees can be defined as goal seeker based on Doherty (2013) since they were focused on specific career goals. Moreover, 3 out of 4 AEs can be defined as corporate agency according to Evans et al. (2002), since they were

assigned to Thailand for long-term, in order to manage, control and transfer the knowledge to the subsidiary company.

As a result, it is seen that, regardless of being a SIE or an AE, career improvement is the main motivation for the expatriation. However, the difference is that the SIEs move to abroad with their inner and individual motivation, whereas the AEs move to abroad with an external influence from their companies.

#### **4.2.2 Motivation of Expatriation to Thailand**

All SIEs had selected to move to Thailand by their own choice which was mainly shaped by the country having better job and business opportunities and being one of the most developed countries within the South East Asia region. In addition to that, Mr. B and Mr. D mentioned about their preference to live in tropical climate to have an effect on their decision to move to Thailand. The status of the host country was significant for all SIEs, which is in line with the research findings of Doherty et al. (2011). On the other hand, the AEs had very little or even no influence on the destination where they would be assigned to work by their companies. 2 of the AEs, Mr. E and Mr. H, didn't have any choice to select another location. Mr. G was presented 3 choices from different regions of the world and he had selected Thailand mainly due to having better living conditions for his family (such as having international school for his children) compared to other locations. Ms. F was assigned to work based in South East Asia and she had decided to live in Thailand since Thailand is a more expatriate-friendly and more developed country in the region.

The results are consistent with the literature that the SIEs had selected Thailand by their own choice (Doherty, 2013) and economic conditions and job opportunities in Thailand were important parameters for their decision (Doherty, 2011). Conversely, the AEs moved to Thailand by their companies' initiative (Light, 1997).

#### **4.2.3 Duration Between Decision and Moving**

The duration between making the decision and moving to Thailand was in average 1.2 years for the SIEs whereas this average duration was 3.2 months for the AEs which is significantly shorter than SIEs. The main reason for this is that the SIEs

needed more time to arrange their life settings in the host country, especially finding a job took time for them. On the contrary, the AEs came to the host country with the initiative of the company, their jobs were assigned in advance by the company and their arrangements were mainly supported by the company.

#### **4.2.4 Time Plan to Live in Thailand**

The interviewees were asked about how long they plan to stay in Thailand and what affects their intention to stay in Thailand.

3 out of 4 SIEs replied that they would like to stay in Thailand for long term. Mr. A and Mr. C stated that they would like to continue to live in Thailand as long as they can keep the same life quality. However, if there would be a new and better job opportunity for them, they may consider moving. Mr. B, who were living in Thailand for 12 years stated that he has a plan to live 6 more years in Thailand and then to move to another place, mainly due to the decline of the business opportunities for an entrepreneur like him, since Thailand's economy will become saturated and be stabilized by that time. 1 out of 4 SIEs, Mr. D, replied that he has a plan to stay in Thailand for 3 years and after that he wants to go back to Turkey, because he is away from Turkey for a long time.

For the AEs, the time plan to live in Thailand was limited and significantly shorter than the SIEs which is in line with Doherty et al. (2011). All of the AEs replied that the time plan for them mainly depends on their company policy. They explained that even though there can be a flexibility for them for the time shortening or extension depending on the company and expatriate condition, mainly the assignment time for them is defined, which is changing from 3 to 5 years. However, Mr. E stated that his company can move him to another place with short notice.

It is seen that for the SIEs, their life satisfaction level in the host country and their family and job conditions affects their intention to stay in Thailand and mainly, they consider to stay in the host country for long term. On the other hand, the AEs' time plan is mostly pre-defined by their companies and shorter than SIEs. The AEs have a limited flexibility and influence on their duration to stay in the host country.

## **4.3 Preparation**

In order to understand the preparation steps and scope of the interviewees before expatriation to Thailand and what kind of support they have received for their preparations, 3 questions were asked and the results obtained from their answers are summarized as below.

### **4.3.1 Preparation Before Moving**

The interviewees were asked about what kind of preparation they have done before they move to Thailand.

2 of the 4 SIEs mentioned that they had looked for housing in Thailand, visa conditions and cost of living before they moved. Mr. D, who has 2 children, had also looked for schools for his children before moving. On the other hand, 2 of the AEs, Mr. G and Mr. H, come to Thailand for pre-visit with their families to see and arrange housing and schools with the company support. 5 out of 8 respondents replied that they had done moving preparations from their home country. 2 out of 8 respondents mentioned that they had studied details for their new job in Thailand.

It is seen that, regardless of being a SIE or an AE, the expatriates had done the most fundamental and urgent arrangements for their living in Thailand, such as arrangement of housing, schools and packing and moving from their previous location. Different than AEs, the SIEs had also studied the visa conditions and cost of living. It is observed by the interviewer that the reason that the AEs didn't need to study about visa conditions is because their company arrange the visa procedures for them and furthermore, their compensation levels are quite high compared to the SIEs (Farcas & Gonçalves, 2016), therefore cost of living was not an important issue for them.

### **4.3.2 Support Received Before or After Moving**

The interviewees were asked whether they have received any support before or after they move to Thailand for their settlement in Thailand or not.

From the interviews, it is clear that the SIEs received very limited support in case they had a contact person in Thailand and some of them had not received any support from any person before or after they first came to Thailand, even from the companies that they would be working in Thailand. Mostly, they had set up their lives



by themselves. While they were explaining this subject, it was observed that they were a little bit disappointed about this issue, since they were mostly expecting their company's support at some level. However, it is also seen that the SIEs were proud of themselves since they could pass these challenges by without any support.

On the other hand, the AEs had received support from their companies for their setups, such as moving the belongings by container from one country to another, visa and work permit procedures, housing, school, transportation, etc. 3 out of the 4 AEs had received support for their preparations from HR departments of their company both in Thailand and in Turkey. 1 of the AEs, Ms. F, stated that she had received arrangement support from the HR department in Turkey, however, the HR department in Thailand had not supported for her living arrangements, which was a big disappointment for her. Mainly her expatriate friends, who were working in the same company, had supported her. Mr. G's company had also prepared a booklet including every detail about their lives in Thailand, such as Thai culture, nearby shops, schools, sports activities, etc. 2 more of the AEs stated that they had received some support from the Turkish community in Thailand when they first moved. Here, we can see the difference that the SIEs had very limited support whereas the AEs had received quite extensive support from their companies, mainly for preparing their lives in Thailand.

It can be said that the support was needed by all expatriates. For most of the AEs, the support from their company was enough. The SIEs were grateful for any support that they have received, even though it was limited, it helped them for their settlement. For the AEs, the company support was seen as a must and the community support was something additional. It can be concluded that, the satisfaction from the support that the expatriates received is dependent to their expectations. Since the AEs had higher expectations than the SIEs for the level of support, their disappointment was higher than the SIEs in case of no support.

#### **4.3.3 Cross-Cultural Training**

None of the SIEs had received cross-cultural training before or after moving to Thailand. 3 of the SIEs, Mr. B, Mr. C and Mr. D, had known the Thai culture, customs and political conditions from their previous visits and interaction with

Thai people before they moved. Mr. A and Mr. B stated that they had studied these aspects from the internet and from the books as well. Mr. A, Mr. C and Mr. D stated that after a while that they had some friends in Thailand, these friends helped by advising them to adjust their behavior when they make a mistake. 2 of the AEs had received a 1-day cross-cultural training to learn about Thailand, the Thai culture for daily life and work conditions and manners such as what would be respectful or disrespectful to behave. Mr. E and Ms. F hadn't received any training however they had studied about Thailand and Thai culture from the internet, books and some journal articles.

Regarding this question, it was interesting that none of the SIEs and 2 of the AEs didn't know what the cross-cultural training is. Even after the explanation, these interviewees didn't show any interest on receiving cross-cultural training. The other 2 of the AEs who had attended the training stated that it was useful for them to understand the Thai culture. Especially one of them emphasized the practicality of the training for working with Thai people. However, they had stated that it is not an absolute necessity to get the training before moving to another country.

