# SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOL MIGRANT TEACHERS' SCHOOL-BASED EXPERIENCES IN THE ARAB GULF COUNTRIES

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I, Lucille-Dawn Anganoo, declare that this research study presents my original work and it has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other University.

22 November 2019

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Signature Date

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Supervisor Date

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## DEDICATION

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Becoming a mom in the midst of completing this study was challenging but ever so rewarding. You became my inspiration from the day I knew of your existence. Remember to never stop believing in yourself. You can achieve any goal you work towards.

I love you more than you will ever know!

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADEC** | Abu Dhabi Education Council |
| **ADEK** | Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge |
| **ATM** | Automated Teller Machine |
| **BEd** | Bachelor of Education |
| **CAPS** | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
| **CTRP** | Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol |
| **CV** | Curriculum Vitae |
| **DBE** | Department of Basic Education |
| **DoE** | Department of Education |
| **EDM** | Emerging, Developing and Mastering |
| **EFL** | English Foreign Language |
| **EFT** | Electronic Funds Transfer |
| **EMI** | English Medium of Instruction |
| **ESL** | English Second Language |
| **FET** | Further Education and Training |
| **FGD** | Focus Group Discussion |
| **FP** | Foundation Phase |
| **GCC** | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| **GDP** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **GEM** | Global Education Monitoring |
| **HFW** | High Frequency Words |
| **HOD** | Head of Department |

| | |
|---|---|
| **IB** | Inquiry-Based |
| **ICT** | Information and Communication Technologies |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organisation |
| **IoE** | Institute of Export |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **ISC** | International School Consultancy |
| **IT** | Information Technology |
| **KG** | Kindergarten |
| **KZN** | Kwa-Zulu Natal |
| **MDG** | Millennium Development Goals |
| **MoE** | Ministry of Education |
| **NSM** | New School Model |
| **OBE** | Outcomes Based Education |
| **OTT** | Overseas Trained Teachers |
| **PD** | Professional Development |
| **PhD** | Doctor of Philosophy |
| **PS LINK** | Public Service Labour Independent Confederation |
| **PYP** | Primary Year Programme |
| **SA** | South Africa |
| **SACE** | South African Council of Educators |
| **SADTU** | South African Democratic Teachers Union |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SGB** | School Governing Body |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SSE** | School Self-Evaluation |
| **STEM** | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| **TEFL** | Teaching English as a Foreign Language |
| **UAE** | United Arab Emirates |
| **UK** | United Kingdom |
| **UKZN** | University of Kwa Zulu Natal |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNESCO** | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| **UR-CE** | University of Rwanda – College of Education |
| **USA** | United States of America |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER 6**: INSIGHTS

I AM A VISITOR, THANKFUL TO THE HOST COUNTRY FOR THEIR INVITE

## LIST OF FIGURES

## LIST OF TABLES

**Tables** **Page number**

## ABSTRACT

This study explored the reasons for South African teachers from primary schools migrating to teach in the Arab Gulf. It also examined what were migrant teachers' initial school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries and after six months including why they have these particular experiences. Theories of international migration (neoclassical, dual labour, new economics and social networks) relevant to the migration of the highly skilled and theories on migrant teachers' experiences (Huberman, 1989; Day & Kington, 2008; Bailey & Mulder, 2017; Miller, 2019) and acculturation (Bense, 2016), informed the study. The data was generated from a qualitative ethnographic case study using interviews, focus group discussions and diary entries. The majority of the teachers in the sample migrated to primary and secondary schools in Abu Dhabi due to feelings of 'relative deprivation' as a result of economic reasons and the enormous perks offered by recruitment agencies in this destination. Their profiles revealed that they were also predominantly seasoned teachers of Indian descent. The pull factors influencing their decisions were greater than the push factors and these included the high salary earned abroad, better professional development opportunities, living in an Islamic country and easy travel to other destinations from the Arab Gulf. A key finding of the present study, was that of *unencumbered movers* in the sample: seasoned female migrant teachers who were single, with no children. Common migrant teachers' experiences included having an abundance of resources that assisted in curriculum delivery, perceived ill-disciplined learners and a lack of parental involvement in public schools in Abu Dhabi, the language barrier inhibiting teaching and learning and xenophobia. Migrant teachers showed initiative in quickly learning how to customize their lessons according to each learner's ability so that learners were able to pass their assessments. The findings revealed that those migrant teachers who integrated within a year, were attached to the Gulf society and chose to remain and some had returned for a second contract in the Gulf, whereas those migrant teachers who endured unpleasant experiences such as racial and professional discrimination, felt excluded and marginalised, and harboured thoughts of returning to South Africa. The professional identities of migrant teachers were clearly not fixed but altered through acculturation in the host country.



**Keywords:** *migrant teachers, Arab Gulf, school-based experiences, professional identity, acculturation, unencumbered movers*

# CHAPTER 1:
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief overview of teacher migration and teachers' experiences whilst teaching abroad.

## 1.1 Background

Globalisation has enhanced the internationalization of teachers and the demand for qualified teachers has led to teacher recruitment from countries abroad. Teacher migration is thus a growing trend across the world. International migration is described as the "movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals" (International Organization for Migration - IOM, 2019, p. 3). A study conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2005, indicated that a minimum of 50% ranging to 80% of all well-educated residents from numerous third-world countries in Africa and the Caribbean reside and are employed abroad (Manik, Maharaj & Sookrajh, 2006). Health, education and new technologies are three sectors where highly skilled professionals choose to apply for jobs abroad. Such professionals have been known to migrate from developing countries to developed countries since the nineties (Bhengu, 2011, p. 5).

Research has indicated that there is commonly a great level of interest among South African citizens, to teach abroad (Appleton, Bertram, Muthukrishna & Wedekind, 2006a). There is a gender dimension to migration and worldwide migration trends are "increasingly feminised, and teacher migration is no exception" (Caravatti, Lederer, Lupico, Van Meter, 2014, p. 11). Scholars have noted that such migration trends affect the ranking and role of women mutually as employed professionals as well as caregivers (Caravatti et al, 2014). Many studies undertaken by scholars indicated a South to North migration of teachers, for example, South African teachers emigrating to the UK (Manik, 2005; Appleton et al, 2006a) and countries in the Middle East (Manik, 2015; Verster, 2018); Caribbean teachers emigrating to the United Kingdom (UK) (Miller, 2011); Filipino teachers relocating to the United States of America (USA) (Lederer, 2011) and the exit of teachers from India to the USA and UK (Sharma, 2011). Further discussion on south to north migration will be expanded upon in Chapter 2.

### 1.2 The phenomenon of international teacher migration

International migration has become a visible trend in the education sector. Bartram, Poros and Monforte (2014) explain that the phenomenon of international migration is often understood by people as moving to another country to improve the economic situation of their lives. This is also understood to be labour migration where teachers from poorer countries (example, South Africa – SA and the Phillipines) move to wealthier countries (such as the Arab Gulf or USA), in other words, a South to North movement. Castles (2007, p. 251) also draws attention to the mobility across hemispheres when he defines international migration as a "social phenomenon that crosses national borders and affects two or more nation-states. Its analysis requires theories and methodologies capable of transcending the national gaze. This applies more than ever in the current epoch of global migratory flows and growing South-North mobility." An extension of this discussion as well as the source and destination countries will be expanded upon in Chapter 2. It is also important to differentiate between international teacher migration and internal teacher migration within a country. Internal migration does not entail moving across international borders and usually there are "less legal obstacles that impede their movement" (Bartram et al, 2014, p. 88). For the current study, international teacher migration was seen important since South African teachers were migrating across international borders, that is, to countries in the Arab Gulf.

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO, 2018, p. 16) explained that "when people migrate for better work and life opportunities, they have to adjust to new systems, deal with legal and administrative challenges, and tackle linguistic barriers and potential discrimination." In turn, in receiving countries such as in the Arab Gulf regions' education systems will face adjustment costs in accommodating the new migrant teachers. The GEM Report (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16) alluded that in "2017, there were 258 million international migrants, amounting to 3.4% of the world population. About 64% resided in high income countries, where the share of immigrants as a share of population rose from 10% in 2000 to 14% in 2017", thus adjustment costs would have significantly increased in the host countries. Crush (2015, in Mubangizi & Mwesigwa, 2018, p. 68) suggests that once the number of skilled migrants leave a country; this has a detrimental effect on the education system as well as the number of upcoming potential scientists needed for economic growth. "In many Gulf states, including Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, immigrants are the majority group" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16). This study is proof that the Gulf States attract migrant teachers and South Africa

is an example of many primary school teachers migrating to the Gulf for better work opportunities.

### 1.3 Teacher Emigration from South Africa

Appleton, Sives and Morgan (2006b, p. 123) discussed that apprehension in respect of the global employment of South African teachers came to eminence "in 2001 when the then Education Minister, Kadar Asmal, accused British recruiters of 'raiding' the country's resources. In part, this recruitment was objected to because, due to the heavy state subsidies of teacher education, it implied that SA would be funding the training of teachers whose skills serve in other countries. However, the focus of Appleton et al (2006b) article was another concern: that international recruitment would leave SA with insufficient teachers to staff its own education system." Thus, the number of qualified teachers in the teaching profession was of concern to them. The exit of teachers from developing countries affects the source countries twofold: it not only leads to the loss of highly-skilled working professionals but it also affects the prospective development of countries that are currently experiencing difficulty in meeting its development goals (Sharma, 2011). Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind (2006) further explained that the global recruitment of teachers from developing countries who are sought by countries situated in the North has developed into a contentious feature of the problem of 'brain drain'. As a political and economic issue, the argument is that it reduces human capital within the education system and leads to the movement of highly skilled teachers from countries that can least afford to lose them as has been discussed above. In SA the issue of teacher movement is more intricate since there is such limited data: there are various opinions on the extent of the problem, what exactly are the trends, and how SA can best assess what is going on.

Teachers leave their home country for a variety of economic, social and career reasons. A study by Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind (2006, p. 7) exposed that amongst newly qualified teachers in SA, their main reasons for wanting to teach abroad were the "opportunity to earn a higher salary and to travel, followed by professional development." They also added that these 'pull' factors (i.e. the positive aspects of teaching abroad) played a much stronger role than the so-called 'push' factors (i.e. the negative reasons for staying in SA), such as unemployment in SA, the high crime rate and bad working conditions. Interestingly, their study noted that no student teachers ranked better working conditions as a top priority, whereas this is probably likely to be a more important reason for teachers who

are already in the education system. Vester's (2018, p. 49) study found that the pull factors for South African teachers to teach in Abu Dhabi were an opportunity to achieve their financial goals, religious acceptance in the Middle East and access to educational opportunities regardless of race whereas the push factors forcing them to leave SA were "low salaries, crime and affirmative action policies." Under-resourced schools also push South African teachers to emigrate abroad. Hurst (2014, in Mubangizi & Mwesigwa, 2018, p. 68) suggests that "Sub-Saharan Africa is prone to losing its skilled talent to the more resourced countries like China, Canada, Qatar and the UK."

### 1.4 Rationale of the Study

The rationality for undertaking this study and the importance of the study will be discussed below.

My personal rationale for this study is that I am a permanent primary school educator at a combined school in Johannesburg. I decided to conduct this study when I noticed that many primary school teachers on our staff had been applying to teach in the Arab Gulf countries. The migrant teachers at my school were not concerned about the stability of their jobs and started resigning from various Level 1 (Teacher), Level 2 (Head of Department – HoD) and Level 3 (Deputy Principal) posts. This triggered my curiosity to find out why were they leaving and what were South African primary school teachers' experiences of teaching overseas. A primary goal of this study is to elevate the voices of migrant teachers in order to gain first-hand insights into their motivations for migrating to the Arab Gulf countries, the benefits they inherit from their teaching experience, and the challenges they face. Caravatti et al (2014) found that the United States, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, China and Maldives were the top five receiving countries of migrant teachers.

My professional rationale for the study is that teacher emigration to countries in the North has become rife and as a teacher I have noticed that it is very common amongst South African teachers who are highly qualified. I therefore felt it important to research the reasons why migrant teachers were exiting SA. I was concerned that the teaching profession could be losing the 'cream of the crop' to the Arab Gulf and these teachers are needed in SA's primary education system since there is a current shortage of teachers.

The contextual rationale for the study relates to location. This study examines what motivates South African primary school teachers to work abroad in the Arab Gulf region where there is limited data on teacher migration. I was also interested to reveal why South African English speaking teachers are recruited to countries where English is not the general language of communication.

### 1.5 Significance of the study

I believe that my interviews with the South African migrant primary school teachers would provide insights regarding the advantages and disadvantages of teaching abroad. These findings will be important in contributing to the body of knowledge on teacher migration in SA and internationally by indicating why migrant teachers have specifically chosen to teach in the Arab Gulf and their school-based experiences in that particular location in the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman or Qatar.

Migration does plays an important role in expanding employment opportunities and providing funds through remittances. Remittances have a positive impact for source countries such as SA since it "increases household income and reduces poverty" (Sesnan, 2011, p. 7). These authors further explained that teacher migration has important implications for source and destination countries. For example, SA (being the source country) experiences a shortage of teachers because of poor working conditions as well as poor salaries and therefore through the active recruitment from agencies, migrant teachers find jobs abroad. Thus the conditions propelling teachers to migrate to the Gulf is valuable for the profession. The Arab Gulf (destination country) benefits by offering migrant teachers attractive salaries and benefits. It is important to ascertain which primary school teachers in particular are being targeted for their skills: Is it in being proficient in the English Language, teaching scarce skills subjects such as English, Science and Mathematics or are there other qualities that are being sought by recruiters?

This study is valuable for the Department of Basic Education (DBE) because it will assist them to manage teacher migration to other countries especially since SA experiences a shortage of experienced and qualified teachers in a number of subjects.

### 1.6 Why the Arab Gulf?

The SA to Arab Gulf job opportunity is apt for many reasons and migration to the Gulf is mostly propelled by industrialisation as a result of the discovery of hydrocarbon resources in the Gulf (Ridge, Shami, Kippels & Farah, 2014, p. 1). After the Arab oil restriction of 1973 and the massive increase in oil prices, "oil-exporting countries embarked on ambitious development plans that included expansion of social services, particularly in the education sector" (Caravatti et al, 2014, p. 69). They also explained that the International Organization for Migration estimated, "in 1970 there were about 1.9 million migrant workers in the Gulf States. By 1985, there were 5.1 million. 92 professionals from Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan employed in the Gulf States as doctors, teachers and engineers going back to the 1950s and 1960s, but new patterns of migration have emerged as global competition has placed a premium on English language skills."

According to Caravatti et al (2014, p. 69), there is a demand for native English speakers in the Arab region to teach English as part of the national curriculum. They further explained that while there are no figures on the numbers of foreign workers entering and exiting Gulf States, it's not only Jordanian teachers moving to the Gulf States, but also American, British, and Australian teachers working in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait. They thus maintain that besides competitive salaries, Arab schools offer enticing benefits such as housing, settlement allowance, paid flight home once a year, and health coverage. However, not all foreign teachers receive the same pay or benefits.

Teacher migration studies have provided a number of useful insights on factors that contribute to teachers' decisions to leave their home countries to pursue opportunities abroad. Babar (2017) explained that the local nationals in the UAE and Qatar choose other career options besides teaching because they are better compensated in those fields. This therefore creates a shortage of teachers in these countries who lure migrant teachers from abroad to fill the shortages.

In SA there has been much talk about the wonderful benefits of teaching in the Arab Gulf countries. Many teachers applied for their current positions through recruitment agencies who sought their skills and experience. Others learnt about suitable teaching posts through friends and relatives (social networks). However, there has been limited studies (Manik, 2015; Verster, 2018) focusing on SA-Arab Gulf teacher migration. Manik's study was four years

ago and Vester's study was only on SA teachers in Abu Dhabi. Therefore, it is vital to research teacher migration from SA to multiple countries in the Arab Gulf region.

### 1.7 Outline of the Chapters

The thesis is divided into six chapters.

CHAPTER ONE: begins with the background and motivation behind this study. Detailed discussion provides an understanding of migrant teachers' experiences within an international context. Experiences of teaching abroad are briefly examined and the repercussions of the loss of teachers in the home country are explained.

CHAPTER TWO: provides the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. Globalisation as a process is a cutting-edge phenomenon and viewed as the channel to facilitate teacher migration. There are discussions on migrant teachers' experiences and the recruitment of South African migrant teachers in specialist subjects which provide a backdrop for understanding the reasons for SA being a sending country for its teachers.

CHAPTER THREE: centres on the methodology and design used in the study. The choice of tools and methods used were influenced by the need to get rich data from the participants. This chapter also explains the choice of the interpretivist paradigm and ethnographic qualitative approach to the study. The types of data produced and the methods of analysis for this study are also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: reflects on the findings from the research study: migrant teachers' reasons for teaching particularly in the Arab Gulf - what attracted migrant teachers into leaving their home country and their school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf are examined. This chapter provides interesting findings based on the migrant teachers' fears upon entering a new professional context in a new country.

CHAPTER FIVE: provides a discussion of the findings on South African primary school migrant teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf countries by linking the findings of this study with the literature from Chapter 2.

CHAPTER SIX: deliberates on the core insights stemming from the research study. These collectively were strategically located within the theoretical, conceptual and methodological realms. These insights feed into understanding South African migrant teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf and offers some recommendations in respect of keeping South African teachers from moving abroad to teach.

### 1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the study by providing a brief discussion on the background and rationale for the study and a brief overview of the context of SA as a sending country of migrant teachers to countries abroad and therefore a participant in the global brain circulation of the highly skilled workers.

In the next chapter, I discuss the relevant literature, theories and concepts across disciplines that were essential in providing a framework for this study on teacher migration from the South to the North.

# CHAPTER 2:

# LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature which is relevant to the study. The chapter is divided into various sections beginning with an introduction to globalisation and how this leads to the facilitation of migration (Manik, 2005). In terms of the nature of teacher emigration from SA, this literature review, consisting of three sections, has the following structure: The first section discusses globalisation, migration, and what influences the decision of highly skilled professionals such as teachers to move as well as the reasons behind SA being a sending country of migrant teachers. I then discuss the literature on migrant teachers and their school-based experiences in foreign countries.

There has been some scholarly work on South African teachers' migration and this is discussed below. Manik has undertaken a study on South African teachers going to the UK (2005) and she also undertook a study of South African teachers going to the Middle East (2015). In respect of both of these studies, she found that financial incentives, opportunities to travel and professional growth led to them becoming global teachers. These are some of the motives for migration. De Villiers (2007) also reported that South African teachers left for the UK for better pay. In an article by Jones (2012), she reported that De Villiers has called for the Department of Basic Education to take extreme steps to train more primary school teachers, who could work in rural and disadvantaged areas, and teachers who specialise in scarce subjects (mathematics, science and language teachers). De Villiers (in Jones, 2012) stated that foreign countries sought novice teachers who were qualified and who were able to teach scarce skills subjects. The shortage of teachers in the UK was due to teachers' desire for career change and teacher attrition which led to recruitment agencies recruiting teachers from SA. Hence, it was interesting to see presently, in this study, if South African primary school teachers were leaving to teach scarce skills subjects in the Arab Gulf and whether their school placement is in an urban or rural area as well as in a primary or secondary school.

A similar study on the migration of SA teachers to the UK, was undertaken by Appleton, Sives and Morgan (2006b) who found that SA is primarily a sending country to the UK,

Australia, the United States of America and Canada. The emphasis in the literature above has largely been on SA teachers in general and not specific to South African primary school teachers leaving to the Arab Gulf countries. For example, in Manik's study (2015), the participants in her study were South African teachers who had been recruited to teach in the following Emirates: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Saudi Arabia and it was clear that she did not differentiate between primary school teachers and high school teachers exiting SA. She utilised teachers across the board from primary to high school as participants. Hence, this current study wished to specifically focus on exploring migrant primary school teachers' reasons for leaving from SA for the Arab Gulf countries and their experiences abroad.

A paucity of literature indicates that there is a need for current data on the phenomenon and the lack of research around primary school migrant teachers' experiences in schools in the Arab Gulf countries has prompted this research study.

### 2.2 Globalisation and the facilitation of migration

In this section, I discuss globalisation and its impact on migration. Globalisation has led to the increased mobility of teachers. We are experiencing an era in which the dynamics of the world are constantly changing in many areas (transport, communication), and there are challenges ranging from the economy and sports to education and politics worldwide due to technological and scientific growths. The slogan of this era is "globalisation." In the literature, there are definitions of globalisation by different scholars that are both similar to and different from each other. For example, James (2013, p. 4) views globalisation as "the extension of uneven connections among people in far distant places through such processes as the movement of people, the exchange of goods and the communication of ideas." According to Wang (2007), the number of people that keep close contact across the globe has intensified recently due to the communications revolt. This in turn, has made the world into a global village and multi-national companies have made the world one global market. Airplanes, affordable telephone service, email, computers, sea transportation, instant capital flows, all these have made the world more interdependent than ever. Similarly, Hochschild (2006, p. 42) defines globalisation as a "trend toward increased economic and political interdependence, which is aimed towards cultural homogenisation." He points out that there is no place too far apart because progress in travel makes it easier for people to get from one destination to the other. The world has also become less foreign to human beings since globalisation enables people to access, for example, the same kind of hotel, eat the same

food, and watch the same movies, anywhere in the world. Globalisation also makes a person feel close to being in their comfort zone (home country) because technology provides this advantage through for example Skype or whatsapp video call. Hochschild (2006) explains that although globalisation brings about employment, the exchange of ideas, technology and money which are all positive aspects; it can also lead to negative feelings such as a migrant feeling confused and displaced with a lack of freedom in a completely new environment (destination country).

### 2.2.1 Dimensions of globalisation

The development and the use of technology has opened up the borders of countries and made economic, political, and cultural globalisation easier. These three dimensions of globalisation are interconnected to each other seeing that one dimension can affect the other. Various scholars explain the three dimensions of globalisation below from their perspectives:

*a) The Economic dimension*

Mehdi (2013, p. 5) explains that economic globalisation means that the "monetary and fiscal policies of national governments are dominated by movements in the international financial markets reducing the economic autonomy of nation-states." The author elaborates by stating that the entire world operates as one financial sector which is categorised by open and free trade with minimal control from nation states. Through technology, a country is able to transcend their national economic borders by joining international money markets around the globe. Hence, economic globalisation with international direct investment in countries, takes place all across the world.

When globalisation is used in an economic context it refers to the decrease and removal of barriers between national borders in order to enable the flow of goods, capital, services and labour (Njanike, 2010). Bottery (2003, cited in Rifai, 2013) argues that economic globalisation is best characterised by the increasing movement of capital around the world, in and out of a country, through information and technology. Globalisation has had an effect on how banking trade activities are conducted globally. For instance, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) being a global technological advancement is one of the methods through which migrants are able to send money (remittances) to their family members whilst working abroad. Bank branch networks have been influenced greatly by Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and online banking that provides a financial institution's

customers with a method of financial transactions in a public space without the need for a human clerk or a bank teller (Smith, 1999 cited in Njanike, 2010). Online banking is a term used for performing transactions over the Internet through a bank secure website. The above scholars also confirm that Information Technology (IT) reduces the time spent at the bank in order to transact business.

Remittances

Cocco, Wheatley, Pong, Blood and Rininsland (2019) explain that remittances are money and goods sent by workers living abroad to their families and friends living at home. Since global migration has increased over the years, remittances play an important role in a country's economic structure (Swing, 2018). It has been reported that people working abroad have sent 600 billion dollars in remittances around the globe in 2018 (Cocco et al., 2019). This, in turn, has resulted in an improved proficiency in the global financial system. The above authors further added that people move in search of job opportunities, so emigration rises when the economy in the home country is performing badly. When the host country is performing well and migrants prosper, they send more money home - a "countercyclical boost to the struggling economy at home. But when host countries hit hard times, the shock is transmitted back to migrants' families in the form of lower remittances" (Cocco et al., 2019, para. 15[1]). This can spread the slowdown to the home country, stimulating economic unsteadiness on a global scale.

*b) The Political Dimension*

The University of California, Atlas of World Inequality (UNESCO, 2010, p. 4) defines political globalisation as "including wider acceptance of global political standards such as human rights, democracy, the rights of workers, environmental standards, as well as the increased coordination of actions by governments and international agencies." International migration has become common in this era of globalisation as it has led to the mobility of people towards increased economic integration allowing for new cross border opportunities for immigrant workers to take advantage (Adamson, 2006). Andreas (2003, as cited in Gebremedhin & Mavisakalyan, 2010 p. 3) demonstrates how states attempt to gain control and he states that "everyday border control activities - checking travel documents, inspecting cargo and luggage, patrolling coastlines and airports, apprehending unauthorized entrants, are

[1] According to APA 6th style referencing, one can insert the paragraph number if the page number is not given. Henceforth, paragraph numbers will be used when there are no page numbers provided.

part of what gives the state an image of authority and power." The perception that the government is unable to secure its borders may actually heighten the security concern of the host population.

*c) The Cultural Dimension*

A new global hybrid culture is formed when migrant workers arrive in their host country and attempt to adapt (Mehdi, 2013). Migrant workers try to adapt their cultures to the local cultures and norms in the host country. However, a study by Diallo (2014, p. 1) explained how Emirati students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are influenced by a westernised culture through migrant teachers who teach them the English language. The Emirati students live in a conservative Arabic Islamic society and are shaped by Islamic values. They construct their cultural identities while learning English with Western-trained teachers from around the globe, "who are influenced by liberal ideologies and secular epistemologies." In her study, she further added that in this type of professional setting, learning a foreign language for the Emirati students is a difficult process that involves "constructing or negotiating new identities to accommodate new values in order to function effectively in the target culture" (Diallo, 2014, p. 1). This involves an Emirati student's ability to adopt new values but at the same time filter and, wherever necessary, resist aspects of the westernised globalised culture.

Shuey (2001, p. 37) views globalisation as a way of integrating economic, social and political processes. He believes that "this worldwide integration allows people to communicate, travel and invest internationally, and it helps companies market their produces widely, acquire capital and human and material resources more efficiently, share advanced technology and enjoy economies of scale." The various scholars above argue that globalization thus enhances communication, interdependence and the liberty to move through an ease of travel which has close links to neo-liberalism.

### 2.2.2 The impact of Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism is painting a new future which is impacting upon globalisation and inadvertently the movement of people. According to Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005, p. 1), "we live in the age of neoliberalism." Neo-liberalism is a restoration of liberalism and it has transformed the way teachers think. It has existed for many decades and is not a new phenomenon. Various interpretations of this concept are offered below:

*a) Interpretations of 'neoliberalism'*

Neoliberalism is a theory that was formulated in the late 1970s by former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher and American politician, Ronald Reagan during the 1980s which was based on the futility of Keynesian policies which promoted government intervention in the form of creating a demand for goods and services to build the economy (Harvey, 2005 as cited by Cornish-Jenkins, 2015). This policy was believed to be beneficial to some and detrimental to others. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, as explained by Cornish-Jenkins (2015), promotes free trade and minimal government intervention and it therefore opposes Keynesian policies. In other words, neoliberalism may be defined as a situation where neoliberals advocate for the State to have less power so that they can concentrate on maintaining order in the country, administer contracts and take care of those who have a "permanent disability" in a democratic country (Harris, 2001 as cited by Bell, 2011, p. 140). Glenn (2017, p. 145) explained that the term neoliberalism literally means "new liberalism' (neo meaning 'new', from the Greek word n é os)."

SA adopted a neoliberal approach after apartheid era oppression; however, Cornish-Jenkins (2015, para. 14) believes that there is a loop hole in the neoliberal policy as it "does not factor in power" and hence, the policy was unable to rid SA of the repercussions of Apartheid as those who were better off during Apartheid are still better off post-Apartheid.

*b) Neoliberalism and its link to migration*

Canterbury (2010, p. 10) explained that "neoliberal theory however regards migration as an integral component of development…nowadays, there seems to be some consensus on development in neoliberal theory around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is an end to human poverty." Through neoliberalism, globalisation has led to the ease of migration with the opening of international borders to gain an unrestricted flow of money, allows the exchange of goods and services and enables work opportunities for the average income. Frank (2014, p. 4) points out that "state involvement in migration should, according to neoliberalism, be kept to minimum." He further explained that if people are given job opportunities outside their home country then they should have the freedom to travel in order to meet the job demands in that country. There should be as less restrictions as possible on a businesses' ability to recruit foreign workers.

In a study by Wise and Márquez (2013), they explained that over the years migration has endured an intense transformation under neoliberal globalisation. Today, migration is commonly considered when people experience stresses such as job shortages in their home country; they then become motivated to emigrate. The authors also noted that with the freedom of migration, migrant workers also experience susceptibility in the host country and extreme exploitation, particularly with the new trend of a South-North and South-South migration. Kuznetsov, 2006 (cited in Giampapa & Canagarajah, 2017, p. 2) alluded that "skilled migration is motivated by neoliberal economics and ideologies. It is facilitated by the belief that opening up borders for the free flow of personnel and their talents, and competition in the global employment market, are a win-win situation for both the sending and the receiving countries." Their article highlights the benefits that skilled migrants such as teachers bring to the Arab Gulf, such as the exchange of skills, diverse talent, entrepreneurship and the giving of remittances to the home country (Giampapa & Canagarajah, 2017).

Delgado and Márquez (2007, as cited by Wise & Márquez, 2013, p. 3) argued that neoliberal globalisation has led to structural adjustment programmes in southern nations which include the principles of "privatization, deregulation, and liberalisation." This has resulted in migration aiding the "influx of foreign capital by working abroad and generating a massive oversupply of labour" in the host countries. Unequal development is enhanced through neoliberalism between regions, countries, and social classes via labour migration. For example, skilled migrants have the freedom to apply for jobs and work abroad but the poor remain stagnant in their home country because they lack the necessary skills for entrance into a new work destination. This in turn is "related to the emergence of new forms of unequal exchange through neoliberalism" (Wise & Márquez, 2013, p. 3).

### 2.2.3 Globalisation and its effects: Two approaches to globalisation

Richardson (2004, as cited by UNESCO, 2010) contrasts two approaches to learning about globalisation and its effects – the concentric circles approach and the systems approach both of which is found to be relevant to this study. The differences between these are important as they "underpin noteworthy differences not only in thinking about the nature of globalisation but also the philosophies of education" (UNESCO, 2010, p. 3).

The concentric circles approach

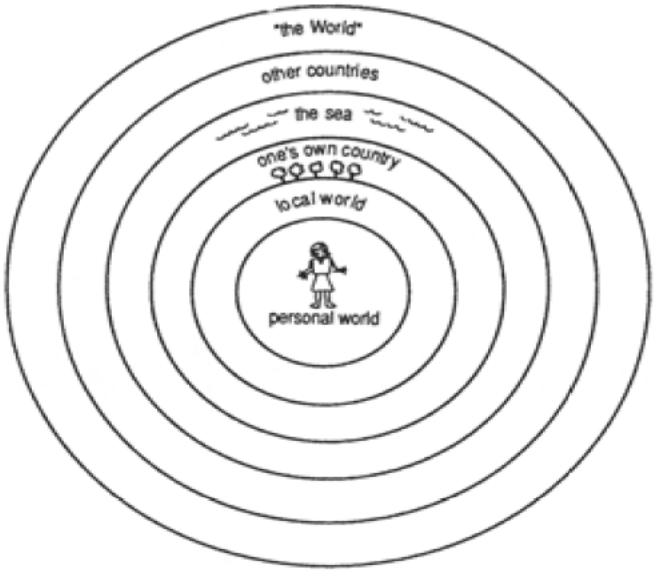



**Figure 1: The concentric circles approach**

(Taken from http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod18.html?panel=2#top)

He explains that in our personal world (the innermost circle) which is for example, the country we live in, we have access to our familiarities and it is of ease of reach. We are exposed to it on a daily basis and our five senses enable us to feel at home with everything at our doorstep. As we move outward from the centre we cross national borders, oceans and the outlying countries of the world, each flowing out from the centre in concentric circles. The concentric circles approach is very often used "as a way of structuring school syllabuses in geography, history and other social science subjects" (Richardson, 2004 as cited by UNESCO, 2010, p. 3). This approach is seen as relevant to this study on teacher migration to the Arab Gulf since migrant teachers are only familiar with the education system in a South African context. Upon moving to the Gulf, they are exposed to an international curriculum with different learners who speak English as their second language. Hence, beyond their national borders, there is a need for them to adjust to a new unfamiliar professional environment which entails adjusting their teaching methodologies and pedagogies in various subjects to cater for English Second Language (ESL) Arab learners.

The systems approach

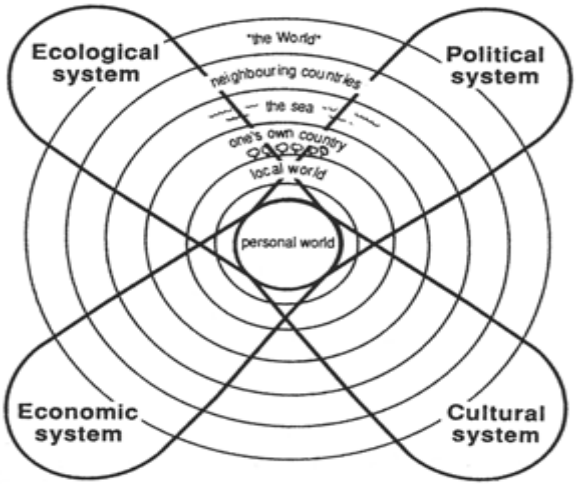



**Figure 2: The systems approach**

(Taken from http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod18.html?panel=2#top)

In Figure 2, Richardson (2004, as cited by UNESCO, 2010, p. 3) explains that there are four systems that influence and shape our personal and local world, namely the ecological, political, cultural and economic system. He describes the systems as acting as "drive-belts on a motor" since they direct our paths with opportunities and developments that are taking place elsewhere in the global world. He used the example of school curricula planning which should take into account the four systems since they are interdependent. He provided the example that, "economic interdependence is an essential concept in geography. Ecological interdependence is fundamental in biology and chemistry. Political interdependence is central in all studies of causation in history. Cultural interdependence, involving fusion, cross-over and mutual influences and borrowings, is a recurring feature in art, design, drama, literature, music and technology" (cited in UNESCO, 2010, p. 3). Figure 2 is relevant to the current study since migrant teachers in SA went abroad to teach different scarce skills subjects in English and were exposed to the four systems shaping their personal life on a daily basis.

### 2.2.4 Global adventurers: Ease of teacher movement due to globalisation

Bhengu (2011, p. 5) reveals that "increased globalisation has been characterised by advanced transport and information and communication systems, which has brought with it renewed concern about the effects of emigration of skilled labour from developing countries to developed ones." He further explained that before teachers qualified in a particular country

and could only teach in their home country. They could not consider teaching around the world as it took too long to travel, they were not made aware of travel opportunities elsewhere and there were no recruitment agencies to facilitate mobility from one country to the other.

Dodani and LaPorte (2005) purport that better standards of living and quality of life, higher salaries, access to advanced technology and more stable political conditions in the developed countries attract talent from lesser developed areas. The majority of highly skilled migration occurs from developing to developed countries and skilled migration is regarded as "one of the key elements for economic growth and innovation" (Bailey & Mulder, 2017, p. 2). It is time to understand and accept that teacher mobility and mobility in other professions is part of life in the 21st century (Stehlik, 2018).

*Increase in communication*

Jackson (2016) explained that the turn of the 21st century has not only brought technology, but also modes by which teachers around the world can be connected in no time. Easy communication, quick travel, and larger alliances between developing and developed countries are becoming progressively more common (Dodani & LaPorte, 2005). Chen (2014) articulated that the internet offers a cheaper, faster and easier method of communication, an alternative that has created a global audience. According to Ahmed (2018), connecting with people today in different continents is a less tedious task than in the past years. He added that "satellites, fiber-optic cables and the internet make it effortless to share information with those in different time zones and locations" (Ahmed, 2018, para. 1). He further explained that "global communication is directly affected by the process of globalisation, which in turn aids in boosting business opportunities, eliminates cultural obstacles and it sustains a global village" (Ahmed, 2018, para. 1). Both globalisation and global communication have changed the environmental, cultural, political and economic elements of the world. This results in an ease of movement and exchange of ideas in a global economy.