#### **4.4 Challenges**

In this section, the challenges that the expatriates had faced and their ways to overcome these challenges are summarized. The challenges are were asked to the interviewees by categorizing them as challenges in the beginning, current challenges, personal challenges, cultural differences/similarities, work-related challenges, family-related challenges and networking challenges. It is seen that mostly, the challenges faced don't change by the expatriate type. Both SIEs and AEs faced the similar challenges after they moved to Thailand.

##### **4.4.1 Challenges in the Beginning**

5 out of 8 respondents mentioned about language problem when they first came to Thailand. However, the interesting point was their statement while talking about this problem. 3 of the SIEs said that "It was a challenge that I was not able to speak Thai language in the beginning.", on the other hand, 2 of the AEs said that "It

was a challenge for me that most of the Thai people don't speak English language.” Here we see that the SIEs and the AEs perspective are different. SIEs' statement shows that they want to adjust themselves to the country, whereas, AEs expect the people to have a suitable language setting for them.

3 out of 8 respondents replied that Thai food was a challenge for them and 2 of the respondents replied that they loved Thai food which helped them to adjust to the country more easily. 2 of the respondents mentioned that the traffic condition and lack of mass transportation to be a challenge for them. All of the AEs highlighted hot weather and tropical climate conditions to be a challenge. Furthermore, 2 of the AEs had also said that many more insects (as compared to Turkey) due to hot weather was a challenge for them and for their family. On the other hand, none of the SIEs mentioned about this challenge. 2 of the SIEs had mentioned earlier that the hot weather was an attracting characteristic for them to select to live in Thailand. Another challenge at the beginning identified by 2 of the respondents was about not finding what they were looking for easily for their daily life. 2 of the respondents stated as a challenge that it was not possible to find some of the main Turkish food ingredients in Thailand. Other challenges mentioned by different respondents were: negative reactions and double pricing to foreigners, slow-paced lifestyle, being personally conservative and prejudicial to the society because of there are many different sexual orientation people, not being able to communicate with doctors at the hospital in case of a health problem.

It can be summarized that the mainly 3 challenges affected the expatriates: language, food and climate conditions which are the major and fundamental changes for a person's life. Furthermore, it is seen that whoever accepted these changes could adjust easier than the rest.

Mr. A said that “Nothing feels like a big challenge with the enthusiasm of the beginning.” where he refers to the *honeymoon stage* of the foreign assignment for an expatriate (Noe et al., 2018). He continued that “Many things feel like a challenge after you start learning about the country and the culture.” which refers to the *culture shock stage* (Noe et al., 2018).

#### 4.4.2 Personal Challenges

Only 3 out of 8 respondents stated different personal challenges. Mr. E stated that he is a hyperactive person and Thailand is a slow-paced country, therefore this difference affects him a lot. Ms. F stated that personally, loneliness is the biggest challenge. Mr. H's personal challenge was mainly related to the job novelty due to his new position in the company as managing director.

Here it is seen that the personal challenges don't have to be dependent on the country or the culture. Many factors such as work, family or network conditions in the new life setting effects the expatriate and can become a challenge.

#### 4.4.3 Cultural Differences/Similarities

Below cultural differences and similarities between Thai culture and Turkish culture were mentioned by the interviewees during the interviews. It is seen that the perceived cultural challenges don't change based on the expatriate type, i.e. they are the same for the SIEs and the AEs.

##### *Differences perceived negatively*

- Thai people say "No" for the issues that they don't understand or don't want to do because the suggestion is coming from a foreigner. (A, G)
- There are many types of smiles in Thailand and it is hard to understand the meaning or differences for the foreigner. (F, G)
- Thai people are very discreet and distant to foreigners and will not tell you anything even they have a problem with you. There is no arguing/debating. (A, F, G)
- Thai people don't give opinion or feedback, especially in front of authority. (G, H)
- Thai people have a gossip culture; everybody is watching you therefore what you do and how you behave are very important. (G)
- There is a wrong impression of Turkish people in Thailand. Thai people think that Turkish people are similar to Middle Easterners even though Turkish people are quite different from them. (C, D)

### *Differences perceived positively*

- Thai people are more patient compared to the Turkish people. (C)
- Thai people are very smiling, more warm-hearted and sincere compared to Turkey. (D, E)
- In Thailand, personal relationships are very important. (E, G)

### *Similarities with Turkish culture*

- Thailand is a nationalist country (which can be seen with strict business and immigration rules for foreigners) same as Turkey. (B, E)
- Thai people are proud of their history and culture and cuisine, same as Turkey. (E)
- In Thailand, family is very important. Children are the center of the family and people always spend time with their extended family, which is very similar to Turkey. (B, G)
- Thai people don't like the question "why". (G)

During the interviews, it is observed that the negatively perceived differences make the expatriate feel challenged to adjust to the new culture, on the other hand, the similarities and the positively perceived differences make the adjustment easy for the expatriate. Hence, a balance is being reached by the expatriate towards the host country culture.

#### **4.4.4 Work-Related Challenges**

During the interviews, it is seen that work-related challenges are mostly arising from the cultural differences. The (mostly negatively) perceived challenges by Turkish people while working with Thai people can be summarized as below:

- Turkish people work aggressively and angry and in Thailand, this situation is perceived as negative. (A, B, C, F, G)
- Getting angry at work (short temper characteristic of Turkish people) doesn't result in a solution, on the contrary, people get stuck and start looking down on you. (A, B, C, G)

- Thai people say "Yes" or "OK" for any request, however don't comply or do something by their own way which is perceived by Turkish people as not keeping their word. (A, B, D, G)
- In Thailand, people are not flexible, not customer-oriented and not practical to think short ways, they always do the things in the same way, which are different from Turkey, Europe and the US. (C, E)
- In Thailand, you need to convince people to do some new things at work, they are not open to new things. (D, E, F, H)
- Thai people don't prefer to do multitasking while working. (E)
- In Turkey, life and work are more fast-based. However, in Thailand, everything is very slow and relaxed compared to Turkey. (C, D, E)

It is seen that the work-related challenges had affected the expatriates the most, because these people's main purpose to expatriate is working and they are spending their most of their time working. These differences were mostly learned by experiencing by the expatriates at the workplace. It is observed that the AEs had an additional difficulty about the work-related challenges than the SIEs, because they are also reporting to the headquarters and their superiors or colleagues at the headquarters are not familiar with the host country culture. Therefore, for the AEs, it is also challenging since they are expected to accomplish the assigned work in the host country with the same standards as in their headquarters.

#### **4.4.5 Family-Related Challenges**

Regardless of being a SIE or an AE or being single or married, 5 out of 8 respondents replied that they are missing their family back home and it is impossible to compensate the time lost in between when they are not with them. 2 of the married expatriates with Turkish spouses, Mr. D and Mr. H, mentioned that in the beginning their wives had a problem about being alone when they go to work and their children go to school and their wives couldn't adjust to their new life in Thailand due to limited network. Mr. B and Mr. D have also mentioned about Thai families to be closed and don't want to socialize with foreigner families and there are not much fully foreigner

families in their network to socialize together. Mr. G and Mr. H stated that their children didn't want to move to Thailand at first and after they come, it took 3-4 months for their children to fully adjust to their new school, new friends and new teachers however, after that everything is going well.

It is observed that the family adjustment is a very important factor for the expatriates who had moved to Thailand together with their family. The most affected persons in the family are the spouses, especially in case that they are not working, whereas the children can adjust to the new country within a couple of months. On the other hand, the expatriates who had married after they moved to Thailand, didn't face any similar problems, as expected. It is also noticed from the interviews that the expatriates who moved with their families are spending more time together with their families in the host country.

#### **4.4.6 Networking**

6 out of 8 respondents stated that networking was not a challenge for them. They explained that first you know some people and then they introduce you to other people, hence the network gets bigger. Remaining 2 of the respondents mentioned that Thai people are not very easily approachable therefore it is hard to socialize in Thailand. 2 of the AEs mentioned about the good impression of expatriates in Thailand which makes networking easy.