Through globalisation, we are able to "travel from one place to another in a day, so communication has to be there in order to be competitive. And English is the communication method in a global village" (as cited by Jung in Manzo & Zehr, 2006, para. 6). Hence, being eloquent in communicating with the English language can help migrant teachers take up

teaching posts in foreign countries where their teaching skills are required especially if their teaching specialisation is English. The barriers that once stalled the ability to communicate and interact with people across the globe have also been immensely reduced. For example, interviews can be done via Skype and a South African teacher would be able to get the job and arrive in Abu Dhabi, for example, in the next day.

*Increase in information*

Lawlor (2007, p. 9) argues that "with the quickening and intensifying flows of information and communication, people can now access more information from all over the world, all from the comfort of home." However, he also mentioned that a drawback of globalisation is that businesses can now search all across the globe for the lowest priced labour and in some cases you will receive lower wages for a job that should be paying a higher rate. An example is that information posted by recruitment agencies, which is readily available on the internet and this facilitates teachers' movements because they know realise that there is a need for them as teachers which leads to being recruited to several countries of need.

It has been reported that whilst international trade of goods might slow down due to businesses performing badly, the movement of people and information is growing rapidly due to digital technology (Garrett, 2017). He provides an example of the sale of a hard copy of a book will include "the cost of materials, printing, shipping, etc., even if the marginal cost falls as more copies are produced. But the marginal cost of a second digital copy, such as an e-book, streaming video, or song, is nearly zero as it is simply a digital file sent over the Internet, the world's largest copy machine" (Garrett, 2017, para. 10). It is argued that as a result of rapid changes, education must also constantly change "to meet the challenges of the fast-changing and unpredictable globalized world" (Serdyukov, 2017, p. 1) and this can be done through modern day classrooms, "otherwise called techno-classrooms" (Hismanoglu, 2012) which are supplied with laptops, the internet and the projector empowering teachers to benefit from a variety of materials and information in their lessons. Information and communication technology (ICT) has presented "a variety of software and websites that can be used for educational purposes" (Hismanoglu, 2012, p. 4). Hence, information can be transferred easily and instantly through digital technology such as prospective migrant teachers sending a curriculum vitae (cv) to a recruitment agency via e-mail instead of travelling to drop off a hard copy in person.

*Increase in transport*

According to Keevy (2014, p.11), teachers and many skilled professionals have become increasingly mobile in today's society. He further states that it has become "commonplace to find South African teachers working in the United Kingdom, Canada and in the United Arab Emirates. Likewise, it is not uncommon to find teachers from Zimbabwe, India or Ghana teaching in SA." It can take a South African teacher 7 hours to get from SA to Abu Dhabi by plane whereas previously, 20 years ago, it would have taken you a couple of days. Increased mobility of skilled professionals such as teachers was also noted by Bailey and Mulder (2017).

### 2.2.5 The impact of Globalisation on Education

A key aspect of globalisation is the movement of people across borders (Paine, Aydarova & Syahril, 2017). For teacher education, this means preparing migrant teachers for a growing diversity in classrooms with foreign learners, given the rise of emigration (Paine et al, 2017). The teachers in today's world have to deal with linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms and these teachers must take the necessary measures in order to maximize skills of diverse students (Mori & Takeuchi, 2016), for example, South African migrant teachers in the study needed to cater for the possible language barriers amongst the local Arab learners and embrace the Islamic cultural values in their classroom.

Jackson (2016) identified two main trends that have transpired in curriculum and teaching pedagogy research, wherein education is recognised as a significant potential shaper of globalisation. Jackson (2016, p. 23) stated that these two trends are "global citizenship education (also intersecting with what are called 21st-century learning and competencies) and education for sustainable development." Interestingly, Gough (2018) argued that both of these trends struggle to find a place in the school curriculum due to increasing global inequalities which require governments to take a greater role in encouraging education for sustainable development and global citizenship as well as achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG four is about achieving quality education therefore there are competing discourses on quality education, because in the recruitment of teachers from the south, as is the case of SA, these teachers are required in their home country especially if they are in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects or English.

## 2.3 Migration

Various scholars have tried to define the concept of migration clearly using their different approaches. There are two main strands in the definitions and these are based on the following division:

**Internal migration** is when people migrate within the same country or region and is also known as domestic migration, for example, moving from Durban to Cape Town (Bartram et al, 2014).

**International migration** is when people migrate from one country to another, that is, crossing a national border and changing continents (World Bank, 2018), for example, moving from SA to the UAE. In Webster's dictionary (1966, p. 1432), the term has been defined as "the act or an instance of moving from one country, region to settle in another." The World Economic Forum (World Bank, 2018) explains that such migrants are known as immigrants (coming into a foreign country) and emigrants (leaving their own country).

According to Huzdik (2014), people moving from place to place for living or working purposes is referred to as migration. According to Caplow (as cited by Chittibabu, 2015, p. 1), migration can be associated with a need for a change in the place where one calls home which can be influenced by a new job. The United Nations (UN) Secretary General explains migration as "an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future" (as cited by O'Neil, Fleury & Foresti, 2016, p. 2). The definitions cited by the above authors is relevant to this study since migrant teachers from SA moved to the Arab Gulf in search of better opportunities. Caplow (as cited by Chittibabu, 2015, p. 1) added that people migrate internally or internationally, to improve their job prospects and financial status, often from "densely settled countries to less densely settled countries and from the centers of the cities to their suburbs." In this study, I wanted to gain insight into whether South African teachers are moving from densely settled areas or schools in SA to less densely settled areas or schools in the Arab Gulf.

It is now understood that people migrate for numerous reasons (to alleviate poverty, escape struggle, or deal with economic, political and environmental shocks as has been noted) but

these reasons can occur at different levels. The level at which these factors occur and which influence their migration is discussed below:

### 2.3.1 Drivers of migration: macro, meso and micro factors

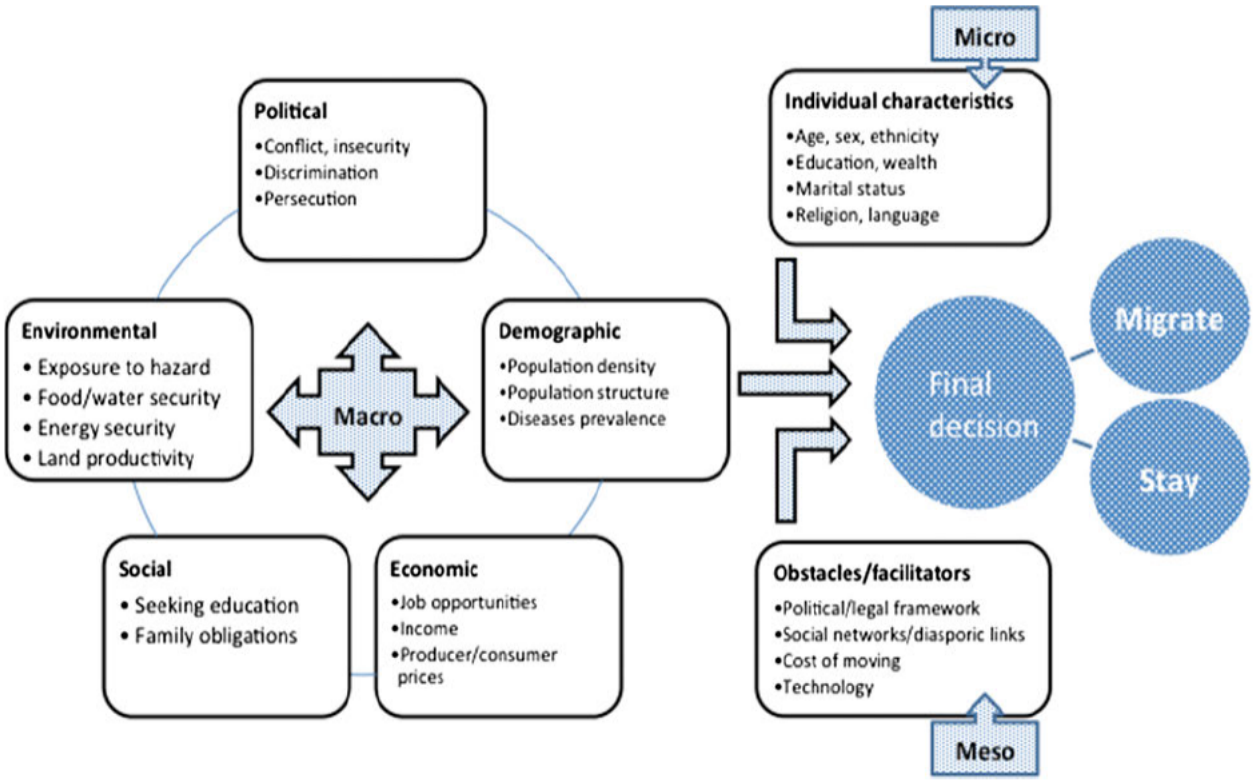



**Figure 3: Drivers of migration: macro, meso and micro factors**

Adapted from Castelli (2018, p. 3)

It is argued that migration is not something that takes place easily and people consider the macro, meso and micro factors before they decide to migrate (Castelli, 2018). Timmerman, De Clerk, Hemmerechts and Willems (2014, as cited by Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro and Foresti, 2015, p. 25) provide an understanding of the drivers of that influence all migrants at the three levels. According to Cummings et al (2015), the factors shaping people's decisions to migrate can be at different levels: personal at the micro level whilst for example, political security, and secure livelihood opportunities (linked to the economy) can be considered the macro factors. Other factors at the micro-level concern personal characteristics, such as education, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status (Cummings et al, 2015). Timmerman et al (2014, as cited by Cummings et al, 2015) added that at the macro-level, factors which

influence all migrants, although not essentially in the same way, can include "immigration policies, the strength of a country's economy, and a country's political situation." At the meso-level is where migration decisions lie in between the two levels and include factors linking an individual migrant to wider society, such as social networks and family bonds (Wimalaratana, 2017). All of these factors impact on a migrant's decision to move from one place to another or remain in their home country.

In this chapter, most of the discussion related to 'migration' centres on economic migrants. Fry and Glass (2016, p. 5) explain that economic migrants are "people who move because they expect to be better off in some way than they would have been had they stayed where they were." Similarly, Whyman and Petrescu (2017) define economic migrants as people who move voluntarily from their home country to the host country in search of better economic incentives such as salaries, improved standard of living and personal happiness.

After evaluating all the definitions of different scholars, it is evident that most of them have emphasized time and space. Migration can be defined as permanent or semi-permanent movement from one place to another which can lead to cultural diffusion and social integration (Gutkar, 2014). In respect specifically of teacher migration, it has been explained to involve educators leaving their home country to work on a contractual basis for a period, exceeding one year, in another country (Oucho, 2003, p. 12). However, contrary to Oucho's definition, some migrant teachers in certain countries have had their occupational status change from contractual (with the recruitment agency posting teachers to multiple schools) to permanent (with one school) as revealed in Manik's study (2005) of SA migrant teachers in the UK.

The next section analyses some of the theories popularly used in migration literature.

### 2.3.2 International migration theories in the 21st century

International migration is an intensifying phenomenon of our times (Wimalaratana, 2017). The World Bank (2018) explains that it is a process whereby millions of migrants move across geographical borders which has changed the global setting. Transportation modes today, has made it "easier, cheaper and faster for people to move in search of jobs, opportunity, education and quality of life. At the same time conflict, poverty, inequality and a

lack of sustainable livelihoods compel people to leave their homes to seek a better future for themselves and their families abroad" (International Migration Report, 2017, p. 6).

International migration theories are useful as they provide theoretical guidance to understand human mobility in a broader perspective. Arango (2000, p. 283) stated "migration is too diverse and multifaceted to be explained by a single theory" and therefore a brief description of the various theories explaining the commencement and ongoing international migration is provided below.

*Neo-classical Theory*

The oldest and best known theory of international migration is Neo-classical Theory (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouchi, Pelligrino & Taylor, 1993). It explains the impact of labour migration on economic development (Massey et al, 1993; Arango, 2000; van Naerssen, Spaan & Zoomers, 2008, Nijkamp, Masood, and Piet, 2011). Massey et al (1993) stated that international migration is theorised as an asset in human capital. They also explained that this theory suggests that people move to where they can be most industrious using their skills and that migrants tend to move to those countries where the economic returns for their professional qualifications are greatest. The Neo-classical micro theory assumes that the international labour migration is caused by differences in a salary between the home and host countries and after the removal "of the wage gap on a global scale, movements of labour will stop" (Gurieva & Dzhioev, 2015, p. 3). From a macro perspective, this economic view of migration "locates the universal human being within the global supply and demand for labour in universal markets, in which countries with more work, higher wages and fewer workers attract workers from countries with lower wages and less work" (O'Reilly, 2019, p. 3). According to Borjas (1990, as cited in Castles, 2000, p. 2), the neoclassical theory embraces that "the main cause of migration is the individual's efforts to maximize their income by moving from low to high wage economies." This partly resonates with the migration of South African teachers to the Arab Gulf.

*Dual Labour Market Theory*

In 1979, Michael J. Piore introduced the Dual Labour Market Theory. The dual labour market theory states that international migration is determined by 'push' (supply) and 'pull' (demand) factors in migrant sending and receiving countries respectively. According to Piore

(1979, as cited by Wimalaratana, 2017), push factors from the home countries are low wages and high unemployment, while pull factors in the host countries are better salaries, a demand for labour, the opportunity for higher living standards but also political freedom. It is suggested that the demand pressures generated in primary sectors of labour markets of developed countries stimulate the supply of international labour migration from developing countries (Piore, 1979). Dual labour market theory argues that international migration is caused mainly by pull factors in the developed migrant-receiving countries (Porumbescu, 2015).

*New Economics of Labour Migration Theory*

Stark (1991, as cited by Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015, p. 8) argues that "migration flows and patterns cannot be explained only at the level of individual workers and their economic incentives, but that wider social entities must be taken into account as well." Their approach is called the new economics of labour migration. The household is one of the social entities that they mention. In order to avoid risks, labour migration of a family member is a one of the solutions for a household when there is insufficient income to meet the needs of the family. A possible way to reduce the risk is by having family members abroad send remittances.

According to Davis and Brazil (2016), these remittances and the prospect of attaining a continuous flow of household income are the leading drivers of international migration. This theory is linked to the concept of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation argues that awareness of other households in the sending country about income variances is a significant factor with regard to migration (Porumbescu, 2015). The concept of relative deprivation in migration indicates that "awareness among individuals of the existence of income/wage differentials between migrant-sending countries and migrant-receiving nations is the main incentive for international migration" (Stark and Taylor, 1993 as cited by Dinbabo and Nyasulu, 2015, p. 34). People from relatively more deprived households have higher incentives to migrate because "migration occurs not only to maximize the expected income or wage but also to minimize the feeling of deprivation relative to the community they reside in" (Kafle, Benfica and Winters, 2018, p. 8). Hence, when migrant teachers hear about economic opportunities in other countries which others have accessed, they are tempted to also emigrate so that they too can take advantage of the opportunities abroad. Therefore, the incentive of households to emigrate will be higher in societies due to their country's economic disparity.

*World Systems Theory*

World systems theory focuses more on wider systems than on individuals and it considers international migration from a global perspective. It is an approach in which "many contemporary critiques of global capitalism are based, and it explains the poverty of poorer nations in terms of historical relations of power, dependency and debt" (O'Reilly, 2019, p. 4). Drawing from Marxist political economy, it emphasises the global disparities and argues that migration is crucial in contributing to the continuation of the system of strong and weak countries (O'Reilly, 2019). The result is that "Trade between countries with weaker economies and countries with more advanced economies causes economic stagnation, resulting in lagging living conditions in the former" (Jennissen, 2007, p. 419). This difference in living standards becomes an incentive for migration. Porumbescu (2015) explains further that this theory highlights that communication between people is an important determinant of social change within societies.

*Social Network Theory and chain migration*

Social Network theory argues that international migration of people between countries creates migrant networks and other linkages between the destination countries and the sending countries which serve to prolong migration (Esveldt et al, 1995 as cited by Dinbabo and Nyasulu, 2015). Migrant networks may help prospective migrants of the same cultural background, such as by helping to find a job or appropriate accommodation, or by giving information about education possibilities or access to social security (Porumbescu, 2015) which will lead to chain migration. Chain migration is "a social process by which potential migrants, within a family or in a community, are influenced by previously migrated family members or friends and eventually follow them to a new place of residence" (Eurenius, 2019, p. 2). Useful information and numerous forms of support are conveyed from those who have already migrated, facilitating the movement of family and friends from the home country and initiating a chain migration process (Eurenius, 2019). As international migration transpires on a large scale it can become institutionalised as well. Global institutions have existing networks and this too facilitates migration. Jennissen (2007) explained that in a broader sense the concept of institutions may be used to emulate the structure of the whole social setting in which individuals have to make choices. De Bruijn (1999, as cited by Jennissen, 2007, p. 22) reserves the concept of institutions not only for such "contextual entities as universities, organizations and firms, which are generally also in common language perceived as institutions ... [but also for] more abstract social constructs such as democracy, religion,

policy and gender systems or bodies of knowledge." The author further elaborated that great international migration movements do make stronger connections between countries, for instance, if travelling between the source and destination countries does rise then economical and regular flight connections will be established. This will encourage migrants to travel abroad and the institutions will also "strengthen cultural linkages between countries enhancing chain migration" as well (Jennissen, 2007, p. 22). Therefore, as organisations progress to support, sustain, and encourage movement, the movement of migrants becomes much more institutionalised and independent of the aspects that initially caused it (Sasikumar, 2015).

### 2.3.3 Gendered migration: A feminisation

The number of women migrating is growing substantially (Mbiyozo, 2018). The author explains that the 'feminisation of migration' refers to an increase in the number of women migrants. A rising number of women are "making individual migration decisions and moving more than ever to meet their own or their families' economic needs" (Mbiyozo, 2018, p. 3). Antman (2018) alluded that a significant feature of migration from developing to developed countries (such as SA to the Arab Gulf) has been the separation of households and families.

Mincer (1978, as cited by Antman, 2018) argued that women were normally known to migrate as 'tied movers'. Smits, Mulder and Hooimeijer (2003, as cited by Antman, 2018, p. 13) added that previously men found work abroad and women joined their husbands as 'tied movers', however, in today's world, women move independently and there is "more equal power balance within couples." Thus men can now be 'tied movers'. It should be noted that whilst migration does pose various opportunities there are also risks and vulnerabilities for women migrants in the host country. For example, a study by Topa, Neves and Nogueira (2013, p. 3) found that women immigrants in Portugal were vulnerable to discrimination and oppression. The authors further pointed out that "affiliations of gender, along with ethnic affiliation and affiliations of class and nationality", among others, created conditions for different forms of discrimination and therefore had a detrimental effect on the health of immigrant women in the host country. Milewski, Struffolino and Bernardi's (2018) study explained how lone immigrant mothers are exposed to different types of risks in the labour market in Switzerland compared to immigrant men. Immigrant mothers of young children were found to be less active in the labour market of the host country and they therefore were offered fewer labour market opportunities than non-migrants (Milewski et al, 2018).

## 2.4 Teachers' reasons for migrating across the globe

There are a host of studies that show that teachers are migrating internationally due to various reasons (Manik, 2005; Appleton et al., 2006c; Morrow and Keevy, 2006; Lederer, 2011; Ochs, 2011; Caravatti et al, 2014) which are based on numerous push and pull factors that are discussed in detail below.

### 2.4.1 Push and pull factors

The reasons for migration can be economic, social or political. There are usually push factors and pull factors at work. Piore (in Brown and Schulze, 2007, p. 3) grouped the range of casual factors of migration into two distinct categories, namely push factors and pull factors, and suggests that "migration is not caused by push factors in the migrants' country of origin, but by pull factors in the receiving countries." Similarly, Bartlett (2014, p. 46) states that teachers' migration decisions can be divided into two categories, namely, a 'from' category and a 'to*'* category" and these she added reflects push and pull factors. Bartlett (2014) explained that when teachers migrate 'to' the destination country, their choice of location is determined by many factors before they leave their home country.

*a) Push factors*

Rosenberg (2017) defines a push factor as something that "involves a force which acts to drive people away from a place." Eurenius (2019) added that the factors influencing the decision to move are based on an individual's human capital, as well as age, schooling, skills, marital status, and experience. Manik (2005, 2015) has theorised that South African teachers left to first world countries because of socio-economic and professional reasons. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2005, p. 78) has noted that South African teachers "perceived low salary, unattractive work locations, unprofessional treatment of teachers, lack of professional development opportunities, and insufficient supportive supervision" as some of their reasons for teachers leaving the profession. This may lead teachers to leave the profession locally and go abroad.

Economic Reasons

Economic motives appear large as push factors in all human movements, but are particularly important with regards to teacher migration. Financial instability, poor salaries,

unemployment including limited professional benefits and opportunities for growth are some of the reasons related to economics that motivate teachers to leave their home country.

**Poor salaries**

Migrant teachers tend to move away from their home country when they compare their low income salary to the higher salaries that they could earn in the host country. Job dissatisfaction primarily due to poor salaries is one of the main reasons for teachers leaving (De Villiers, 2007). Previous research, (Xaba, 2003; Buckley, Schneider and Shang, 2004; Appleton et al., 2006a; De Villiers, 2007; Sharplin, 2009; Nutsuklo, 2015) has noted that one's salary has an effect on teachers' career decisions. Simpson as cited in Xaba (2003, p. 287), concurs with the argument that poor salaries result in many teachers leaving the profession for greener financial pastures. Even though teachers are driven primarily by intrinsic rewards, they are not solely motivated by them, money does matter (De Villiers & Weda, 2017). Lederer (2011) revealed that Filipino teachers left their home country due to the poor salary and for better financial opportunities in the US Poor working conditions, a slight chance at career advancement and low salaries have continued to push thousands of experienced Filipino teachers to greener pastures abroad (Lederer, 2011). The Public Service Labour Independent Confederation (PS-LINK) at a forum on the mass migration of Filipino teachers stated that amidst the global economic crisis, more than 4000 Filipino educators, including school principals demoted themselves to teaching jobs and moved to the US, Middle East, and other Asian countries like China, Japan and Indonesia to teach.

**Unemployment**

The temporary nature of a teacher's contract can cause him/her to look for employment opportunities elsewhere for fear of becoming unemployed (Morgan, Sives & Appleton, 2006). Similarly, Manik's (2005) study found that the absence of permanent employment contracts in home countries has led to teachers migrating to other countries, such as the UK. Thus, teachers leave their home country in search of job opportunities with more stable contracts to prevent themselves from being unemployed.

In addition, social reasons can also encourage teachers to migrate.

## Social Reasons

Manik's (2005) study on South African teachers leaving to the UK has shown that the social reasons that have led to teacher emigration include the need to live in a safe society and opportunities to travel abroad. More than fifty percent of newly qualified teachers in a pilot study conducted by Manik (2005, p. 122) showed that South Africans had not been out of the country and "travelling to the UK would be their first trip abroad." She explained that many migrants were leaving SA with the purpose of travelling. She also argued that social networks can also lead to the increased migration of teachers (Manik, 2005). Similarly, Anganoo (2015) explained that migrant teachers' acquaintances with friends and family in SA helped them feel comfortable about their choice of migration to Johannesburg. Social networks have an encouraging impact on cross-border migrants' happiness because belonging to a network intensifies "migrants' resilience to social and economic shocks" in the host country (Mazars, Matsuyama, Rispoli and Vearey, 2013, p. 7). Ekiss (2011) added that social factors which lead to migration include receiving an assurance from family and friends, improved health care, better professional chances and finding spiritual acceptance. Additionally, Gabriel (2013, p. 2) revealed that one of the most important attractions for people who migrate is "the prospect of freedom in various areas of life" which can enhance their sense of happiness.

## Career/Professional Reasons

Ultimately it appears that teachers are moving abroad for multiple reasons: social, economic and professional. For example, in studies of SA migrant teachers to the UK, both Manik (2005) and Appleton et al. (2006c) revealed that professional development, an opportunity for travel and improved work opportunities in the destination were determining factors for those who choose to leave their home country and move to other countries. People may also migrate to another country in search of professional and study opportunities. Anganoo (2015) revealed that a few Zimbabwean teachers who taught in Johannesburg found that professional opportunities in SA were numerous as they were able to also complete their higher education degrees in the host country. Similarly, Manik (2011) explained in her study on Zimbabwean teachers that they were migrating to SA for better professional opportunities, and to study further in a postgraduate environment. The opportunity to improve linguistic skills or study further has also attracted teachers to posts abroad. Jimenez and Sotto (2004) found that this migrant characteristic is understood to positively affect migration, since well-educated people are more knowledgeable, are on the hunt for improved jobs, and are more competent due to

the acquisition of further skills and are also more likely to therefore accept the possibility of risk. Another professional reason found to be uplifting in pushing migrant teachers to teach abroad was the need for English Medium of Instruction (EMI) teachers (Dearden, 2014).

**Work dissatisfaction**

Migrant teachers tend to move away when they feel that there are limited opportunities for professional growth. A study by Cardoso and Costa (2016, p. 2) found that "there are changes in attitudes and emotions within the teaching environment that can interfere with work performance, given that factors associated with satisfaction and dissatisfaction reflect the investment that individuals make in their career." Satisfied teachers are more committed to their careers and they tend to put more exertion into their work (Tindowen, 2019). In contrast, dissatisfied employees tend not to produce as well as expected and also tend to look for a way to change their job or workplace. Satisfaction refers to a generally positive emotional state. Among the theories that explain the degree of satisfaction of teachers and the work that they do, Herzberg's (as cited by Asegid, Belachew & Yimam, 2014) two-factor theory which includes motivation and hygiene factors attempts to explain satisfaction and motivation in the workplace. He argues that personal satisfaction is caused by both internal factors, such as personal fulfilment and professional recognition, and by external factors related to hygiene or context such as working conditions, remuneration, safety, stability and interpersonal relationships established in the workplace.

Several studies across the world have reported on an unhappiness in the work environment due to several reasons as stimulating migration. Lederer (2011) who studied Filipino teachers in the USA explained that people leave their home country in order to improve their professional benefits and Shotte (2011, p. 113) who writes on Jamaican teachers emigrating to the UK also stated that "promotion chances" are some of the benefits of the teaching profession that push people to emigrate instead of being satisfied with no upward growth positions in the home country. Similarly, Manik's (2005) study on South African teachers migrating to the UK revealed that some of her participants decided to emigrate due to the lack of professional development and opportunities that restricted them from getting promoted in SA.

An increasing desire from teachers to leave the teaching profession is further intensified by low morale, low levels of job satisfaction, unpleasant working conditions (Bosso, 2017) and high levels of job stress connected with time pressures, professional changes, administrative problems, professional distress and pupil misbehaviour (Dlamini, Okeke & Mammen, 2014; Alson, 2019). According to Hammett (as cited by Jimana, 2012), teaching is not regarded as a rewarding career choice; hence the change of careers and teaching is no longer a career of first choice (Degazon-Johnson, 2006). For example, those who migrate to other countries are offered better prospects to re-establish their careers and to improve their financial stability in their new country (De Villiers & Weda, 2017). Interestingly, migrant teachers noted that "frustrations with the educational system in their home countries also drove them to teach abroad. Specific factors cited included standardised testing, misdirected policies, and disrespect for teachers" (Caravatti et al, 2014, p. 32).

Political Reasons

Political volatility in one's home country can trigger teachers' frustration to leave their home country and Ochs (2007) described that push factors include the political and unsafe situation at home (particularly for South African teachers) as well as the professional reason of job scarcity at home. The degree of the impact of politics on teacher migration, has also been argued by Makina and Mosala (as cited by Bhengu, 2011, p. 19) who added that, "while politics may be a reason, research shows that economic reasons are more likely to serve as an impetus, primarily because Zimbabwean teachers who come to SA continue to have families back in their home country and more often than not, commute back and forth between Zimbabwe and SA and send remittances back home." Bhengu (2011) further explained that for Zimbabwean teachers who left their home country due to political mayhem, there was also the "knock-on" effect on the economy and education opportunities which added to their decision to leave. As a result, there are numerous reasons for exiting the home country and entering a particular destination (De Villiers & Weda, 2017).

Recruitment agency influence, induction and Geopolitical Discrimination

The recruitment of teachers is occurring in a more organised way with governments providing agencies with mandates, to pursue more experienced teachers with special skills in return for 'better' rewards. Mulvaney (2005) stated that there are various marketing strategies used by recruitment agencies to attract South African teachers to go abroad to teach and these include through direct marketing activities on university campuses; posted letters, pamphlets,

posters in cafeterias; presentations advertising on the internet; advertising in the local and regional newspapers. O'Donoghue (2016) highlighted that an Irish recruitment agency hired a many teachers in their early 30s, couples who were going over looking to save and come back and buy a house for themselves since newly-qualified teachers with two or three years of experience don't have a permanent job in Ireland. The agency recruited both primary and post-primary teachers, to work in the UAE. The ILO (2005) also alluded that another strong pushing factor is the low opinion that society has of teaching. Teaching is considered a low-status career and well-qualified teachers have alternative employment opportunities in other sectors of the economy.

Recruitment agencies have identified 'education' as a high-growth area in the recruitment business. As teacher shortages become rife, the job market for teachers spreads beyond the borders of their home countries and this can be seen as the internationalisation of teacher demand. Thus teachers from as far away as from Guyana are going to Botswana and the Bahamas where remuneration is more worthwhile (Van der Pijl, 2007; Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse, 2008). Teachers from India are moving to the United States, Canada and the UK (Sharma, 2011). Morrow & Keevy's (2006) study stated that English which is widely the language of the Commonwealth – is a valuable passport to international mobility for teachers. Similarly, South African primary school teachers are going to the Arab Gulf countries to teach local children how to speak and learn in English as well as teach other subjects. Bartlett (2014) emphasises that the success of teacher migration and recruitment is strongly linked to a migrant teachers' experience in the host country and their efficacy in the classrooms.

*b) Pull factors*

According to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) report (2009, p. 14), a pull factor is "an enticement to select another place to live or work." Lee (1966) describes a pull factor as something that encourages people to move to new destination for example, a democratic government, prospering economies and adequate job opportunities. Studies point to a range of reasons in the destination that attracts teachers. De Villiers (2011) maintains that pull factors are powerful motivators and extends on the examples provided by Lee (1966) citing better working conditions, family ties, higher compensation and benefits, professional development interests, better living conditions, more political, economic and social stability, more job opportunities and a desire to see the world. According to King (2012 as cited in Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015), factors present in the destination countries which pull or attract

migrants include better income and employment prospects, better social welfare services and political freedom. Thus, there appears to be a multiple pull factors including political, economic and social reasons.

Economic Reasons

Studies have indicated that teachers are tempted to work abroad if the financial reasons and economic incentives are appealing in the host country.

**Higher salaries and the promise of a "better life"**

Global studies on teacher migration find that the main factors that contribute to teachers' decisions to leave their home countries and pursue opportunities abroad are economic, including better pay and career opportunities (Ravenstein, 1885; Manik, 2005). Similarly, Sesnan (2011, p. 88) revealed that "teachers will naturally try to go to where the money is. In every situation that he has worked in, there would have been no shortage of qualified teachers if a good salary had been offered for the job." Also, Ochs (2011) revealed that the appealing remuneration was one of the motivating factors pulling Caribbean teachers to the United States. Better pay, low interest rates in the UK, the ability to purchase assets in SA and in the UK as well as discontentment in South African education policies were some of the reasons that triggered South African teachers to go abroad (Manik, Maharaj and Sookrajh, 2006, p.19). International migration becomes desirable when teachers consider the large salary differentials between potential earnings abroad and domestic salary offerings (Appleton, Morgan and Sives, 2006c). For example, Morgan et al (2006) observed that South Africans were able to earn three to four times more by teaching in the UK than by staying in their own country**.** De Villiers (2017) also commented that South African students, who qualified to become teachers chose Australia, UK, South Korea and the US as their destination country since they could earn a higher salary. It is evident that teachers from developing countries can double their income by teaching in more developed countries.

**Less taxes**

In an article by O'Donoghue (2016), she wrote about young Irish teachers flocking to the Middle East to make cash. They moved from South Dublin to the UAE to save significantly since their new salaries would be tax-free and they would get free accommodation. In a study by Caravatti et al (2014, p. 70), Americans and Australians who were hired as English

Medium teachers in the Arab Gulf, reported with a focus group that they were "treated lavishly. Upon arrival, they spent the first month at the five-star Intercontinental Hotel in Abu Dhabi, where their only job was to acclimatise. They earned a tax-free income that exceeded their home country salaries, in addition to free housing, health care, several trips home, and even a furniture allowance." However, they noted with concern that there was discrimination in the application of the recruitment packages between their own treatment and that of teachers from Egypt and Jordan. They suggested that there was even a third tier of salary devised by recruiters and benefits reserved for the South African teachers, who fell mid-way between the Westerners and the teachers from the North African region.

Professional Reasons

Migrant teachers who are keen to teach English as a medium of instruction to English Second Language (ESL) learners abroad are sought after in many countries whose first language is not English (Manzo and Zehr, 2006). For example, in Saudi Arabia, "English is recognised as a basic skill, and the prestige attached to English ability was said to include the potential for accessing better employment" (Dearden, 2014, p. 20). This is also found true in many Asian countries to be able to secure jobs out of the country (Manzo and Zehr, 2006). A study by Ellis (2016) interestingly revealed that some non-English speaking migrant teachers learn the English language so that they can also obtain better teaching prospects in countries that sought after Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) educators. Ellis (2016) also provided an example of a Spanish migrant teacher in her study who emigrated to teach the English language to Australian local learners because she felt that she would make a fantastic example as an ESL teacher in inspiring the Australian local learners abroad to follow in her footsteps of learning English as a Foreign and Second Language. Since English is also a second language to the migrant teacher, she can therefore relate to the local learners' complexities in embracing English as new language in Australia and guide them accordingly to make to make their learning easier.

Political Reasons

Politics has been associated to the stability of a country. For example, most migrant teachers entering SA have come from Zimbabwean schools affected by political violence to a large extent before or after the 2008 presidential elections, especially from the rural areas (Hammar, McGregor & Landau, 2010). Years later, Manik (2011) and Anganoo (2015) argued that the movement of Zimbabwean teachers into SA has also been in part due to the

political instability in the country of origin and the stability of SA. Zimbabwean teachers' migration to SA was due to the political violence or repression in Zimbabwe (Ranga, 2015). Therefore, their migration to SA can be linked to SA's strong civil service and stable government.

### 2.4.2 What contributes to "teacher loss"?

It has been reported that balancing the supply of, and demand for, teachers is by no means an easy exercise (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). The literature reveals that there are many factors contributing to the problem of teacher loss in schools all over the globe. As a result, this phenomenon is one of the biggest challenges facing schools today around the globe (Buckley et al, 2004). Teacher loss peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s in many developed countries such as the US, UK, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia (George and Rhodes, 2015). The international concern more than a decade ago was that education departments had more teachers and quality professionals leaving than entering their systems (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). Various scholars (Bhengu, 2011; George & Rhodes, 2015) revealed that in many of these developed countries, the teaching profession was ageing due to the lack of ability to attract young people into the profession in these developed countries. The loss of teachers were as a result of the ageing teaching workforce and, as was the case in the UK, the drop of salaries and unpleasant working conditions of UK teachers, poor pupil behaviour which also resulted in reduced recruitment into the profession and shrinking retention rates (Manik, 2005; Miller 2008). Various studies have shown that the above mentioned phenomenon of teacher loss has also been noted in SA (Appleton et al., 2006a; De Villiers, 2007; Manik, 2011; Bhengu, 2011; Ebersöhn, 2014).