It is observed by the interviewer that where and how the expatriate is working, living, family conditions and related social environments and personal characteristic of being sociable affects the networking status of the expatriate. Furthermore, how much time and effort the expatriate put on networking and his/her networking expectations also have an effect.

#### **4.4.7 Current Challenges**

3 out of 8 respondents stated that they don't have any problem now. For the remaining 5 respondents, same challenges that have been mentioned are still continuing however their effect is reduced. As Mr. D stated, since "[they] have learned what to expect", everything is better now.

It is observed that the expatriates who are living in Thailand longer were more relaxed when answering this question, which shows that as the time passes and as the expatriate learns how to cope with the challenges and get used to the situation. This is why the effect of the challenge is reducing every day.

#### **4.4.8 How to Overcome Challenges**

It is seen that the interviewees had different tactics to overcome the challenges that they had faced. Ms. F said that “If you are working and living with different cultures, you should be like a chameleon. You should understand the culture and adjust yourself quickly.” Mr. A said that “You should accept that you are in a foreign country and you should be understanding even something feels very different or doesn’t make any sense to you.” Similarly, Mr. H said that “You should behave according to the culture of the country.” and “I spend more time with my family”. Mr. C said that “I am doing my hobbies to relieve my stress.” Mr. D said that “I have adjusted my expectations.” Mr. E said that “I am going out from Thailand frequently to miss Thailand.” Mr. G said that “Being yourself and using my own Anatolian culture as being warm-hearted are very effective in Thailand.”

Regarding the work, 3 of the respondents said that closely following up the work and sending frequent reminder e-mails are required to accomplish the work in Thailand. Regarding the language challenges, respondents stated that they started to learn the language. Regarding the food, they are eating different cuisines and also bringing the ingredients from their home country to cook by themselves. And lastly, about the traffic, they are adjusting the traffic hours or using motorcycles to commute.

The common statement from all expatriates was that in order to overcome the cultural challenges, one should try to understand the culture, be respectful and accept the differences. The other challenges which affects the living conditions can be overcome by small adjustments. It can be concluded that the cultural challenges are the most difficult to adjust to, on the other hand, the solution to other challenges such as food, weather, traffic etc. can be found more easily.



## **4.5 Adjustment**

In this section, the results of the questions related with the expatriates' adjustment process, adjustment levels and factors affecting the adjustment are discussed.

### **4.5.1 Effect of Cross-Cultural Training**

Mr. G and Mr. H, who had received a 1-day cross-cultural training, stated that it was helpful for them for the adjustment. Mr. G stated that it was especially helpful for him because they have a German company culture and Thai culture is very different from German culture for many aspects such as strict due dates, no flexibility, strong discussions, etc. On the other hand, Mr. H said that even though the training was helpful, it is not a necessity. Interviewer observed that the difference in their opinion is also dependent on the training quality. Mr. G's company used a professional company for this training, on the other hand, Mr. H's company conducted the training by their HR team members.

As mentioned in Section 4.3.3, the other interviewees hadn't received cross-cultural training, however, they had received some information from their friends, from the internet and from books. 4 out of 6 of these respondents stated that the information that they received was helpful for them for quick understanding and easy adjustment to the Thai culture. 2 of the respondents said that the information that they had received and the reality were very different, therefore they had a culture shock especially in the beginning.

5 out of 8 respondents stated that regardless of how long they are living in Thailand, they are still experiencing and learning the culture every day. Mr. H said that "Learning by experiencing yourself is very important and very precious for an expatriate."

It can be concluded that receiving the cross-cultural training or equivalent information through reading or discussions shortens the adjustment process to the new culture as the expatriate become prepared what to expect, what are the meaning of the behaviors and learn how to behave.

### **4.5.2 Thai Language**

All of the SIEs had learned to speak Thai language and 3 of them are in the intermediate or upper-intermediate level and 1 of them is in the beginner level. Generally, they are able to speak for daily communications, such as ordering food, finding the way, short questions and answers, etc. 2 of the SIEs had also mentioned that they would like to continue to improve their Thai language skills.

The AEs didn't give priority to learning Thai language over their jobs, furthermore, they think that learning Thai will not be useful for them for their career in the future, because Thai language is being spoken only in Thailand. Even though 3 of the AEs mentioned that they have a plan to learn Thai in the near future, they had stated that the intermediate level for speaking only would be enough for them. The remaining 1 of the AEs doesn't have a plan to learn Thai because he thinks that English is enough for his work. Interviewer observed that the AEs see themselves temporary in Thailand, that's why they don't think learning Thai language would bring them benefit in the long run in their lives. On the other hand, it is seen that since the SIEs have a plan to stay long term in Thailand, they pursued to learn the Thai language and their skills are better than the AEs which is in line with the literature (Farcas & Gonçalves, 2016).

However, 5 out of 8 respondents mentioned that speaking Thai is very effective to communicate with the people and it makes people happy and they receive sympathy from the Thai people as they speak.

### **4.5.3 Social Activities**

The interviewees were asked about how they socialize in Thailand and whether their companies arrange any social activities or not.

5 out of 8 respondents replied that their company have social activities, however, these activities don't really help them to socialize, these are mainly perceived as a necessity by the interviewees.

6 out of 8 respondents replied that they are mainly socializing with their friends in Turkish community. 4 of them said that they also have Thai and other nationality expatriate friends. Mr. C mentioned that it is hard to become friends with

Thai people generally because there are a language barrier and Thai people are shy to speak and closed to the foreigners.

5 out of 8 respondents said that they are doing sports activities as hobbies and these help them to socialize as well. 3 out of 8 respondents had also mentioned about joining the events organized by the Turkish Embassy.

It is seen that mainly the personal preferences and the expatriate's social environment effects the social adjustment of the expatriate.

#### 4.5.4 Adjustment Levels

The interviewees were asked to rate their level of adjustment to Thailand from 1 to 5 where 5 means the most adjusted. They were asked to score their life quality in Thailand and adjustment to the Thai culture. The results are given in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Adjustment Scores of the Interviewees to Thailand**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Life quality</b>	5	4	4	4	4.5	3	4	5
<i>Average</i>	<b>4.3</b>				<b>4.1</b>			
<b>Thai culture</b>	5	5	4	5	3.5	4	2.5	4
<i>Average</i>	<b>4.8</b>				<b>3.5</b>			
<b>Total</b>	10	9	8	9	8	7	6.5	9
<i>Average</i>	<b>9.0</b>				<b>7.6</b>			

It is seen that the SIEs' score for the life quality, the Thai culture and overall are higher than the score of the AEs. One of the reasons for this result would be the duration of staying in Thailand. The SIEs are living in Thailand in average more than 7 years, on the other hand, the AEs are living in Thailand in average more than 1 year. Therefore, the SIEs might have adjusted to their life in Thailand better than the AEs. Another reason might be that the SIEs may try to understand and adjust to the culture deeper than the AEs because the SIEs had selected Thailand as the host country by their own volition. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, it is observed that the AEs has a shorter time plan to stay, therefore they consider themselves temporary

in the host country. On the contrary, the SIEs plan to stay in Thailand for long term, hence they make an effort to become a part of the country. This results the adjustment scores of the SIEs to be higher than the SIEs.

#### **4.5.5 Reason for Adjustment**

The interviewees were asked the reasoning behind the scores given in Table 4.1 and which of their personal characteristics helped them for adjustment.

4 out of 8 respondents replied that accepting the cultural differences even it feels very different or not make any sense was the key for their adjustment. 2 of the respondents answered that their previous international experience helped them. Mr. G said that “While considering your adjustment, you should consider every place separately, don’t compare with other places. Advantages and disadvantages are different for every place. This a golden rule for expatriates.”

Being an easy person to adapt, warm-hearted, compassionate, understanding, positive and good communication are the personal characteristics that helped the expatriates to adjust to the new culture which is in line with the literature by Noe et al. (2018), Brimm (2016), Black & Gregersen (1999), Gomez-Meija et al. (2016), Littrell et al. (2006) and Evans et al. (2002).

#### **4.5.6 What Helped for Adjustment**

The interviewees were asked to explain what has helped them for their adjustment to the new country.

The SIEs stated that three conditions motivated them to adjust to the country:

- Thinking and feeling that they are not temporary in Thailand,
- Their family and working conditions make them to live in Thailand, and
- They don’t want to go back to Turkey.

The AEs replied differently. Mr. E said that his personal thinking and people’s smiles and good relations with them helped him to stay. Ms. F said that her expatriate friends supported her to stay and also going back would have meant being

not successful in her endeavor. Mr. G said that his family, especially his wife's support and his children's happiness in school helped him to adjust to live in Thailand. Mr. H said that his boarding school experience helped him for easy adjustment.

Here the main difference between the SIEs and the AEs is that the SIEs have more internal motivation than the AEs for adjustment because of their long-term plan to live in Thailand.

It can be concluded that below factors affect the adjustment of the expatriate to the host country and these results are coinciding with the framework of international adjustment of Black et al. (1991):

- Working conditions
- Family conditions
- Network conditions
- Personal motivation
- Host country's culture
- Previous experience

#### **4.5.7 The Useful Support/Information**

The interviewees were asked which support or information would have been useful for them before or after moving to Thailand.

2 of the respondents answered that if they had known more about the Thai working culture, i.e. being not aggressive and working slow-paced, that would have helped them to adjust. 3 of the respondents answered about having more knowledge and encouragement for work related issues would have been helpful for them. Mr. G replied that it would have been better if he had known about the tropical climate conditions. Mr. D replied that Thai language support from his company would have been very useful.

In order to complement the highlighted points by the respondents, below preparations and supports can be provided to the expatriates:

- Cross-cultural training explaining Thai culture and working style
- A pre-visit to the country
- Thai language lessons

- Information/practice about the new job/position
- Personal support



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusion

In this paper, as research questions, the differences between the SIEs and the AEs are investigated in terms of their individual characteristics, family and work situations, motivational drivers, their preparations before the expatriation, the challenges that they have faced and their adjustment process. The sample was including 8 Turkish expatriates (4 SIEs and 4 AEs) who are currently living and working in Thailand. It is concluded that there are some differences between SIEs and AEs in terms of individual characteristics, motivation for expatriation, preparation and the level and mode of adjustment. The similarities are found for the faced challenges and what helped for their adjustment. The results are summarized on the research framework of the study as shown in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 shows that the SIEs and the AEs have differences and similarities in their expatriation process. Full lined boxes show the characteristics of each type, i.e. the differences, whereas the dash lined boxes show the similarities for both types. The conclusions of the study can be summarized as below:

- The SIEs expatriated younger than the AEs, hence they have more international and host country experience.
- The SIEs mostly got married with local nationals after they expatriated. This is one of the indicators that they have long term plan to stay in the host country.
- Even though both the SIEs and the AEs had the career development motivation for moving, the SIEs have higher internal motivation than the AEs.
- The preparation time before moving was longer for the SIEs than the AEs. The main reason for that is the SIEs need to prepare everything about their lives by themselves, on the other hand the

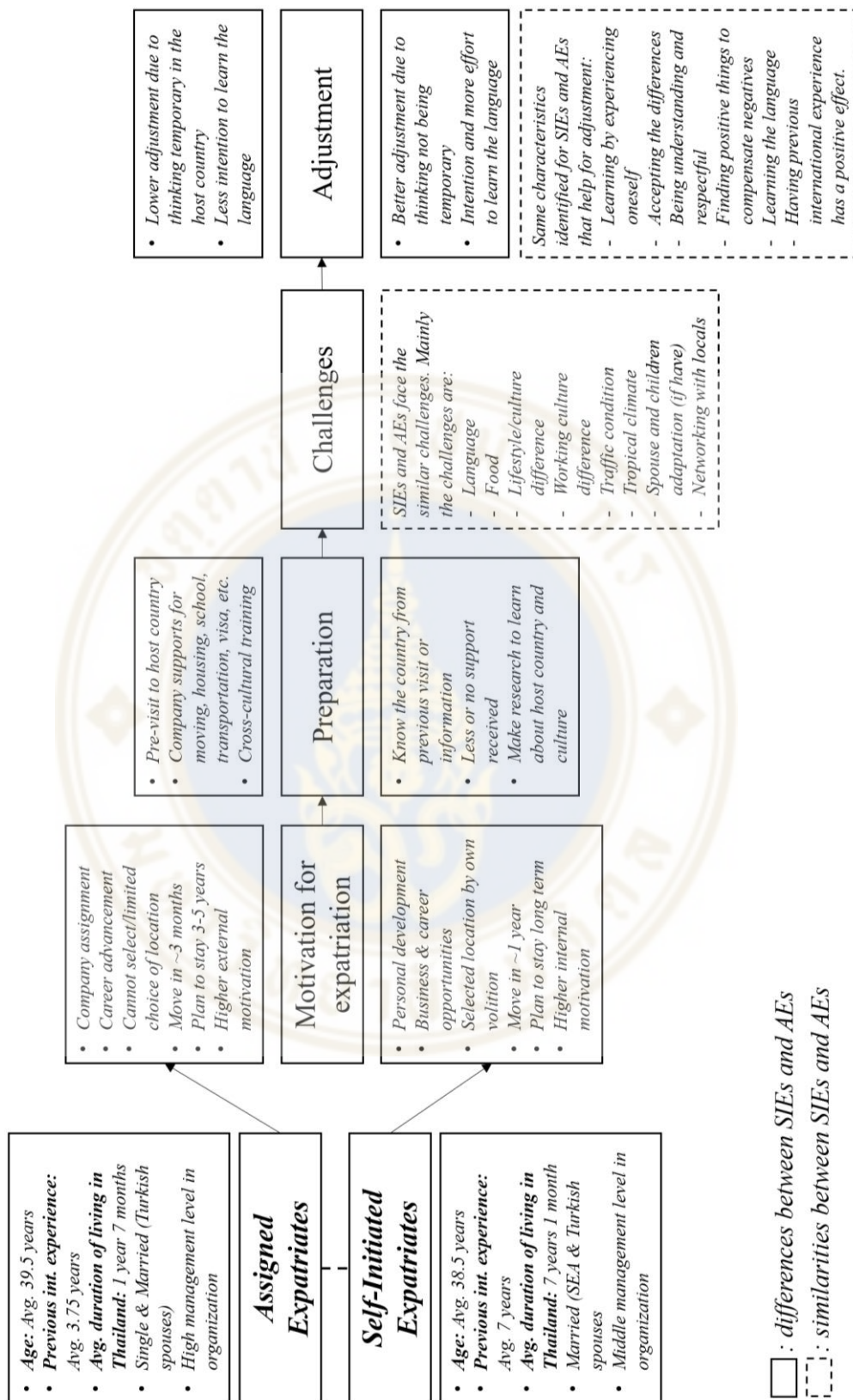


Figure 5.1 Differences and Similarities of Adjustment Process Between the SIEs and the AEs



AEs are fully supported by their companies.

- Even though the AEs received more support than the SIEs, their adjustment levels are lower, because the AEs consider themselves temporary in the host country.
- The faced challenges in the host country were mostly the same for both expatriate types. Especially language and work and culture related challenges are significant for all expatriates. The other challenges are the food, climate conditions, lifestyle differences, networking and family adjustment.
- The received support for both types helped for overcoming the challenges that were faced for the expatriates and helped for the adjustment.
- Even though helpful at the beginning, the effect of preparations and received support are limited for the overall adjustment to the host culture. This is seen when the adjustment scores of the AEs and SIEs are compared. Learning the culture by experiencing is very important.
- Personal mindset and motivation are important for the adjustment process. If one doesn't want accept the changes and differences, it is not possible to adjust to the new life in the host country.