Hence, such local shortages in specific areas lead governments to actively recruit foreign teachers (George and Rhodes, 2015). Primary classroom teachers (both Junior and Senior) and English teachers are especially in demand when it comes to teaching in the Gulf countries (SA recruitment, 2014). It is in this international context that the issue of teacher migration in SA must be understood. Bhengu (2011) highlighted that South African teachers gain access to different countries in many ways such as via recruitment agencies' face-to-face interactions, internet applications as well through the networking of family members who live abroad.

### 2.4.3 South to North teacher migration: Factors that determine migration

The demand and supply of teachers across the world is the reason for teacher migration. In this section, I discuss the shortage of teachers particularly in countries of the global South and the need for teachers in countries in the global North which has led to the movement of teachers from the South to the North. Skilled labour is recruited from developing countries (George and Rhodes, 2015) to fill the gaps in the labour market in developed countries and this can retard the economic growth of those developing countries which are affected by migration of the highly skilled such as teachers. Since my research study is based on South African teachers leaving to the Arab Gulf (South to North), other scholarly studies on teacher migration are relevant in determining the factors that push teachers to move from the South to North. The migration of teachers from developing countries (exit countries) in the South such as the Caribbean, the Philippines and SA to pursue better opportunities in developed countries (North) such as the UK and US which become key destination countries for migrant teachers is discussed below.

*South Africa (SA)*

It has been established that SA is largely a source country for migrant teachers (Manik, 2005) although it is also a destination country (Manik, 2015). In the nineties, teachers left SA to go to the UK (Manik, 2005). In the 2000's, teachers left South Africa to go to the Middle East (Manik, 2015). Several motives for teachers leaving SA to teach abroad have been documented in teacher migration studies in the context of SA. These included higher salaries in the destination country, opportunities to travel and professional development (Manik, 2005; Morgan et al, 2006). There was also a yearning for from teachers to escape bigoted leadership and management in certain public schools (Manik 2005).

MacGregor (2008) stated that SA was losing 4000 teachers a year to emigration. Teachers have been recently migrating to countries in the Middle (Emirates, Saudi Arabia) and Far East (China, Vietnam) as has been evident in media reports and research (Manik, 2015). These teachers are reportedly specialists in STEM subjects and English. A study by Anganoo (2015) found that immigrant primary school teachers in SA have made a positive impact on the quality of education in participating schools in the urban areas in Johannesburg by lessening teacher shortages across a range of subjects, especially with regard to subjects taught in the Foundation Phase (FP) and languages, but also with regard to mathematics,

natural science, economic and management sciences. It would be interesting to see what South African primary school teachers are teaching in the Arab Gulf countries and which subject specialisations are in demand, in addition to their experiences.

*Jamaica*

Shotte (2011, p. 113) who studied on Jamaican teachers emigrating to the United Kingdom also stated that "promotion chances" are some of the benefits of the teaching profession that push people to emigrate instead of being satisfied with no improved professional growth positions in the home country. In an article by Clark (2017), she wrote that starting in 2000 and continuing this year, Jamaica had seen recruitment agencies come from Britain and North America and they are quite aggressive and successful when recruiting of teachers. The island lost many of its most experienced teachers, including those qualified to teach in scarce skills subjects such as maths and science and this has negatively affected the Jamaican school system. While Jamaica was prepared to pay their teachers well, they could not compete with the UK and US, who are developed countries. Higher salaries and living standards pushed teachers to move to the North. Jamaicans working in the UK mentioned professional development, salary and travel as the most important reasons for migrating (Morgan et al, 2006). They could afford to send remittances back home because they lived a better lifestyle in the UK as opposed to their home country, Jamaica.

*Philippines*

The reasons why many Filipinos work abroad are mainly due to economic reasons. Both Bolton and Bautista (2004) and Ubalde (2007) see the economic factor as the driving force for Filipino teachers seeking to work abroad. Similarly, Lederer (2011) found that Filipino teachers left the Phillipines to teach in the US for better financial opportunities. Ubalde (2007) added that Filipino teachers are highly esteemed abroad. They are paid up to ten times their salaries in the Philippines, and they are often bread winners for their families. In the process according to Ubalde (2007), the Philippines loses many of its better, if not the best, teachers in specialty subjects such as Science, Mathematics and English. A study by Caravatti et al (2014) also reported that Filipino teachers were exploited and treated unfairly in the process of their recruitment to positions in public schools in the USA.

*India*

Sharma (2011) explained that teachers from India are migrating to more developed countries such as the U.S.A where they can be better rewarded in terms of attractive salaries. Bartlett (2014) alluded that the U.S.A experiences teacher shortages in scarce skills STEM subjects such as Mathematics and Science and it therefore employs migrant teachers from the South: Philippines, Jamaica, India and Spain. She further added that this need for Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) is only a "short-term labour solution, a fill in, a less desirable and a temporary alternative to an American teacher" (Bartlett, 2014, p. 5).

The Commonwealth Secretariat (2003, p.11) explained that in most countries, there is a shortage of teachers. This shortage of teachers in developed countries has therefore given rise to the recruitment and supply of teachers from developing countries who are qualified to teach scarce skills subjects (Manik, 2005). According to a study conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2005, between 50 to 80% of all highly educated citizens from several developing countries in Africa and the Caribbean live and work abroad so the emigration of highly skilled workers from developing countries is not a new phenomenon.

## 2.5 Theoretical understandings of teachers' career decisions and their mobility

A key theory that I use for teachers' career decisions in terms of their mobility to the Arab Gulf countries is Huberman's (1989; 1995) theory of the professional life cycle of teachers. Huberman's model proposed seven stages or phases of the teaching career: entry, stabilisation, experimentation and diversification, reassessment, serenity and relational distance, conservatism and complaints, and disengagement. The stages of a teacher's career are broken down by the number of years that they have been in the teaching profession. He explains that often teachers change from more pleasant pathways to less pleasant pathways and teachers sometimes skip stages because of particular events or circumstances.

Huberman's theory is similar to Steffy and Wolfe's (2001) theory where they identify six distinct phases in the developmental continuum for teachers. These categories are as follows: novice teacher (beginning the process), apprentice teacher (learning how to achieve high ideals), professional teacher (finding time for reflection), expert teacher (unlocking the learning process), distinguished teacher (impacting policymakers) and the emeritus teacher (completing the cycle and giving back also known as the 'active retired teacher'). Steffy and

Wolfe (2001) and Huberman (1993) suggest a more uncertain exploratory interpretation in terms of phases in teacher development. In their view, teachers can develop skills at any time during any phase, and yet at any moment they can also be grouped into one best-fitting phase.

White (2008) explained that teachers make choices that help them grow or cause them to withdraw. As teachers grow throughout their careers, they can take part in transformational processes including critical reflection on practice, redefinition of assumptions and beliefs, and improved self-worth. Or they can disengage from the teaching environment as a source of stimulation for different learning and begin the slow decline into professional withdrawal. In short, Steffy and Wolfe (2001) has identified one of the issues: disengagement and professional withdrawal of teachers, which features in the late career of teachers in Huberman's framework.

Huberman also explained that in the time between Phase 1 or "career entry" to the final phases of "serenity" or "disengagement", the phases of "diversification and change" (phase 3) and "stock-taking and interrogation" (phase 4) at mid-career are the most adjustable and extensive. In the third phase, teachers are aiming to increase their skills and effectiveness and to look beyond the classroom to collaborative projects and involvement. In the fourth phase, typically between 12 - 20 years of experience according to Huberman, the teacher engages in self-questioning and may consider a career change as part of a broader "life review." If the answers to the questions are positive, then serenity and continued growth can follow. If disappointment or dissatisfaction occurs, then conservatism or even disengagement can be the outcomes.

In respect of newly qualified teachers, The University of Rwanda - College of Education (UR-CE, 2018) explained that teachers starting their careers need concrete support and assistance in pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach the subject), behaviour management and subject expertise. They also need to feel welcome at the school, time, have opportunities to build up routines and a mentor who can give support. Additionally, well experienced teachers do benefit from professional development that helps them discover and try out new approaches to increase their impact on their learners. Huberman (1995) further discovered that career teachers tend to associate three actions or relationships with their most satisfying experiences in mid-career: undertaking a role shift (e.g. becoming a literacy lead, instructional leader, etc.); experiencing strong rapport with special classes or groups of students; experiencing significant results from their teaching activities in their particular

context, in other words, impacting student learning and achievement. His theoretical framework was valuable in highlighting the experiences of teaching as it changes over the years and my study does differentiate between a migrant teacher's experiences in the first six months and experiences after six months.

### 2.5.1 The Construction of Migrant Teachers' Professional Identities

Migrant teachers' professional identities can be easily altered from a positive to a negative way if their adjustment is not made easy in the host country. Various factors play a role in a migrant teacher's construction of his/her professional identity in the host country. In this study, the definition of a teacher's professional identity, as presented by Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000), is considered appropriate. Professional identity is defined as how teachers perceive themselves, how teachers are perceived by others and what factors contribute to these perceptions. A review of the voluminous literature reveals that teachers who leave their countries of origin to teach in another country almost always experience challenges, obstacles and difficulties in the process of adjustment and reconstructing their professional identities (Bense, 2016; Collins & Reid, 2012; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Sabar, 2004).

*a) Feelings of marginalisation in the host country*

Once in the destination country, migrants have to endure a difficult integration process in the host country. Kostogriz and Peeler's (2007) study on teacher professional identity explained that most migrant teachers who taught in Australia felt isolated in many dimensions; for example, migrant teachers from Japan were made to feel marginalised in the school staffroom based on a linguistic distinction and the staffroom was arranged according to migrant teachers' contracts, that is whether they were employed on a permanent, contract or casual basis. Their study highlighted that the migrant teachers will always feel professionally 'foreign' in the locals' eyes and despite the tensions experienced, they do strive to "focus more on the tactics of survival" (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007, p. 116).

Survival in the host country is critical because migrant teachers are "accustomed to the teaching and learning cultures of their home country" (Caravatti et al., 2014, p. 114) and

when they move from one cultural location to another, for example, from SA to the Arab Gulf, "they take with them some form of 'cultural baggage' consisting of attitudes, beliefs, and values towards education" (Bense, 2016, p.13). Kostogriz and Peeler (2007, p. 111) explain upon arrival in a new location, migrant teachers experience a "period of negotiation and adjustment" as they have to rebuild their professional identity as teachers and establish a "pedagogical place" (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007, p. 107) for themselves within the new classroom setting. Bense (2016) claims that if migrant teachers want to be successful in their teaching pedagogies in the host country, they would need to learn the behavioural and learning styles of the local learners and to adjust to the "cultural gap/way of doing things" (Collins and Reid, 2012, p. 50) in the host country.

Professional identity construction in the new teaching environment commences from the first day in the new school. A study by Bressler and Rotter (2017) who draws on the teaching experiences of immigrant teachers in Germany explained the concept: "frame of orientation" that concerns a migrant teacher's professional practice in the host country and this provides a framework for the understanding and perception of teachers' work in the new environment. The notion of the migrant teacher's frame of orientation is that it entails the construction of a migrant teacher's professional identity. According to this conception, "the professional identity is embedded in the migrant teacher's experiences and underlies her practice in everyday (work) life, connecting past experiences with present actions" (Bressler & Rotter, 2017, p.5). Similarly Yazan (2018, p. 1) alluded that a teacher's professional identity refers to "teachers' dynamic self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, which shifts as they participate in varying communities, interact with other individuals, and position themselves (and are positioned by others) in social contexts." Several studies that were conducted in the UK, have found that some immigrant teachers find the experiences of teaching in the host country demanding, lonely and difficult (Manik, 2005; Miller, 2008). These obstacles and hindrances, act as barriers in the rebuilding of migrant professional identities. I have used six months as representative of initial experiences since Manik's (2005) study found that during the first six months that South African teachers taught in the UK, they experienced a great culture shock and it was extremely trying times compared to the seventh month onwards.

*b) Sociocultural theory in professional identity*

It has been reported by Bense (2016) that a framework of sociocultural knowledge is needed for understanding the challenges and requirements of migrant teachers who move into a new country and unfamiliar sociocultural setting. Bense (2016, p.15) asserts that the "main strength of a sociocultural model is that it provides a general overarching theory of where cultural-historical differences between education systems come from as well as for broad international trends in education." Yazan (2018) elaborates that a teacher's professional identity has an impact upon a wide range of matters, like how language teachers learn to mediate their lessons effectively to ESL learners and how they interact and collaborate with their colleagues in their social setting. Kostogriz and Peeler (2007, p. 2) add that the construction of marginality in the new context is informed by discourses about what counts as being a professional but also in the conception of the workplace, spaces of the school, classroom, and staffroom as "mono-cultural bounded entities". It is important to consider "workplaces as relational and… that sociocultural spaces are connected to each other" (Kostogriz and Peeler, 2007).

*c) Acculturation theory*

Bense (2016) highlights the fluidity in professional identity which she calls the process of professional acculturation for migrant teachers. She explains that this refers to the period of transition and negotiation that migrant teachers encounter when they move into a new school context. Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) explain that migrant teachers need to find a way of balancing the two cultures (which is relevant for South African teachers' experiences in the new Arab Gulf school context) and a strategy to cope in order to effectively teach local learners in the host country. Negotiating the new cultural change against their previous expectations of the host country and adapting to the dominant culture of the society helps to "shape and build their professional identity" (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007, p. 14).

Acculturation in the new school environment is important. Berry's (1997, as cited by Joy & Gopal, 2017, p. 4) acculturation strategies framework explains that acculturation deals with the process of "psychological and cultural changes happening with the migrants as they live and mingle with the host community." Berry's four varieties of acculturation, are "integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization materialise from the joining of the original culture and adopting the host culture" (Joy & Gopal, 2017, p. 4). Berry (1997)

explains that the integration path is embraced by participants when it is of value to keep both, their own culture and contact with others; assimilation is adopted when a participant does not want to retain either their own cultural identity or contact with outside groups; the marginalisation path is adopted when there is a slight concern in maintaining one's own cultural identity or contact with others. If the participant does not desire to retain relationships with other cultural groups but wants to hold on to his or her own cultural values, separation is experienced (Berry, 1997). However, it is important to note that immigrant teachers will not always have the liberty to choose their own acculturation path due to prevalent attitudes in some countries towards ethnic diversity, like the Arab Gulf which holds strong Islamic religious values that have to be maintained in schools.

A study by Pantiru and Barley (2014) reported that the acculturation strategies of Romanian immigrants in the UK were mostly characterised by integration, an optimistic approach for adjusting to new cultures leading to psychological wellbeing in the host country. It has been maintained that in the case of migrants who move to a new location with an assumption that they will reside there for a short period of time, their approaches and adaptability patterns are different compared to migrants who plan to stay for a long time (Joy, 2017). Since migrants have individual differences, not all of them will face the same degree of difficulty in the acculturating process (Joy & Gopal, 2017). Climate and educational policies are other important factors that influence the acculturation and adjustment of immigrants in the country of settlement (host country) which forms part of the significant macro-context of acculturation (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). The different coping strategies embraced by the migrants also influence their adaptation in the host country.

### 2.5.2 Migrant teachers' professional identity and their professional development

There is a link between the personal and professional identity. In Day and Kington's (2008) longitudinal study on teacher identity, they concluded that teachers' identities are built not only from practical and emotional aspects of teaching and teachers' personal lives, but also from interactions between personal experiences and the social, cultural, and institutional environment. Day and Kington (2008, p. 9) also define teacher professional identity in the following way drawing a distinction between it and the role of the teacher: "Professional identity should not be confused with role. Identity is the way we make sense of ourselves to

ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others. It is culturally embedded. There is an unavoidable interrelationship, also, between the professional and the personal."

There is an element of time in identity formation and Bressler and Rotter (2017, p. 240) also explain that the concept of professional identity develops "over time and are shaped by the interplay between contextual/external factors and the individual." They further stated that migrant teachers are responsible for their own professional identity based on their own life experiences and feelings in reaction to the cultural, social and political context and the interaction with others in the host country. Bressler and Rotter (2017) add that immigrant teachers who have a migration background of the host country are able to have better teaching experiences. For example, if an immigrant teacher is bilingual (knowing Arabic and English), this can be advantageous because it would help to assist in communicating with the local learners enabling more effective classroom lessons.

A migrant teacher's professional development in the host country clearly contributes to the construction of his/her professional identity. Postholm (2012, p. 405), explains that teacher professional development is defined as "teachers' learning: how they learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupils' learning." Both individual and organisational factors are said to impact on teachers' learning. Cook (2007) reported that American teachers gained a wider cultural awareness, learned new teaching strategies, acquired more international connections, and learned to appreciate other cultures as well as achieving a greater appreciation of their own culture while working abroad. Cook (2007) also revealed challenges which his American participants encountered and these challenges were noted as being the lack of knowledge regarding the local language, the new classroom setting and the culture. The overall effect on the participants was a tendency to feel inadequate as a teacher (Cook, 2007). It has been suggested that like a series of concentric circles (see Figure 1, p. 6), "teacher identity evolves as new teachers develop coping strategies appropriate to their role, acquire understandings of self as a teacher, and a sense of their overseas born professional identity in their workplace community" (Peeler & Jane, 2003, p. 5). Meaningful professional experiences, supportive and collaborative professional atmospheres, opportunities for teacher leadership, and more direct involvement in the decisions that affect their work lives are noteworthy foundations of a "teacher's motivation, morale and professional identity development throughout one's teaching career" (Bosso, 2017, p. 7).

Day and Kington (2008) also found that identities are neither stable nor fragmented, but they can be stable depending on the individual teacher's capacity to manage his or her identity in various social settings. It was interesting to see how the participants in this study constructed their identities upon leaving SA and the level of stability in their identities given their experiences. Day and Kington's (2008) theory on professional and personal identity was used to analyse the migrant teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf countries.

## 2.6 Teachers and their school-based experiences in foreign countries

Since my study is based on teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf, it was interesting for me to explore migrant teachers' experiences from countries in the South to countries in the North, and below I provide a discussion based on selected country contexts.

### 2.6.1 Migrant teachers' experiences in Australia

Immigrant teachers, like other professional immigrants, experience substantial problems before they arrive to work in Australia and teach in an Australian classroom (Collins & Reid, 2012). Migrant teachers decision to leave their home country, their social networks such as family, friends, jobs, their familiarity and then to relocate themselves to another country is a risk that many immigrant teachers take when finding a teaching job in Australia (Collins & Reid, 2012). A lack of support, differing expectations and values, a lack of local knowledge and difficulties with student behaviour are general problems for migrant teachers settling into Australian school culture (Bense, 2015, p. 11). An early study by Kato (1998) found that Japanese teachers experienced difficulties communicating with students which stemmed from language barriers as well as adjusting to the education system of Australia. Similarly, Peeler's (2002) study with two teachers from India and the Philippines emphasised how the process of compromise between accustomed ways of teaching and new practices can be a difficult time for migrant teachers. Hence, they assert that there is a need for migrant teachers to be mentored continually and to go through an induction process at the beginning of their journey in order to make themselves aware and familiarise themselves of the school practices and policies.

Interestingly, a study by Reid, Collins and Singh (2013) found that racial discrimination is common in Australia targeting South African, American and migrant teachers from Ireland because they are different from the local Australians. Migrant teachers who taught in

Australia often felt professionally devalued and discriminated "not to their skin colour but to their accent" (Reid et al, 2013, p. 20). Being highly eloquent in English was considered extremely important upon recruitment.

### 2.6.2 Caribbean teachers' experiences in the UK

Miller's (2011) study on Caribbean teachers in England revealed that there was an extreme shortage of primary and secondary school teachers in the UK which led to recruitment agencies hiring Overseas Trained Teachers (OTT's) from the Caribbean states. The experiences of Caribbean Overseas Trained Teachers as explained by Miller (2008, p. 4) in London included "shock; loss of confidence; impairment of self-esteem; lack of support; financial constraints; not being accepted as equals by local colleagues; not having their original qualifications accepted as equivalent; and being abused (verbal, racial, and physical) by pupils" are largely representative of their more negative experiences.

### 2.6.3 South African teachers' experiences in the Gulf

Lewin (2015) who has a blog named the 'the School Corridor Tatler' shared the experience of a South African migrant teacher who teaches in Oman in the Gulf. The interviewee stated that she has learnt that children are the same all over the world. "They are no different to our South African children. And just as we experience children with language barriers in SA, so do I experience the same here. In fact, it's at a more challenging level here as the only time the learners are exposed to English is during the English, Mathematics and Science classes. All the other subjects are in Arabic, Urdu or French. Many of their parents cannot speak English at all" (Lewin, 2015).

According to an article written by Bulbulia of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (2015), he was a student from the university and he applied for a teaching post at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2013 and was successfully accepted to teach English as a second language to high school learners. He described his teaching experience as being "filled with challenges and opportunities, emotional highs and lows. I'm very grateful to have ended up at the school that I'm in. The salary is enough for me to live comfortably and save up a little bit towards travel during the holidays. " He also stated that every teaching job is different based on who you are, what you're expecting and what you're met with. Every single day was different for him and there were a number of other South African teachers at the school which made fitting in rather easy. Bulbulia (University of Witwatersrand, 2015) also

reiterated Lewin's (2015) view of the language barrier by explaining that only some of the students speak English at home, while others only get exposed to it in class which makes teaching at the right level a challenge.

### 2.6.4 Turkish migrant teachers' experiences in Germany

A study by Bressler and Rotter's (2017) noted that Turkish immigrant teachers in Germany were able to discipline Turkish immigrant students better because they shared a commonality: Turkish ethnicity. The Turkish learners respected the Turkish teachers because the method of communicating used when reprimanding the learners was through the use of the Turkish language and not the German medium of instruction. Turkish immigrant teachers acknowledged that they were specifically responsible for the Turkish learners. The study found that ethnicity was at the core of the immigrant teachers' professional identities rather than their "pedagogical competencies" in the classroom (Bressler & Rotter, 2017, p.6).

## 2.7 Conclusion

Studies have indicated that there is a greater flux of teachers emigrating to developed countries such as the Gulf. Majority of the teachers are emigrating due to the desire for travel opportunities and lucrative financial improvements. The Arab Gulf countries was not researched enough or as thoroughly as information regarding this topic was scarce (Manik, 2015; Lewin, 2015). Studies also indicated that research focused primarily on migrant teachers who teach in the Middle East, particularly the UAE and not specifically to the Gulf countries. I therefore found it valuable to see why are migrant primary school teachers from SA emigrating to the Gulf area and what are their teaching experiences as well as the grades and subjects that they teach as this will also have implications for teacher supply and demand in SA.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature, main ideas and theories which create a foundation underpinning the teaching experiences of migrant teachers.

This chapter embarks on an explanation of the context of the study, followed by a discussion of the methodological approach chosen to conduct the research. When conducting research, there are many possible ways of gathering information from participants. The discussion in this chapter includes the use of specific research tools in addressing the overall aim and objectives of the study. The research design is discussed with eminence given to qualitative methods which is where this research positions itself. A qualitative research design was used as it was found to be most appropriate in meeting the critical questions of the study. The research tools chosen gave the migrant teachers an opportunity to willingly share their feelings about their school experiences and their reasons for choosing to teach in the Arab Gulf area. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the data are then discussed and the chapter concludes with a description of the limitations to the study.

## 3.2 Context of the study

The study was undertaken with the participants being South African primary school teachers who have moved to the Arab Gulf countries and who are now teaching in primary or secondary schools. The Arab Gulf region is made up of six countries. The map below shows the location of the Gulf region (Figure 4).


**Figure 4: Location of the Arab Gulf countries**

(Taken from http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/gulf-cooperation-council-gcc-countries.html)

### 3.2.1 What is the GCC?

The “Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries which are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981. The purpose of the GCC is to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities, which are rooted in Islamic beliefs. Presidency of the council rotates annually” (Gulf Cooperation Council, 2017).

Member States of the GCC

Sawe (2017) explained that the GCC comprises of six oil-rich Arabic nations. The six member states of the GCC are described below.

Kingdom of Bahrain

Since the Kingdom of Bahrain is run by a liberal economy, the Bahraini dinar is esteemed as the second highest currency in the world. Bahrain delights in a diversified economy such as banking and merchandising to make up for its little oil reserves (Hamdan, 2011).

The State of Kuwait

According to Sawe (2017), Kuwait has 9% of the world's oil reserves and the country is ranked 10th regarding standards of living, therefore it displays a high standard of living.

The Sultanate of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman has diversified its economy to cater for their shrinking oil reserves (Sawe, 2017). Despite this, the country still attracts many expatriates who enjoy the stunning contrast of deserts, mountains, beaches, and plenty of friendly people (Walton, 2015).

The State of Qatar

With plentiful natural gas and petroleum reserves, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Qatar ranks the top across the globe (Sawe, 2017). This allows them to pay high salaries but also exhibits a high standard of living (Sawe, 2017).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sawe (2017) explained that Saudi Arabia is the proud owner of 20% of the worlds identified oil reserves and it is the biggest nation of all the GCC member states. It has a lower standard of living compared to other GCC states and therefore attracts many expatriates (Sawe, 2017).

United Arab Emirates

The Institute of Export (IOE, 2015) asserts that oil and natural gas are the primary natural resources in the UAE, and petroleum production is the most significant industry. The UAE has been recognised as the leading trade, economic, and tourism hub in the region and across the globe (Sawe, 2017). Therefore they have been attracting highly skilled professionals such as teachers from all over the world. The UAE offers free education to all male and female citizens from "kindergarten to university and at primary and secondary level, education is universal and compulsory up to ninth grade" (IOE, 2015, p. 51).

In my study, South African primary school teachers have migrated to all of the above Arab countries except Bahrain. In an article by Heialy (2016), she reported that a global shortage of school teachers is negatively impacting the GCC, which depends on migrant teachers to fill the majority of teaching positions. It is asserted that the Gulf region is progressing better than some parts of the world as it offers higher salaries and a better climate for westerners since it is hot throughout the year even during their winter season (Kenny, Reddan & Geraghty, 2018). However, with the high reliance on expatriates and the small number of nationals (locals) motivated towards following teaching as a career, "more investments are needed to keep up with the growing number of students, the increasing amount of schools in the region and, most importantly, the next wave of new teachers" (Heialy, 2016, para. 35). The majority of teachers in the GCC are recruited from foreign countries, "often on short-term contracts of two to three years incurring additional costs for schools such as housing, visa fees and travel expenses" (Ahmad, 2016, para. 3).

In her article, she also stated that "in the UAE, for example, 47% of the 39,000 full-time school teachers are from the UK and 13 percent from North America, compared to less than 1 percent who are nationals, according to The International School Consultancy (ISC). The figures are similar in Saudi Arabia's international schools, where 24 percent of teachers are British, 23 percent are from North America and 4 percent are local" (Heialy, 2016, para. 8). The UK has been experiencing its own teacher crisis (Manik, 2005), with much of its talent now lured to the Gulf by tax-free salaries and a warmer climate (Manik, 2015). The UK in the early 2000s recruited teachers from countries such as Jamaica, Canada, SA and Australia because of teacher shortages (UNESCO, 2018). SA was and still is recruiting teachers from Zimbabwe to alleviate their teacher shortages. Thus teacher mobility remains an on-going phenomenon (Manik, 2014, Caravatti et al, 2014).

The table below lists key details and provides expat percentages of each member state.

| | Bahrain | Kuwait | Oman | Qatar | Saudi Arabia (KSA) | UAE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital** | Manama | Kuwait City | Muscat | Doha | Riyadh | Abu Dhabi |
| **Ruler** | Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa | Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah | Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said | Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani | King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud | Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan |
| **Currency** | Bahraini Riyal | Kuwaiti Dinar | Omani Riyal | Qatari Riyal | Saudi Riyal | Dirham AED |
| **Citizens** | Bahrainis | Kuwaitis | Omanis | Qataris | Saudis or Saudi Arabians | Emiratis |
| **Percentage expats** | 55% (UN, 2013) | 70% (PACI, 2014) | 30% (UN, 2013) | 85% (2014, estimate) | 30% (UN, 2013) | 80-90% |

**Table 1: Capital, ruler, citizens, foreign expat resident percentages and currency**
(Taken from the List of GCC countries and nations online, 2019)

From Table 1, we gather that the largest number of expatriates are concentrated in the UAE predominantly, making up 80-90% of the population. The second highest percentage of expatriates resides in Qatar and then follows Kuwait. However, the table above does not only include expatriate teachers but migrant workers in all professions so the percentages in the table does not necessarily reveal that the highest number of expatriate teachers reside in the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait respectively. Conclusions will be drawn from the current study on South African primary school teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf countries.

### 3.3 Aims and Objectives

This study aimed to explore South African migrant primary school teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf countries. Therefore, the research targeted the six member states and the experiences of migrant teachers in primary schools there. In order to achieve the aim of this study, there were three objectives. These clarify the focussed areas of the study.

The objectives of this study were:

3.3. 1. To explore the reasons for South African migrant teachers from primary schools leaving for the Arab Gulf.

This objective aimed to explore the reasons for South African migrant teachers choosing to migrate to the Arab Gulf. I was interested to also gather information from the teachers which would reveal if their school placement matched with their qualifications and subject specialisations. This information would determine if the South African education system is prone to certain emigration features; or if migrant teachers merely see the Arab Gulf countries as a financial hub of employment; and if the teachers have perhaps joined their family members who moved to the Arab Gulf prior to them (chain migration).

3.3.2. To examine what are migrant teachers' initial teaching experiences in the Arab Gulf countries.

I wanted to probe whether some of the themes that had been highlighted in my masters research study on teacher immigration (in Johannesburg, South Africa) such as ill-disciplined learners, loneliness, the instability of employment contracts and the level of satisfaction as a result of the phase or subjects allocated to migrant teachers in their teaching workloads, were also dominant themes amongst South African teachers choosing to go to Arab Gulf schools. In-depth research and insight was necessary to develop a better understanding of South African migrant teachers' experiences in their working environment in the various Arab Gulf countries and to extend the literature on migrant teachers' experiences abroad.

3.3.3 To examine what the migrant teachers' teaching experiences are after six months abroad and why they have these particular experiences.

This objective was targeted towards discovering if it took migrant teachers six months, less than six months or more than six months to adjust to the schooling environment in the Arab Gulf. I have used six months as representative of initial experiences since Manik's (2005) study found that during the first six months that South African teachers taught in the UK, they experienced a great culture shock and that these first few months were extremely trying times.

The critical questions that informed the objectives above were as follows:

i) Why are primary school migrant teachers' leaving SA to the Arab Gulf countries?

Migrant teachers who were working in primary schools in SA were the data sources in this question and the next.

ii) What are their experiences of teaching abroad within the first six months of their contract?

For the above question, information on South African migrant teachers' experiences was generated based on their initial teaching experiences in a new environment.

iii) What are their teaching experiences and why do they have these particular experiences?

Information on South African migrant teachers' experiences after six months was generated to compare their initial teaching experiences as opposed to after six months of teaching abroad.

### 3.4 A Qualitative Approach within an Interpretivist Paradigm

A paradigm is a set of views and assumptions about how something works (Schmidt, 2013). Schmidt (2013) argues that in research, there are several different paradigms that people consider when trying to understand how things work in their field. These paradigms guide how people ask questions and what they consider to be the truth. Paradigms can also be seen as a framework for how we interpret what we observe or learn. There are several different ways of describing and categorizing paradigms depending on the field of research, including interpretivism (Schmidt, 2013). In the interpretive paradigm, the crucial purposes of researchers are to get insights and in-depth information. In interpretivism, researchers tend to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its unique context instead of trying to generalise the base of understanding for the whole population (Creswell, 2007). In the same way, Hammersley (2013, p. 26) highlights that since multiple interpretations are developed among humans' relationships, interpretivist researchers should try to understand "the diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures and try to avoid the unfairness in learning about the events and people with their own interpretations." Cohen et al. (2018, p. 19) also add that interpretivism shows

a concern for the participant by keeping their integrity of the topic being explored and efforts are made “to get inside the person and to understand from within” so that they can freely speak about their experiences.

Therefore, the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effect (Creswell and Poth, 2018). For an interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Cohen et al., 2018). I have chosen the interpretivist paradigm because it leans on the importance of understanding each individual's perception of reality, that is, South African primary school teachers’ experiences and their reasons for leaving for the Arab Gulf, which was seen as valuable to the study and to understanding migrant teachers’ school-based experiences whilst working in the various Arab countries. Research in interpretivism must include how individuals experience the world, and each of these experiences is considered to be a valid reality. Therefore qualitative research is useful in this study.

Bryman (2008, as cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 287) explains that “qualitative research connotes the use of words rather than numbers.” Similarly, Hammersley (2013, as cited by Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287) defines qualitative research as “a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a number of naturally occurring cases in detail and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of approach.” Creswell (2009, p. 4) similarly states years ago that “qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” Hence, in educational research, if a researcher seeks understandings and experiences of a group of teachers, interpretivist qualitative methods are likely to be the best-suited methods.

Qualitative research makes use of data collection and analysis techniques that use purposive sampling and semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Gopaldas, 2016). Data collection in qualitative research generally does not use pre-existing categories for sorting the data, it always has a focus (Hammarberg, Kirkman & de Lacey, 2016). The focus is driven by the specific research questions. Qualitative interviews are distinguished by their deliberate giving

of power to participants, in the sense that they become co-researchers (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The interviewer tries to empower participants to take the lead and to point out important features of the phenomenon as they see it. For example, participants may be encouraged not only to reveal aspects of their experiences that were not expected by the researcher, but also to suggest improvements in the research procedure. Finally, Creswell and Poth (2018) point out that a data triangulation strategy is often used in qualitative research with data gathered by multiple methods (e.g., observation and interviewing). This strategy can yield a richer and more balanced picture of the phenomenon, and it also serves as a cross-validation method.

In this research study, each of the research participants' views, attitudes and experiences (personal and professional) were carefully recorded to fully understand how each of them described their migration decisions and experiences and to make sense of how they expressed their experiences. The views of the various scholars above have extended my understanding of the link between interpretivism and qualitative methods. Following the nature of the interpretivist paradigm, this study elaborates upon and explores the adaptation of South African primary school migrant teachers when they enter a new teaching and learning environment in the Arab Gulf. This transition was examined based on their feelings, understandings and experiences of the twenty migrant teachers through a series of interviews and focus group discussions.

### 3.5 Research Design: An Ethnographic Case study

An ethnographic case study of SA migrant teachers in the Gulf was seen as the most appropriate research style. The research for this qualitative ethnographic case study was conducted by using three different perspectives, which allowed for the triangulation of information and the emergence of common congruent themes. In ethnography, the main strategy is purposive sampling (explained in more detail in the sampling section 3.7) "of a variety of key participants, who are most knowledgeable about a culture and are able and willing to act as representatives in revealing and interpreting the culture" (Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p. 3). For example, an ethnographic study on South African primary school migrant teachers will recruit key participants from amongst a variety of Arab Gulf countries to find out their school-based experiences abroad which is what I chose to do in this study.

According to Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 3), “a qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.” Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 156) also added that a case study research is defined “as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews and audio-visuals.” Hence in the study, the methods used to get deep insights from my participants were multiple semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (with an artefact discussion) and the use of diaries.

Heale and Twycross (2018, p. 1) describe “a case study as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units.” In this current study, twenty primary school migrant teachers were interviewed, their school-based experiences were used to understand the teaching experiences of South African teachers who have migrated to the Arab Gulf. Creswell (2014) explained that the structure of a case study should be the problem, the context, the issues, and the lessons learned. Flick (2009, p. 134) added that in case study approaches, “sampling is purposive and they will be most instructive when they are methodologically based on a narrative interview for collecting the data.”