The interesting findings in this research can be highlighted as below:

- Food is one of the biggest factors that was mentioned by the respondents to affect their adjustment process, because food is very important for Turkish society. This factor was not found in the literature.
- Turkey is physically located between Europe and Asia; hence the Turkish culture is also in between the European and the Asian culture. This provides an easiness for the Turkish expatriates to adjust to the Thai culture, especially for the everyday life and personal relations. However, Turkish working culture is closer to

the European culture. Therefore, understanding and adjusting to the Thai working culture is a challenging process for Turkish expatriates.

- Compared to Turkish society, Thai society is more relaxed, more patient and have a slower paced lifestyle. Depending on the situations, these characteristics have some advantages and disadvantages for the Turkish expatriates for their adjustment.
- By conducting this study, it is seen that the same factors are affecting the adjustment process of the expatriates of both types. However, the differences in the adjustment levels are aroused from the differences in the personal mindset of the SIEs and the AEs.
- Even though the result of this study complies with the previous literature findings, the limitation of this study is the sample size to be 8 for the interviews. The research can be done with a bigger sample size and the results can be checked with the literature accordingly. Also, the duration of living for the SIEs and AEs were different in the sample size. Since this could affect the result of the adjustment level of the expatriates, it would be better if the future studies consider to interview the expatriates who have the similar level of experience in the host country.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The recommendations to the expatriates and to the companies who are working with expatriates can be summarized as below:

- It is good to have support at the beginning for the most urgent needs of the expatriate and his/her family such as housing, school, visa, etc.
- Having a mentor or a friend to advise the expatriate about the culture helps him/her to understand the cultural differences easily which shortens the time for the adjustment.

- A good preparation about the culture, language and work would help to adjust more easily to the new life in the host country.
- Networking is not a problem if the expatriate is a social person. Once you know one person, the network expands easily. Company social activities, expatriate community and sports activities help for networking.
- Spouse and children adjustment to the host country effects the adjustment of the expatriate.

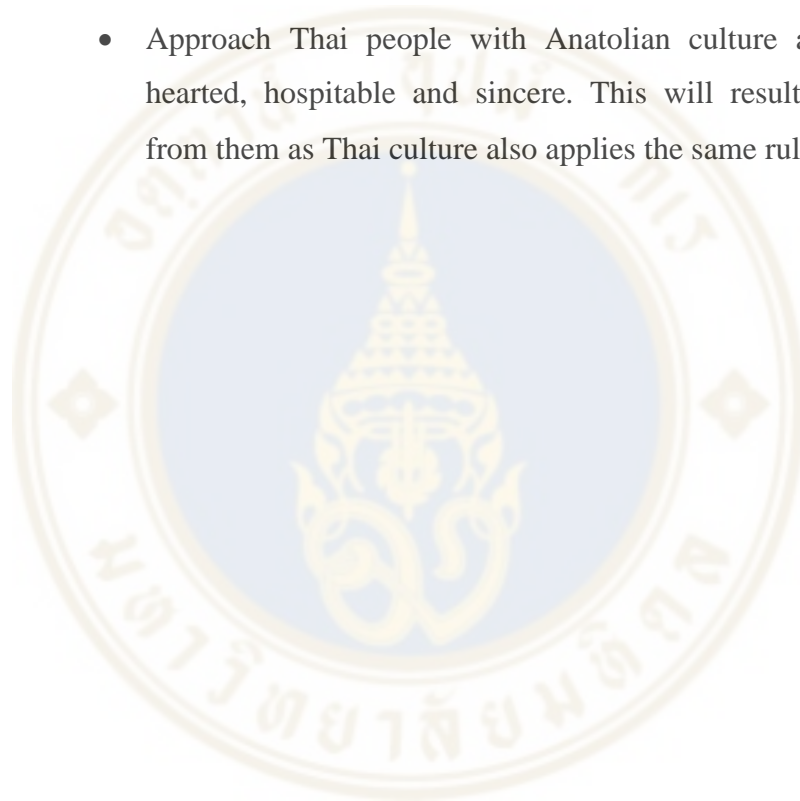
Recommendations of the interviewees to expatriates are as below:

- Be respectful to the people and to the culture.
- Be understanding, positive and compassionate towards the people.
- Be a good communicator.
- Be open-minded and not prejudiced about the culture.
- Have a technical expertise.
- Learn and study about the culture, religion and working culture.
- Learn the language.
- Visit the country (not as a tourist but as an explorer to settle) at least once before moving.
- Study about cost-of-living.
- Adjust your expectations, don't have too high expectations.
- Don't try to change the environment instead adjust yourself to the environment.
- Don't think that you are temporary in the host country.
- Keep your self-motivation
- Continue to learn by experiencing yourself
- Enjoy the experience since being an expatriate widens one's world and vision.

Furthermore, recommendations specific to Turkish expatriates who plan to come to Thailand can be summarized as below:

- Be patient, don't get angry easily.

- Especially at work, give more time for getting things done.
- You may need to double check and follow up the work closely.
- It's hard to find Turkish food ingredients in Thailand, be prepared for this condition.
- Cost of living in Thailand is not cheap.
- If a Thai person agrees on something but doesn't comply to it later, this doesn't mean s/he is not keeping his/her word. This means s/he didn't want to disagree with you explicitly at the beginning.
- Approach Thai people with Anatolian culture as being warm-hearted, hospitable and sincere. This will result good feedback from them as Thai culture also applies the same rules.



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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs

	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Background Information</b>	<b>Expatriate type</b>	SIE Turkey Manager	SIE Turkey Business Owner	SIE Turkey Manager	SIE Turkey Manager
	<b>Nationality</b>	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey
	<b>Position in company</b>	Manager	Business Owner	Manager	Manager
	<b>Duration of living in Thailand</b>	9Y	12Y	6Y 6M	1Y 1M
	<b>Previous International Experience</b>	Yes (4Y)	Yes (6Y)	Yes (4Y)	Yes (14Y)
	<b>Marital status</b>	Married	Married	Married	Married
	<b>Age</b>	40	34	38	42
	<b>Gender</b>	Male	Male	Male	Male
	<b>Previous trip to Thailand</b>	1 week for interviews, alone. Effective for adjustment.	Several trips to Asia and working experience in Thailand while making research for own business	Visited Thailand before to meet with wife's parents	Visited Thailand 3 times as tourist
	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>2. Motivation of expatriation</b>	For career improvement. SEA is an important region for his business sector.	Gaining scholarship. Job opportunities and more entrepreneurship opportunities due to underdevelopment situation of countries in SEA and want to make something as the first person in the market	To improve himself (language and higher education)
<b>3. Motivation of expatriation to Thailand</b>		More job opportunities in Thailand compared to other SEA countries	More market opportunities in Thailand due to young population, high consumption and society who follows the trend. Liked Thailand due to tropical climate.	Due to wife, looking to live in SEA. Thailand had more job opportunities. Better working conditions in Thailand than in Turkey for his wife.	Looking for other jobs and received a job offer from Thailand. Likes Thailand geographically (hot weather, tropical) and a developed country in the SEA region.
<b>3. How long between decision and movement?</b>		1.5 years	1 year	1 year	3 months
<b>4. Time plan to live in Thailand</b>		No specific plan. Long term. As long as keeping the same life quality.	Until 2025. Due to forecasts in economic slow down like developed countries	No specific plan. Long term. As long as keeping the same life quality.	Total 3 years. Have a plan to go back to Turkey because far away from Turkey for a long time.



## Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	A	B	C	D
	<p><b>5. Preparation before moving</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home search close to work</li> <li>- Studied Thai politics and culture (from internet)</li> <li>- Cost of living</li> <li>- Visa conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading translated books</li> <li>- Travelling with motorcycle and doing market research and detailed observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepared himself and his family psychologically</li> <li>- Visa conditions</li> <li>- Moving preparations in Turkey</li> <li>- Knew Thai culture, customs, political conditions, etc. from his wife (They lived together in US for 3 years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home search</li> <li>- School search for children</li> <li>- Moving preparations from the previous country</li> <li>- Studied the company operations in Thailand</li> <li>- Knew Thai culture, politics before from their previous visit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preparation</b></p>	<p><b>6. Support received before or after</b></p>	<p>Received support from the people who helped for job search and who hired him</p> <p>Helped for home search, where to buy daily needs, where to go, some Thai customs. However done most of the things by himself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some support monetary support (rental fee for 3 months, transportation, from the company that he was working at that time)</li> <li>- No other support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No support for the first job. Needed to change the job due to different working conditions than agreed.</li> <li>- Later some people close to him supported to find the second job by arranging interviews.</li> <li>- However, his wife is Thai.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No support from anybody</li> <li>- Found some contacts in Thailand who supported to find a real estate company for house rental</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Cross-cultural training</b></p>	<p>No training.</p> <p>Became friends with his boss who is a foreigner having a Thai wife and living in Thailand for 15 years.</p> <p>Supported him to explain the cultural differences and advise him when he made a mistake for his behavior</p>	<p>No training.</p> <p>Reading books and translations of Thai books.</p>	<p>No training.</p> <p>Received information from his Thai wife.</p> <p>Colleagues at work (superior and/or subordinate) give guidance and advise him when he made a mistake for his behavior.</p>	<p>No training.</p> <p>Studied by himself for the culture, religion, life styles (in order to understand and adjust himself, very different from Turkey)</p> <p>Asked to colleagues and Turkish friends</p>	

## Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	A	B	C	D
<b>8. Challenges</b>	<b>a. Challenges at first</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cannot find something that you are looking for.</li> <li>- Cannot speak the language</li> </ul> However nothing feels as a challenge with the enthusiasm of the beginning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business challenges 51/49, 4-to-1, increasing labor cost, no support for the investor</li> <li>- Personal challenges</li> <li>- Negative reactions to foreigners</li> <li>- Thai food</li> <li>- Traffic condition</li> <li>- Double pricing to foreigners</li> <li>- Long immigration queues (no special treatment for work permit holders)</li> </ul>	Thai food Cannot speak the language	Cannot speak the language Traffic condition (lack of mass transportation, not obeying the traffic rules)
	<b>b. Current challenges</b>	Item 1 in Appendix C. It is getting harder after you learn the culture.	Same as in the beginning	Company inside politics however it is the same all over the world. That culture challenges (Item 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 in Appendix C)	No problem since you have learned and know what to expect.
	<b>How to overcome challenges</b>	Accepting that we are in a foreign country, being understanding even something feels very different or not make any sense to you.	Eating other cuisines Using motorcycle to overcome traffic	Relieving stress by doing his hobbies Learning the language Customizing the food while ordering Sending reminder emails all the time to follow-up work.	Adjusting your expectations Learning language Adjusting traffic hours Closely follow-up the work.
	<b>Personal challenges</b>		2 times police foreigner hunting		
	<b>Cultural differences</b>	Item 2 & 4 in Appendix C	Item 4 & 5 in Appendix C	Item 7 & 8 in Appendix C	Wrong impression of Turkish people in Thailand (same as Middle East), however they think that our working style is same as European and that intimidates Thai people.
	<b>Work related</b>	Item 2 in Appendix C	Item 2 & 3 in Appendix C	Item 2, 3 & 6 in Appendix C	Item 4 & 6 in Appendix C
	<b>Family related</b>	Missing family back home Sometimes they come to visit	Visa-immigration problems as a foreigner family	Missing family back home Wrong impression of Turkish people in Thailand effected his wife's family. Now they accepted him.	His wife had a problem to adjust to live in Thailand For wife, it was hard to find friends (Hard to socialize with Thai people and not so much fully foreign families)
	<b>Networking</b>	It is not hard to have a network. First you know some person and then they introduce another one. The network gets bigger.	Limited family networking (because That families don't socialize other than their own family), therefore the child sees his parents as friends	First you know some person and then they introduce another one. The network gets bigger.	It is not hard to have a network. I am a sociable person. I meet with people very easily.

## Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs (cont.)

Interviewee	A	B	C	D
<b>7. Effect of CCT</b>	Was effective 50 percent. Remaining 50 percent is still learning by himself. It is impossible to understand the Thai customs/culture fully. Therefore, just accept the differences.	Learned information from books were effective to adjust my behavior and respect Thai culture and act accordingly	Cultural information that I have received and what I have experienced was very different. I had a culture shock in the beginning. Still learning by himself.	The information that he received from his friends were helpful to be more understanding and careful for the issues that he could not understand for the culture. The life style effects the working style.
<b>9. Thai language</b>	Intermediate level. Ordering food, taking a cab, asking and answering easy questions.	Enough level to handle daily routines, ordering food, finding way, etc.	Upper intermediate level and still learning. Ordering food, finding way, short discussions at work, etc., but not professional Thai	Beginner level and learning. You receive sympathy as you try to speak.
<b>10. Social activities</b>	Normal company activities (new year party, training events, company outings) Embassy activities Sports Turkish or Thai friends which they can meet on common grounds	Company activities (lunch every week, yearly sightseeing trip, cultural activities in religion days) Some Turkish friends but not much, mainly being a family-man	No company activities Embassy activities Sports Turkish friends which they can meet on common grounds It is hard to socialize with Thai people (due to language barrier, being shy and closed)	Many company activities (especially CSR activities) Establishing Turkish Business People Association Sports Joining Thai cultural activities Travelling in Thailand
<b>11. a. Life quality</b>	5	4	4	4
<b>11. b. Thai culture</b>	5	5	4	5
<b>Reason for adjustment (&amp; personal characteristic that helped for adjustment)</b>	We have to accept and adjust our living in Thailand	By showing respect, accepting the things even it feels very different or not make any sense to you.	Accepting the things even it feels very different or not make any sense to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being stubborn</li> <li>- Being positive</li> <li>- Being understanding</li> <li>- Being warm and compassionate</li> <li>- Previous cross-cultural experiences</li> <li>- Being mature/patient</li> </ul>
<b>Adjustment</b>				

## Appendix A: Interview Results – SIEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	A	B	C	D
<b>Adjustment</b>	<b>12. What helped for adjustment?</b>	Motivation to work in Thailand and not wanting to go back to Turkey	Strong bonds and sincerity within the core team in the company.	Working because it keeps you busy and you can make money and visa conditions are solved by working. Obligation to live in Thailand due to immediate family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal approach (trying to understand and know them, learning language, being positive)</li> <li>- Adjusting your thinking that you are living in this country, that you are not temporary</li> </ul>
	<b>13. Support/information which could have been useful</b>	There was 1 person to support me in the beginning. If there had been more, it would shorten the time for adjustment. However, I have done everything by myself and I would do the same again.	More encouragement from outside to seize more business opportunities. However, being a foreigner and not being able to speak Thai fully hindered to enter to the new businesses. Also Thailand doesn't govern international law regulations.	To know about the working style in Thailand (not aggressive and slow-based) However, wife's support was a big advantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thai working information from the company would have been useful.</li> <li>- Explaining the necessity of Thai language</li> <li>- Teaching Thai language within the company</li> <li>- Company support to find home in Thailand</li> </ul>
	<b>14. Advice to other expats coming to Thailand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being patient</li> <li>- Being understanding</li> <li>- Know that the religion is different</li> <li>- Don't try to change the environment instead adjust yourself to the environment</li> <li>- Study and learn about the culture</li> <li>- Learn how to speak Thai</li> <li>- Represent Turkey well</li> <li>- Before moving, visit Thailand alone to see if you can live in this country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being respectful to the culture</li> <li>- Asia is not a cheap destination</li> <li>- Don't try to change the environment instead adjust yourself to the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn how to speak Thai</li> <li>- Get used to the Thai food</li> <li>- Thailand is not cheap, some things which are very common in Turkey are very expensive.</li> <li>- Before moving, visit Thailand alone to see if you can live in this country</li> <li>- Study cost of living before moving to Thailand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being understanding</li> <li>- Study and learn about the culture</li> <li>- Being open-minded</li> <li>- Not being prejudiced</li> <li>- Being positive, warm and compassionate</li> <li>- Mentally adjust that you would not be temporary in here, you would be settled in here to live.</li> <li>- Adjusting your expectations about the infrastructure since there are many things to improve</li> <li>- Living in harmony</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs

	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Interviewee</b>				
<b>Expatriate type</b>	AE	AE	AE	AE
<b>Nationality</b>	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey
<b>Position in company</b>	Director	Manager	Manager	Managing Director
<b>Duration of living in Thailand</b>	3Y 6M	7M	1Y 4M	1Y 1M
<b>Previous International Experience</b>	Yes (2Y)	Yes (4Y)	Yes (4Y)	Yes (5Y)
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	Single	Married	Married
<b>Age</b>	30	36	44	48
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female	Male	Male
<b>Background Information</b>				
<b>Previous trip to Thailand</b>	No previous trip to Thailand.	No previous trip to Thailand.	No previous trip to Thailand. Info trip with family for 1 week	Visited Thailand as a tourist and for a work trip. Pre-visit with family for 1 week before moving.
<b>2. Motivation of expatriation</b>	To have a different experience and widen his vision and perspective. To represent Turkey abroad with his work.	To have an international experience and to improve her career. Better economic opportunities.	For career improvement because company requires.	To improve himself by working with different cultures for a better future, career improvement.
<b>3. Motivation of expatriation to Thailand</b>	Company assignment. No opportunity for selection. If not accept, no career path in the company for the future.	Company assignment in SEA. Had opportunity for selection. Thailand is expat-friendly and more developed compared to the other countries in the region.	Company assignment. Had opportunity for selection. Better conditions for living and for family compared to other proposed countries.	Company assignment. No opportunity for selection.
<b>3. How long between decision and movement?</b>	1.5 months	2.5 months	8 months	20 days
<b>4. Time plan to live in Thailand</b>	Not specified. Depend on company new assignment consideration. Should be ready to go anytime.	Not specified by the company. 3-4 years. However, has a plan to move to Europe in the 2. year.	3 years 4 months. Can be extended but no plan for the moment.	3 to 5 years. Depend on company new assignment consideration.
<b>Motivation</b>				

## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	E	F	G	H
<p><b>Preparation</b></p>	<p><b>5. Preparation before moving</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Studied Thailand market for his business</li> <li>- Studied Thailand sociological aspects for business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving preparations</li> <li>- Read about Thailand and Thai culture from internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving preparations</li> <li>- His wife has resigned from her government job</li> <li>- Come to info-trip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving preparations</li> <li>- Looking for schools for the children</li> <li>- Come to pre-visit</li> </ul>
	<p><b>6. Support received before or after</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR department of the Thai company arranges/coordinates every process (visa, company legal, agent for home search etc.)</li> <li>- Looked for a home with agent that the company arranged within 2 weeks after arrival</li> <li>- Other Turkish people in the company explains their experiences and give advices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Company supported for moving by container, visa procedures, etc. until moving to Thailand.</li> <li>- After moving, expat friends working in the same company supported to find home, supported as a family (going out together, psychologically supported)</li> <li>- No support from Thai staff in Thai company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Company supported for everything including HR department in Turkey and Thailand.</li> <li>- Company has prepared all visa procedures, work permit, home, school, transportation, transportation to work with driver, moving by container (however they prefer to keep their home in Turkey).</li> <li>- Received information /opinions/ experiences of the Turkish people who have been living in Thailand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Company supported for everything including HR department in Turkey and Thailand.</li> <li>- Company has prepared all visa procedures, work permit, home, school, transportation, transportation to work with driver, moving by container (however they prefer to keep their home in Turkey).</li> <li>- Received information /opinions/ experiences of the Turkish people who have been living in Thailand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Cross-cultural training</b></p>	<p>No training. Studied by himself by reading the books and articles about the Thai history and comparing with Turkish history. Item 5 &amp; 11 in Appendix C</p>	<p>No training (normally company prepares a booklet for the expats in Singapore however it was not prepared for Thailand). Studied by herself from the internet, mainly about foreigner opinions about Thailand.</p>	<p>Attended a 1-day training with 2 specialists outside of the company. It was like a workshop and including information about Thailand, Thai culture and Thai working culture and daily life.</p>	<p>Attended a 1-day training with 2 specialists outside of the company. It was like a workshop and including information about Thailand, Thai culture and Thai working culture and daily life.</p>	<p>HR gave a briefing about Thai culture, what are the priorities, what would be respectful-disrespectful, etc.</p>

## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	E	F	G	H
<b>8. Challenges</b>	<b>a. Challenges at first</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hard to adjust to the hot weather.</li> <li>- Slow-paced lifestyle</li> <li>- Many different sexual orientation people in the society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language problem. People cannot speak English</li> <li>- Faced a health problem in the 2nd week and couldn't communicate with the doctor</li> <li>- Hard to adjust to the hot weather</li> <li>- Turkish food ingredients are not available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thai food</li> <li>- Everything (especially main food items for Turkish people) is expensive.</li> <li>- Turkish food ingredients are not available.</li> <li>- Hard to adjust to the hot weather</li> <li>- Bug and small creature population due to hot weather.</li> </ul>	<p>To establish a good and trust relationship with the employees and make them know you and your targets in order to be a good team.</p> <p>To learn the background of the job in order to be able to make decisions. Decisions were taking time.</p> <p>Long working hours at the beginning.</p> <p>For daily challenges, where to find what you are looking for.</p> <p>Hot weather</p> <p>People don't speak English</p>
	<b>b. Current challenges</b>	<p>Mainly slow pace and Thai - Turkish working style not matching related problems</p> <p>Bugs on the street (have phobia)</p>	<p>Better than the beginning however still continue some problems.</p>	<p>No problem</p>	<p>No problem</p> <p>Early sleeping and waking up schedule</p>
	<b>How to overcome challenges</b>	<p>Going out from Thailand frequently to miss Thailand. Closely follow-up the work. Firstly I was not trying to adapt to Thailand because I was not planning to stay. After 7 months, I have accepted that I will continue to live in Thailand.</p>	<p>If you are working and living with different cultures, you should be like a chameleon. I understand the culture and adjusted myself quickly.</p>	<p>Being himself and warm-hearted and using Anatolia culture is very effective in Thailand. Bring Turkish food ingredients from Turkey. Used pest control frequently</p>	<p>You should behave according to the culture of the country. Spend more time with family.</p>
	<b>Personal challenges</b>	<p>I am hyperactive and this is a very slow country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loneliness was the biggest problem</li> <li>- Considered to go back in the 2nd week</li> </ul>		<p>Mostly changing position related</p>

## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	E	F	G	H
<p><b>8. Challenges</b></p>	<p><b>Cultural differences</b></p>	<p>Item 6 in Appendix C Turkey is more conservative about sexual orientation and I can be prejudicial sometimes about this issue.</p>	<p>In Turkey, we take care of foreigners very well. However, here even I got sick and couldn't go to work and nobody called me to check if I am OK. Thai people are quite distant by as the time passes, we started to know and trust each other and now it's better.</p>	<p>Thailand has gossip culture, therefore what you do, how you behave is very important. I couldn't accept this situation. Item 1 in Appendix C</p>	<p>Item 9 &amp; 15 in Appendix C</p>
	<p><b>Work related</b></p>	<p>Item 6, 7 &amp; 12 in Appendix C</p>	<p>Item 2 in Appendix C</p>	<p>Item 2, 4 &amp; 13 in Appendix C</p>	<p>First time to have this wide-range of responsibility in the company. Challenging but exciting since it is the first time. Item 6 &amp; 9 in Appendix C</p>
	<p><b>Family related</b></p>	<p>Missing family back home. Sometimes they come to visit Every month, he goes to visit Turkey</p>	<p>Missing family back home. Cannot go back to Turkey easily and cannot be able to support your family in case of a health problem.</p>		<p>- Finding markets/places suitable for them - The children didn't want to move at first but then easily adapted in 3 months. - Hard to find same/similar activities for the family members as Turkey - His wife had a problem to find friends etc. in the beginning. - Missing family back home - Cannot replace times lost for your children to spend with their grandparents</p>
	<p><b>Networking</b></p>	<p>No problem Good impression of expats in Thailand Many expats all over the world Many networking opportunities</p>	<p>Thai people are not easily approachable to become friends.</p>	<p>Good impression of expats in Thailand We think the networking should be as family. In the beginning we didn't know much people but by time it has been improved. It was our decision to be this way.</p>	<p>First you know some person and then they introduce another one. The network gets bigger.</p>



## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs (cont.)