The aim of using this study was to get a deeper understanding of South African migrant teachers in terms of their experiences and all its associated issues. This allowed me to gain a better understanding of the South African migrant teachers’ experiences in the Arab Gulf countries. My aim was to obtain information-rich experiences of migrant primary school teachers in the Gulf within six months of their arrival and then longer – to understand how they constructed their identities based on their experiences in a foreign country and different school environment.

### 3.6 Research tools and Data Collection

Jamshed (2014) states that qualitative research methodology is considered to be suitable when the researcher either investigates a new field of study or intends to establish and theorize prominent matters. She further added that “there are many qualitative methods which are developed to have an in-depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of their

textual interpretation and the most common instruments which are used, are interviewing and observation" (Jamshed, 2014, p. 1). The tools I have employed in this study are two interviews per participant and two focus group discussions with three participants in each FGD.

### 3.6.1 Interviews

Boyce and Neale (2006, as cited by Dudovskiy, 2018) explains that interviews involve conducting in-depth individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their views on a particular idea, topic or situation (example, factors that influence their stay at the Arab Gulf). They also stated that interviews provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena especially when little is known about the research topic and detailed information is required from each participant. Cohen et al. (2018) add that researchers should bear in mind that interviews are a social encounter whereby trust and rapport should be built to enable the participant to speak freely. Additionally, Adhabi and Anozie (2017) noted that interviews require a personal commitment of both the participant and researcher. Also, with the emerging technology, the execution of the interview process has become flexible thus moving away from the rigid face-to-face mode of interviews.

*Three types of interviews*

Below I discuss the different types of interviews and the type of interview chosen for my research with reasons in support of this choice. Three types of interviews are discussed: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews

Dudovskiy (2018) states that structured interviews consist of a series of pre-determined questions that all interviewees answer in the same order. He also explains that data analysis in structured interviews usually tends to be more straightforward compared to other forms of interviews, because the researcher can compare and contrast different answers given to the same questions. Berg (in Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 2) elaborates on this by stating that a key feature of the structured interview is that it is mostly organised around "a set of predetermined direct questions that require immediate, mostly 'yes' or 'no' type, responses. Thus, in such an interview, the interviewer and interviewees would have very little freedom. Accordingly, it can be argued, that this type of interviews is similar to the 'self-administered' quantitative questionnaire in both its form and underlying assumptions." For this study,

closed questions without the expansion of views would have been restrictive in gaining the full response from my participants given the nature of the study; therefore I did not use this type of interviewing method.

Semi-structured interviews

Jamshed (2014) defines semi-structured interviews as interviews that are detailed where the participants have to answer pre-set open-ended questions. She also adds that semi-structured interviews are based on a semi-structured interview guide, which is a representation of questions or topics that need to be explored by the interviewer. O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic´ and Sinha (2016) explained that a significant advantage of semi-structured interviews is the opportunity for previously unknown information to emerge. "Participants can be regarded as experts by experience; therefore when sufficient opportunity to speak freely is provided, new and novel information can emerge" (O'Keeffe et al, 2016, p. 3). To attain optimum use of interview time, the interview serves to guide the useful purpose of exploring many participants more systematically and comprehensively as well as to keep the interview focused on the desired line of action.

Scholars warn that "in conducting an interview, the interviewer should attempt to create a friendly non-threatening atmosphere. Much as one does with a cover letter, the interviewer should give a brief, casual introduction to the study; stress the importance of the person's participation; and assure anonymity, or at least confidentiality, when possible" (Connaway and Powell, 2010, p.170). Moreover, Engel and Schutt (2009) caution about potential participant bias during the primary data collection process and argue that participant bias would seriously compromise the validity of the project findings.

Other scholars, recommend that "some interviewer bias can be avoided by ensuring that the interviewer does not overreact to responses of the interviewee" (Connaway & Powell, 2010, p.172). According to Adams (2015a), some of the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews include being time-consuming and labour intensive because it entails the laborious task of examining a large amount of findings and sometimes many hours of transcripts. He also added that interviewers need to be smart and sensitive as well as knowledgeable about the relevant substantive issues that participants discuss during the interview. The process of preparing for the interviews, setting up the interviews, conducting the interviews, and analysing the interviews is not nearly as quick and easy.

In this research, the semi-structured interview is considered to be a research data technique carried out with the definite purpose of gathering data by means of the spoken word through the use of a planned series of questions with some leeway to probe further. The choice of qualitative research for this research is the result of a reflection on the nature of the problem – why are South African primary school teachers leaving to the Arab Gulf and to explore their school-based experiences. Face-to-face interview methods (onsite or via Skype) were, therefore, preferred (to quantitative methods) as they give intricate details of the phenomenon. In this research, semi-structured interviews were seen as the richer and most insightful option to gather data.

The semi-structured interview is a more flexible version of the structured interview as "it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005 as cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 2). Berg (in Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 2) points out that when conducting such interviews, "researchers recommend using a basic checklist that would help covering all relevant areas (i.e. research questions). The advantage of such a checklist, is that it allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study." Morris (2015) further explains that the term 'probe' involves asking participants to elaborate on an answer. It is an effort to obtain more clarity and detail on the research topic. Hence, semi-structured interviews were used to probe South African teachers on their reasons for leaving to the Arab Gulf and to explore their school-based experiences.

Unstructured interviews

Trochim (2006, para. 4) explains that unstructured interviewing "involves direct interaction between the researcher and a respondent or group. It differs from traditional structured interviewing in several important ways. First, although the researcher may have some initial guiding questions or core concepts to ask about, there is no formal structured instrument or protocol. Second, the interviewer is free to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up. Consequently, unstructured interviewing is particularly useful for exploring a topic broadly." Morris (2015) further adds that the unstructured interview is similar to a real conversation in that the context is crucial and there is a fair amount of spontaneity. This interview method was not appropriate for this research given my objectives of the study. I needed some sort of structure in order to gain rich data from my participants.

In my study I have utilised semi-structured interviews. Four face-to-face interviews were conducted in SA during the participants' Arab holiday break but majority were via Skype or whatsapp video call while they were in their homes in Abu Dhabi, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. I interviewed twenty South African primary school teachers; the duration of their interviews was approximately an hour long (on average) and some of the questions asked included accessing why they chose the Arab Gulf in particular, what were their teaching experiences in the first six months and if their teaching experiences differed after about six months in the Arab Gulf and if yes, how?

### 3.6.2 Face-to-Face In-Depth Interviews

Face-to-face interviewing is the most widely used form of data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Morris, 2015). The interview gives the researcher access to the participant's thoughts, reflections, motives, experiences, memories, understandings, interpretations and perceptions of the topic under consideration (example, facial expressions can reveal if the participant enjoyed teaching in the Gulf or if they disliked their teaching experience). It gives the researcher the opportunity to establish why people construct the world in particular ways and think the way they do. The stories of participants in a research are "a way of knowing" (Seidman, 2013, p. 7). Face-to-face interviews are often avoided due to the inability to travel across international borders because of high costs and the need to physically avail one's self and sacrifice much time for the research study (Cater, 2011). Therefore, through technological changes, researchers today can be able to conduct interviews online using the internet which is more convenient and cost effective instead of relying on face-to-face interviews (Nehls, Smith & Schneider, 2015).

*Skype interviewing*

Janghorban, Roudsari and Taghipour (2014, p. 1) explain that "over the last few decades, the online interview has overcome time and financial constraints, geographical dispersion, and physical mobility boundaries." They also added that Skype, as a free communication service, provides the opportunity of calling, seeing and messaging wherever they are. In addition to family, friends, and peer communication, Skype has played various roles in education and research. Deakin and Wakefield (2013, p. 3), believe "the online interview should be treated

as a viable option to the researcher rather than just as an alternative or secondary choice when face-to-face interviews cannot be achieved." Ryobe (in Janghorban et al, 2014) further explained that the educational implications of Skype consist of teaching, learning, and team work in online classrooms. In its research role, it offers researchers a novel interview method to collect qualitative data. Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown (2016, p. 5) argued that "a great advantage of using Skype as a qualitative research tool is that it allows researchers to transcend geographical boundaries, by nullifying distances and eliminating the need to visit an agreed location for interview."

Skype also provides the opportunity of audio or video interviewing. Concurrently interactive communication with direct probing is created in both of them. In using the web camera, the interaction will be comparable to the onsite equivalent for the presence of nonverbal and social cues (Stewart & Williams, 2005). "However, a 'head shot' provided by webcam will create obstacles in observing all of the participant's body language" (Cater, 2011 as cited in Janghorban et al, 2014, p. 2). Skype encourages interviewees who have time and place limitations for face-to-face interviews to participate in research. Consequently, the interviews occur in more convenient conditions for participants.

In the study, eleven participants used Skype video calling for their interviews which took place in the comfort of our homes (for both the researcher and participant) either on a weekday or weekend depending on their availability. I could easily read their facial expressions and body language and tell whether their school experiences were pleasant or unpleasant in the Arab Gulf. Some participants shook their heads vigorously in disappointment or raised their eyebrows to indicate how shocked they were with the learners' behaviour upon arrival in the Gulf. These nonverbal cues provided me with more insight on their experiences and the video call enabled more closeness towards the participant in the interview as opposed to an audio call where only the voice is heard and you cannot see the participant's face. Deakin and Wakefield, 2013 (as cited in Janghorban et al, 2014, p. 1) explained that "the flexibility may resolve the researcher's concern to reach key informants and increase participation. Nevertheless, the selection of a disruptive environment could affect interviewee concentration and data gathering." I therefore chose my home environment because it was peaceful and there were no distractions which would enable more quality time spent on extracting information from the participants. After the participants agreed to taking

part in the study and interviews conducted through Skype, the times of the interviews were arranged.

*Interview Details*

Twenty South African primary school migrant teachers in total were interviewed from Abu Dhabi (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Most of the participants were questioned via Skype because they teach abroad and it was the most convenient method. However, one teacher who teaches in Saudi Arabia was interviewed in Johannesburg in the comfort of her home; another teacher who first taught in Saudi Arabia and then moved to Qatar was interviewed at the school where I teach, in Johannesburg due to convenience for both of us and the two other teachers (who taught in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi) were interviewed in Durban when they returned to SA for the holidays.

There were two interviews conducted and both were based on the objectives of the study. The first interview was based on the participants' school-based experiences in the first six months of their teaching contracts and the second interview was after six months of their teaching contracts. Both interviews were approximately one hour long on average. There were no South African primary school teachers who taught in Dubai (UAE) or Bahrain. All the interviews were tape-recorded after the participant's consent was given. The interview schedule consisted of many open-ended questions because it allowed the participants, the freedom to talk about their experiences and it also allowed the researcher to pose follow-up questions to better access the participants' true feelings about an issue of concern.

The migrant teachers were chosen by speaking to my friends who taught in the Arab Gulf and then they referred me to South African primary school teachers who taught with them or had migrated to other Arab countries. I contacted the interviewees via Whatsapp and email a few days before interviewing them to find out if they were willing to participate in the study. Most participants were keen on being interviewed except that it was difficult for them to stick to the time they initially confirmed the Skype interview as other unforeseen circumstances arose and we needed to reschedule the interview. Arrangements were made to interview the participants after school hours. A weekday was most suitable for many of the participants since their weekends were busy whilst some opted for Friday (Arab weekend falls on a Friday and Saturday). The participants granted me permission to record them without hesitation because they were informed that names and school names will not be mentioned in

the research report. This made them feel more comfortable to 'open up' to me and share their experiences of teaching. During the face-to-face interviews, the migrant teachers freely expressed themselves in the familiar surroundings of their homes in the Arab Gulf. They expressed feelings of happiness at being employed with a good salary but mostly they discussed their negative experiences.

### 3.6.3 Diary entries

Flaherty (2016, p. 1) explained that diary entries allow a researcher to get a contextual understanding of the participant's behaviour and experiences over time. In her article she further added that this research method is used to collect qualitative data which is "self-reported by participants longitudinally." This means information is written over an extended period of time that can range from a few days to even a month or longer. I found it appropriate to use diary entries as a method of obtaining information about migrant teachers' experiences since there was a distinction between their first six months of being in the Gulf and then their school-based experiences after six months. Cucu-Oancea (2013, p. 5) added that its usage as a data collection tool has the advantage of, on the one hand, of "eliminating memory errors, and on the other hand, of the increase of data accuracy and fidelity." The author also stated that by recording natural social unrestricted states of an individual's experiences (such as their teaching experiences over the two/three year contract), the diary entries will provide a high reliability of data. Since working in a new environment was a daunting experience for many of the participants in the study, only three agreed to complete diary entries for a year whenever they would possibly get a chance and their experiences are explained in Chapter 4, the findings and discussion chapter.

### 3.6.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018) explain that focus groups are qualitative in nature and they aim to mine deep extracting data from a purposefully selected group of participants. Flick (2018) further emphasised that a FGD stimulates discussion amongst participants and uses the dynamic of conversation in the discussion as the main source of information. However, focus group discussions should be avoided where participants are uncomfortable with each other or where there is disapproval of a participant on socially characteristic grounds (Harrison, Baker, Twinamatsiko & Milner-Gulland, 2015). In such circumstances, participants may not share their feelings and views freely or are

reluctant to participate in the topic of interest to the researcher and this can undermine the process of gathering rich data.

Carey and Asbury (2012) explain that focus groups generally consist of a one-time meeting of persons who do not know one another and who have common experiences, such as in this study, the difficulty of adjusting to a new country's school curriculum. But it is becoming more common to use focus groups in settings where the members do know one another as in the case of my FGD's. Focus groups are planned to capitalise on the interaction among the participants to enhance the collection of deep, strongly held beliefs and perspectives.

***Reasons for the use focus group discussions in this study***

Leung and Savithiri (2009, p. 218) state that the focus group format has several advantages which was of benefit for the study: "It is relatively inexpensive. What is more, individuals are more likely to provide candid responses. Through facilitated discussion, participants build on each other's ideas through piggybacking" and in this way, the focus group is very advantageous for research purposes. For example, I used two applications, Skype and IMO which I downloaded on my tablet. These two applications were recommended by my participants and they only needed internet data to be able to communicate with my participants for each of the FGDs. This was a way which was more affordable than planning a trip to the Arab Gulf for data generation.

Focus group discussions could also allow for the clarification of misconceptions - participants could repeat their answers to questions that may be rephrased if they were not clear (Flick, 2018). In both the FGD's, this was common since the participants reiterated some of their school experiences by using a practical classroom example when I needed more clarity about their answers and this made it easier to understand them. In this way, I could process the information and produce a rapport with the group in a short space of time. The "synergy in the group interaction also usually prompts greater breadth and depth of information", and comparison of views within a group leads to greater insight into experiences (Carey & Asbury, 2012, p. 18). This was evident in both my FGD's as when one participant spoke about an issue, the other participant's agreed and added their views/experiences about that particular issue. In the first FGD, the participants sometimes laughed because it was ironic that although they taught in different schools in different areas, there were so many commonalities amongst them.

***Limitations of the focus group discussions***

Flick (2018) points out that it sometimes becomes difficult for the researcher to mediate during the course of the discussion because the participants have so much in common to chat about and can sometimes even steer away from the topic. He also added that at certain times, some participants tend to dominate whereas others refrain from talking. This was seen as true when I conducted my first FGD. One participant was sometimes very pensive whilst another two participants continuously spoke. Interestingly, Gibbs (2005, p. 4) also adds that on a practical note, focus groups can be problematic to bring together. "It may not be easy to get a representative sample and focus groups may discourage certain people from participating", for example those who are shy to communicate in a group or not very eloquent. The method of focus group discussion may also discourage some people from trusting others with sensitive or personal information. Therefore, the personal experiences discussed by participants in my study during their individual interviews which were not common to other participants were not discussed in the FGD which was later held.

I conducted two Focus Group Discussions via video call in the comfort of my home in Johannesburg to discuss the school-based commonalities amongst the migrant teachers that taught in the same Arab country on a Saturday since it was a weekend for the participants as well as myself. The first FGD was via Skype between three migrant teachers who taught in public Abu Dhabi schools. Each of the participants were also in the comfort of their own homes and the discussion lasted two hours. Two of the participants were still teaching in Abu Dhabi, however, the third participant who taught in Abu Dhabi had completed her two year teaching contract and returned to SA but wanted to participate in the FGD. The second FGD was also between three migrant teachers who taught at the same school in Saudi Arabia but this lasted an hour long. I downloaded an application called IMO to interview these participants since Skype was blocked in Saudi Arabia at that time. Two of the participants went over to another participant's home and were together during the FGD. I chose to have the FGD between participants in those countries since my study revealed that the majority of South African primary school teachers were leaving to teach in the UAE (in particular, Abu Dhabi) and Saudi Arabia.

The two focus group discussions commenced with artifacts brought by each participant and each FGD was conducted during the latter part of their teaching contracts. Each participant explained what artifact they brought and why it described their school-based experiences

during the first six months and then the second artifact described their teaching experiences after six months in the Arab Gulf Countries. The artifact was a way of initiating conversation, probing experiences and opening up lines for communication between the participants. Although each participant was given the opportunity to diarise their school-based experiences, only two emigrants kept a diary of their experiences from the time they left SA and chronicled their experiences and changes after six months. An open ended diary meant that as the participants found time, they would write down their school-based experiences. This could have been done on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The participants wrote in their diaries for one year, recording their experiences in the first six months of their first year in the Gulf and then after six months in the Gulf. These diary entries were collected for analysis after they completed their write-up.