Interviewee	E	F	G	H
<b>7. Effect of CCT</b>	<p>The readings I have done helped to learn culture's sensitivities, rules and dynamism. Still learning everyday.</p>	<p>Her study from internet was not helpful because the actual experience was different. Learned by experiencing herself and still learning.</p>	<p>The CCT was very helpful. Because Thai working culture is very different from European (especially German) working style (strict due dates, no flexibility, detailed and long planning term, strong discussions, high discipline). We have learn how to establish trust between yourself and the Thai employee which is essential to work together.</p>	<p>Helpful but it is not a necessity for adaptation. Learning by experiencing himself which is very important for an expat.</p>
<b>9. Thai language</b>	<p>In order to increase interaction with staff, everyday they taught 1 Thai word and I taught 1 Turkish word. Using Thai words makes people happy. I will start basic Thai lessons in the near future. Only had problems while taking taxi but found a solution somehow.</p>	<p>Begin to learn Thai to communicate easily in daily life. Colleagues help to prepare some language cards. It helped to reduce double pricing to foreigners because they understand that you are not a tourist, helped to communicate easier.</p>	<p>I don't have a plan to learn Thai language because I don't contact with factory workers directly. But it would be useful to know if have time to learn it.</p>	<p>Couldn't find time to learn the language. However it is very important for people to accept you and it would be very effective to communicate with people. Thai language is very hard, especially pronunciation. I will try to arrange a time in my schedule to learn Thai for the daily communication level.</p>
<b>10. Social activities</b>	<p>Networking is the main requirement of his job. The company gives budget to sponsor to the events and he can invite many people as his own will. Therefore he has many friends in Thailand now (mainly Thai). Item 13 in Appendix C Sports</p>	<p>- Travels a lot for work - Likes to travel for sightseeing - Mainly doing activities with other expat friends</p>	<p>There are company outings but those are mostly necessity. There are Turkish and Australian families that they are seeing each other. It is important to keep our own values while socializing.</p>	<p>Sports (cycling, golf) Meeting with Turkish community friends Embassy activities Friends come to visit Thailand Dinner with local people</p>
<b>11. a. Life quality</b>	4.5	3	4	5
<b>11. b. Thai culture</b>	3.5	4	2.5	4
<b>Reason for adjustment (&amp; personal characteristic that helped for adjustment)</b>	<p>- I accept the cultural difference and can adapt to it very easily as my characteristic. - Finding positive things to compensate the negative things of the country. - Item 10 in Appendix C - Likes Thai food very much.</p>	<p>I try not to bother anymore.</p>	<p>- You should consider every place separately, don't compare with other places. Advantages and disadvantages are different for every place. This is a golden rule for expatriates. - Anatolian culture, good communication</p>	<p>- Being an easy person to adapt - Our previous experience in Indonesia (similar conditions as Thailand)</p>
<b>Adjustment</b>				

## Appendix B: Interview Results – AEs (cont.)

	Interviewee	E	F	G	H
	<p><b>12. What helped for adjustment?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal thinking</li> <li>- Having good and positive relations with people in Thailand</li> <li>- Item 10 in Appendix C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being persistent to live in Thailand (letting go would mean being not successful)</li> <li>- Personal characteristic to be easily adjustable to new settings</li> <li>- Support of my friend who lived here long time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My family, especially my wife to be an educated person and her ability to speak English and my kids' happiness and adaptation to their school and sports activities.</li> <li>- Travelling in Thailand and neighbor countries.</li> <li>- For work, everything is standard all over the world in every factory. You don't feel any difference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our previous experience in Indonesia, we feel like we are still living there.</li> <li>- Boarding school experience</li> </ul>
	<p><b>13. Support/information which could have been useful</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better job know-how and market-social condition knowledge of the Thai staff</li> </ul>	<p>I prefer to learn by experiencing by myself. Even I had some information about Thai working culture, I would do as my instincts and learn along the way.</p>	<p>It would have been better to know the bug population and tropical climate conditions before coming to Thailand. Our pre-visit was on the best season therefore we couldn't see any problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some training in Turkey related with new job assignment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adjustment</b></p>	<p><b>14. Advice to other expats coming to Thailand</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjusting expectations are important and effective for the adaptation process</li> <li>- Learn and understand Thai working style</li> <li>- Being open-minded</li> <li>- Being compassionate and a good communicator</li> <li>- Daily recommendations (where to live, eat, visit)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You need to have self-motivation. Nobody can help you if you don't help yourself.</li> <li>- Learn by experiencing yourself</li> <li>- Being strong</li> <li>- Try to adjust to the hot weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn the culture and try to adapt to it.</li> <li>- Know that the religion is different.</li> <li>- Be yourself and be live decently because everybody is watching and you cannot separate private and personal lives.</li> <li>- Give a substantial amount of time to mentoring, coaching</li> <li>- Know that the turnover rate is very high and for Thai employees it is easy to find job.</li> <li>- Item 3 in Appendix C. Getting angry is not the solution.</li> <li>- Reduce your expectations for the work speed and quantity.</li> <li>- Should have an expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study what are the important points for the culture and for making people to accept you in the culture.</li> <li>- Learn about religion</li> <li>- Learn to speak the language, this has a positive effect.</li> <li>- Show respect to the people, to the culture</li> <li>- Accepting the things even it feels very different or not make any sense to you.</li> <li>- Don't forget that you will go back someday (repatriate) and don't look for same life standards back home.</li> <li>- Being an expat widens peoples world and vision. It is also helpful for the family especially for children.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Common Statements by SIEs and AEs

Common Statements	Interviewees	
<b>1</b>	Thai people say "No" for the issues that they don't understand or don't want to do because the suggestion is coming from a foreigner.	A, G
<b>2</b>	Turkish people work aggressively and angry and in Thailand this to be perceived as negative.	A, B, C, F, G
<b>3</b>	Getting angry at work (short temper characteristic of Turkish people) doesn't result to a solution, on the contrary people get stuck and start look down on you.	A, B, C, G
<b>4</b>	Thai people say "Yes" or "OK" for any request however don't comply or do something by their own way which is perceived by Turkish people as not keeping their word.	A, B, D, G
<b>5</b>	Thailand is a nationalist country (which can be seen with strict business and immigration rules for foreigners) same as Turkey.	B, E
<b>6</b>	In Turkey, the life is more fast-based. However, in Thailand everything is very slow and relaxed compared to Turkey.	C, D, E
<b>7</b>	In Thailand, people are not flexible, not customer oriented and not practical to think short cuts, always do the things on the same way, which are different from Turkey, Europe and US.	C, E
<b>8</b>	Thai people are more patient compared to the Turkish people.	C
<b>9</b>	Need to convince the people to do some new things at work, not open to new things	D, E, F, H
<b>10</b>	Thai people are very smiling, more warm-hearted and sincere compared to Turkey.	D, E
<b>11</b>	Thai people are proud of their history and culture and cuisine, same as Turkey.	E
<b>12</b>	Thai people don't prefer to do multi-tasking while working.	E
<b>13</b>	In Thailand, personal relationships are very important.	E, G
<b>14</b>	In Thailand, family is very important. Child is the center of the family and people always spend time with their extended family, which is very similar to Turkey.	B, G
<b>15</b>	Thai people don't give opinion or feedback, especially in front of authority.	G, H
<b>16</b>	There are many types of smile in Thailand and it is hard to understand the meaning or differences for the foreigner.	F, G
<b>17</b>	Thai people don't like the question "why".	G
<b>18</b>	Thai people are very discreet and will not tell you anything even they have a problem with you. There is no arguing.	A, G
<b>19</b>	There is a big difference between visiting a country for touristic purposes and living & working there.	A, C, F