**Table 2 Research Imperatives and Strategies used in the Study**

| CRITICAL QUESTIONS | REASON FOR DATA BEING COLLECTED | RESEARCH STRATEGY | DATA SOURCE | NO. OF SOURCES | SITE OF DATA SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Why are primary school migrant teachers leaving SA to the Arab Gulf countries?** | To explore why migrant teachers from primary schools have left SA for the Arab Gulf. | Semi-structured interview<br><br>Focus group discussion<br><br>Diary entries | South African migrant teachers | 20 | Arab Gulf Countries |
| **What are their experiences of teaching abroad within the first six months of their contract?** | To examine what are migrant teachers' initial teaching experiences in the Arab Gulf countries. | Semi-structured interview<br><br>Focus group discussion<br><br>Diary entries | South African migrant teachers | 20 | Arab Gulf Countries |
| **What are their teaching experiences after six months and why do they have these particular experiences?** | To examine what are migrant teachers' teaching experiences after six months and why they have these particular experiences | Semi-structured interview<br><br>Iterative dialogue | South African migrant teachers | 20 | Arab Gulf Countries |

### 3.7 Sampling

The primary purpose of sampling is the selection of suitable participants so that the focus of the study can be appropriately researched. Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013, p. 41) define sampling as the process of "selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study." The authors refer to the term 'items' because the subcategory of things to include in a study may not necessarily include people. Individuals are certainly the most common sampling unit in social research, but sampling units can also be groups, events, places, and points in or periods of time.

According to Elfil and Negida (2017, p. 1), researchers use two major sampling techniques: probability sampling and nonprobability sampling. The authors stated that probability sampling methods is where "all subjects in the target population have equal chances to be selected in the sample." Non-probability sampling methods is where the sample population is selected in a non-systematic process that does not promise equal chances for each subject in the target population (Shorten & Moorley, 2014). Quantitative research generally requires sufficiently large sample sizes to produce statistically precise quantitative findings whereas smaller samples are used in qualitative research (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorp & Young, 2018). This is because the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to "acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research" (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015, p. 13).

In this study, I found the best sample size of twenty participants was adequate to be able to answer my three research questions and achieve data saturation. Lopez and Whitehead (2013) explain that sampling in qualitative research is non-probability sampling and an effective sample selection process is very important because inappropriate procedures may seriously affect the findings and outcomes of a study. Hence, I provide a brief discussion of four types of non-probability sampling methods and the sampling method that I have chosen for the study which best answers my critical questions.

*a) Convenience sampling*

According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013, p. 3), this is the most common form of qualitative sampling and occurs when people are invited to participate in the study because they are "conveniently (opportunistically) available with regard to access, location, time and

willingness." They also added that convenience sampling is a relatively fast and easy way to achieve the sample size needed for the study. However, Etikan (2016) points out that the main limitation of using convenience sampling is that it could suffer from either under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the population. It could also potentially be that the sample is unlikely to be representative of the population being studied and therefore, limits a researcher's ability to make generalisations of the findings to a wider population. Therefore, this method of sampling technique was not suitable for my research study.

*Theoretical sampling*

Polit and Beck (in Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p. 3) define theoretical sampling as a "selection of participants based on the emerging findings to ensure adequate representation of theoretical concepts." Glaser and Strauss (in Elmusharaf, 2018, p. 8) similarly describe theoretical sampling as the "process of data collection for generating theory whereby a researcher jointly collects, codes, and analyses the data and then decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it occurs." The focus in theoretical sampling is on the data that needs to be obtained rather than the people to interview, anyone who can provide this data is the best candidate (Qureshi, 2018).

Purposeful sampling

Patton (2015, p. 264) provides the following description of purposeful sampling: "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry…Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding." Yin (2011, p. 311) further defines purposeful sampling as "the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions." Saunders (2012) interestingly, counts snowball sampling as a prominent form of purposeful sampling. Not everyone who is available to us can be included in a purposeful sampling technique; rather those available are who meet the defined criteria (Alvi, 2016). For example, although many South African teachers have migrated to the Arab Gulf, this research purposefully sought after South African primary school migrant teachers and not high school teachers.

Snowball sampling

Lopez and Whitehead (2013) state that this method of sampling is also known as 'chain referral' or 'networking' sampling. It occurs when the researcher starts gathering information from one or a few people and then relies on these people to put the researcher in touch with others who may be friends, relatives, colleagues or other significant contacts (Elmusharaf, 2018). An advantage of this technique is useful in approaching the type of participants which is not readily available or present in a very small quantity (Alvi, 2016). There are different sampling techniques but I have chosen to focus on purposive sampling and snowball sampling because it was the most convenient and only avenue for me to locate participants. However, snowball sampling is a "nonprobability-sampling technique which can be considered to be a form of accidental sampling", according to Babbie (2009, p. 208). This procedure is appropriate when the participants of a special population are difficult to locate, such as homeless individuals, migrant workers, or an undocumented immigrant which is why I chose to use non-probability sampling.

Data Collection

I have engaged in an in-depth study using as many participants from the Arab Gulf countries who were questioned (semi-structured interviews) regarding their demographic details, professional level and their experiences of teaching in the Gulf. The sampling frame included both male and female teachers from a host of Gulf countries (UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia). I used semi-structured interviews with twenty South African teachers who teach at the Gulf countries. The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions with some closed ended questions. With their consent, face-to-face interviews via Skype and Whatsapp voice or video calls were conducted with the respective teachers. Since it is a qualitative study, three or four of the Arab Gulf countries was sufficiently representative.

I then probed specific issues commonly flagged by the participants for in-depth exploration in a focus group discussion. According to Kvale (1996, as cited by Cohen et al., 2018, p. 506), "as an inter-view, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production." For this study, I created a relatively comprehensive taxonomy of school-based artifacts during the focus group discussions between three participants - a framework which includes inscriptions, gestures, and tools, but also broadens the notion of artifacts to consider objects such as furniture, specific electronic technologies, and more subtle features of the teaching environment like

the Arab culture and temperature. The aim in this study was not only to classify the teaching artifacts, but also to explore their relationships to migrant teachers' school-based experiences.

### 3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data generated. Information from face-to-face transcripts, online in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and a two diary entries were used to analyse the data in the study. Moser and Korstjens (2018) differentiate between two types of qualitative content analysis: inductive and deductive content analysis. The authors of the article explained that in an inductive content analysis, data is broken down into smaller units, "coding and naming the units according to the content they present, and grouping the coded material based on shared concepts. A deductive content analysis uses a theory, theoretical framework or conceptual model to analyse the data by operationalizing them in a coding matrix" (Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p. 10).

This research study makes use of the deductive content analysis. Since the objectives of the research and the literature (a priori categories) were determined by initial broad categories. Specific categories were then developed from a comprehensive examination of the data and identification of repeated or significant themes, words and phrases. Labels were assigned to categories to identify their content and meaning. Some of the themes that I developed from the data included an abundance of resources, the language barrier, travel opportunities and the poor behaviour of the local children in the Arab Gulf countries.

This study includes a lot of verbatim conversations and as Cohen et al. (2018, p. 647) suggests that "some researchers feel that it is important to keep the flavour of the original data, so they report direct phrases and sentences as they are often more illuminative…and rich in detail." The results collected from the sample will involve the following: a representation of the phase/s that South African migrant teachers located in the Gulf countries are currently teaching. Where necessary the findings were also illustrated by diagrams. Themes were generated after reading through the interviews, diary and FGD transcripts and an analysis was presented as responses to the critical questions. The participants were asked to keep a diary to record their daily teaching experiences whilst in one of the Gulf countries.

### 3.8.1 Presentation of results

The data for this study is presented as a response to each of the critical questions but before this, I begin with a brief discussion of the biographical details of all the participants to create visual images of each of the participants. The source of data is demarcated within brackets for each critical question (refer to table 3 for detailed research design). Themes relevant to each critical question are also captured in the textboxes below.

**i) Why are South African migrant teachers teaching in the Arab Gulf?**

a. South African migrant teachers (interviews)

Better salary, travel costs are cheaper when flying to other countries from the Arab Gulf, International teaching exposure, an abundance of teaching resources.

**ii) What is South African migrant primary school teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries in the first six months?**

South African migrant teachers
(interviews and a focus group discussion)

Culture Shock, Language barrier problems, Ill-disciplined learners.

**ii) What is South African migrant primary school teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries after six months?**

South African migrant teachers
(interviews and a focus group discussion)

More comfortable and less stressed.

### 3.9 Trustworthiness of Data

Research using qualitative methods can be evaluated (Young, Fisher & Kirkman, 2014) to ensure reliability and validity. According to Hammarberg et al (2016) the accuracy of interpretations that scholars make about their information refers to validity and reliability in qualitative research. They also elaborate that it refers to the dependability of interpretations scholars make about their information (i.e. over time, location and conditions). Thomson (2011) states that, in qualitative research, there are three types of validity that can be used: descriptive validity, interpretive validity and theoretical validity. Firstly, "descriptive validity refers to the factual correctness of the account as described by the qualitative researcher. Secondly, interpretive validity is attained to the extent that the participants' views, ideas, intentions, and experiences are correctly understood and conveyed by the qualitative researcher. Thirdly, theoretical validity is acquired to the point that a theory or theoretical description is developed from a research study which is aligned to the data and is, therefore, credible and can be defended" (Johnson & Christensen, 2003, pp. 300-302). I have utilised interpretive validity to ensure reliability and rigour by probing my participants to provide detailed accounts of their reasons for leaving SA and their school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf.

Lincoln and Guba (in Shenton, 2004) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. They also recommend "prolonged engagement" between the researcher and the participants in order for both to gain sufficient understanding of an organisation and to establish a relationship of trust between the participants. Trustworthiness of the data was ensured as all interviews and the focus group discussions were recorded. I familiarised myself with the data by transcribing the data verbatim from the dictaphone to typed text.

Triangulation of method was ensured in the following way: the FGD commenced with issues that were common in the interviews. Each participant was asked to bring an artefact that was representative of their first six months for the first FGD and then another artefact that exemplified their teaching experiences after six months in the second FGD. Once I had my participants, I conducted interviews via Skype and IMO.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations of the Study

Ethics can be defined as the norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. They help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (Daniel, 2013). Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, and Cheraghi (2014, para. 4) explain that "the relationship and familiarity that is established between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns, and qualitative researchers face dilemmas such as respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentations." They also added that some important ethical concerns that should be taken into account while carrying out qualitative research are: anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent.

Sutton and Austin (2015) assert that the role of the researcher in qualitative research is to try to access the views and feelings of participants. This, they explained will not be an easy job, as it involves asking people to talk about things that may be very personal to them. For example, sometimes the teaching experiences being explored are fresh in the participant's mind, whereas on other times recalling past teaching experiences over the months spent in the Arab Gulf may be difficult. Therefore, a primary responsibility of the researcher is to safeguard participants and their data. Mechanisms for such safeguarding must be clearly verbalised to participants and must be permitted by an applicable research ethics review board before the research begins (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In my study, anonymity and confidentiality was ensured and participants provided written consent.

I explained the purpose of the study to the participants and that it is a sub study of a larger project on teacher migration in the context of SA. Unclear issues were clarified before the interview and the participants then approved of their participation in the study by signing the consent form. The consent form contained the purpose of the research and the role as well as the contributions that participation entailed. Anonymity of the participants was ensured as all the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Confidentiality is important to protect the participants against harm and to ensure their right to privacy. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they felt uncomfortable with their involvement in the study. After a period of five years, the research data will be disposed of by means of shredding all the documents of the study. The participants were given pseudonyms and any voice recordings were permanently deleted and cassettes destroyed as well. The university ethical clearance document is attached as an appendix to this research report.

### 3.11 Limitations of the Study

A major weakness of an ethnographic study is that "it is difficult to generalize with the ethnography method" (Goodson & Vassar, 2011). Since this is an interpretivist study and a small sample was used of migrant teachers from a host of different Arab Gulf countries, I was therefore unable to generalise. It is contextually relevant to South African primary school migrant teachers only. This research was limited to primary school teachers only from SA who have migrated to teach in a primary or high school in the Arab Gulf countries.

Therefore, the results are confined to this micro location and not to all schools in the whole of the Middle East. The study was not undertaken amongst South African high school teachers. The findings nevertheless provide an understanding of the experiences of South African migrant teachers who are in schools in the Arab Gulf countries. Another limitation is that not all of the diary entries that were written were available for analysis since it was not based on their experiences in the Arab Gulf but rather on their experiences in SA after resigning and waiting for their visas to come through so that they can teach in the Gulf and after the attrition of the diaries, I used two diary entries made by each of the three participants. There were a few interruptions encountered in the data generation process and these are explained below.

**Interruptions to the Data Generation process**

For this research, data was generated from migrant teachers located in public (government) and private schools in the Arab Gulf countries. Various communication methods were used to make contact with the various participants such as email, whatsapp, messenger and Facebook. At the beginning of the data collection, an invite was sent to a recruiter of teachers on Facebook to get me participants from any of the Arab Gulf countries but she was only able to give me the contact details of a South African migrant teacher teaching in Oman. The teacher was keen on participating in the research when we first conversed with each other but then kept postponing the Skype interview dates until one day she decided that she was not going to be comfortable with a Skype interview and she was very busy. However, she was willing to recommend someone else but did not provide me with the details of another potential participant during my data generation period. This was not a very successful method and hence, I decided to speak to people who knew of South African primary school teachers in the Arab Gulf.

Another participant in my research was not comfortable being recorded so I conducted the Skype interview writing vigorously in shorthand to obtain all her experiences. Ten of my participants could not do a video call via Skype as there were problems with the internet connection if they videoed and therefore just a voice call was done. Only two participants could complete the diary entries on their teaching experiences in Abu Dhabi as the other participants found it too time consuming and hectic to complete written recordings but were keen on the Skype interviews. The table below indicates the data generation method used to obtain information from the participants.

**Table 3 Participant Data Generation Method**

| Participant Pseudonyms | Method of Gathering Data | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Face-to-face interview** | **Skype video call** | **Whatsapp voice call** | **IMO** | **Diary** |
| 1. Suraya | × | | | | |
| 2. Tony | | × | | | |
| 3. Aneesa | | × | | | |
| 4. Feroza | × | × | | | |
| 5. Laaiqah | × | | | | |
| 6. Katy | × | | | | |
| 7. Rooshee | | | × | | |
| 8. Aiden | | × | | | |
| 9. Samantha | | × | | | |
| 10. Anna | | × | | | |
| 11. Kelly | | × | | | |
| 12. Alice | | × | | | |
| 13. Riona | | × | | | |
| 14. Jayde | | | × | | |
| 15. Caroline | | × | | | |
| 16. Leona | | × | × | | |
| 17. Leann | | | | | × |
| 18. Tasneem | | | × | | |
| 19. Teysha | | | × | | × |
| 20. Fatima | | | × | | |
| FGD 1 | | × | | | |
| FGD 2 | | | | × | |

The above methods were used to obtain information regarding their school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf. The most popular method was the Skype video call but after some time, the

use of Skype was removed from the UAE, so the participants switched to whatsapp audio call.

### 3.12 Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the study being located in the interpretivist paradigm and the significance of qualitative research given the nature of the aims and objectives in the research study. Purposive sampling was utilised, specifically the snowball sampling technique to locate possible participants. This was embarked on by searching for South African primary school teachers from a host of different countries in the Gulf. An ethnographic case study approach was used to understand the reasons for teachers migrating to the Arab Gulf from SA and in reporting on their school-based experiences in schools in the Gulf. Three research instruments were utilised in the data generation: namely interviews, diary entries and a focus group discussion.

The following chapter begins with a presentation of the findings from the study according to the format described in Chapter 3.

# CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

# ADVENTURE AND OPTIMISM, EXCLUSION AND DESPERATION

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the study that was carried out over a period of three years amongst South African primary school teachers who left to teach in the Arab Gulf countries (in either private or public schools). The study explored three critical questions. The first question allowed participants to provide their reasons for leaving South African primary schools to teach in schools in the Arab Gulf countries. The second question examined what were their experiences of teaching abroad in respect of their ability to engage with the curriculum and their relationships to learners, learners' parents and the school staff within the first six months of their contract. The third question explored what were their teaching experiences after six months and their explanations about these particular experiences.

To shed some knowledge of my participants' identities in the study, I provide a biographical profile of each, to introduce them. Afterwards, I discuss the reasons why these South African primary school migrant teachers are teaching in the Arab Gulf. Then, I conclude by elaborating on these migrant teachers' experiences within the two time frames, i.e. in the first six months and after six months in the Arab Gulf. I have used six months as representative of their initial experiences since Manik's (2005) study found that on average during the first six months of South African teachers commencing teaching in the UK, they experienced a great culture shock and these were extremely trying times compared to their return after the holidays to complete the school year.

## 4.2 Biographical Profile of South African Primary school Migrant teachers

This section presents a profile of the migrant teachers who participated in the research study**.**

**Table 4 Biographical Details of twenty Migrant Teachers**

| Biographical variables | Divisions | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age group | 20 - 29 years | 8 | 40 % |
| | 30 - 39 years | 7 | 35 % |
| | 40 - 49 years | 2 | 10 % |
| | 50 - 59 years | 3 | 15 % |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |
| Gender | Male | 2 | 10% |
| | Female | 18 | 90% |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |
| Race | African | 1 | 5% |
| | White | 2 | 10 % |
| | Indian | 15 | 75 % |
| | Coloured | 2 | 10 % |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |
| Marital status | Currently married | 10 | 50% |
| | Single (Never married) | 6 | 30% |
| | Divorced | 4 | 20% |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |
| Country | Abu Dhabi | 12 | 60 % |
| | Oman | 1 | 5 % |
| | Kuwait | 3 | 15 % |
| | Saudi Arabia | 4 | 20 % |
| | Total | 20 | 100 % |

Age group

In this study, the majority of the participants were young ranging between 20 – 29 years (40%; n=8). Migrant teachers were also middle-aged, ranging between 30 – 39 years (35%; n=7). This shows that South African migrant teachers were youthful and in their prime, between the ages 20 – 39 years, exiting the country despite being offered a two or three year contract in the Arab Gulf. After completion of their contracts, they would endure the possibility of being unemployed because the jobs did not provide them with the option of becoming permanently employed. Being in the age group between 20-39 years, aligns with current practices as the "Arab Gulf employs the younger blood" since they are perceived as having more energy and enthusiasm to offer in the teaching profession (O' Donoghue, 2016).

Gender

A majority, 90% (n=18), of females were exiting and willing to travel abroad to teach given that the "teaching profession is dominated by women" (Lee, 2018, p. 1) in South Africa, so this is an expected finding. Although the majority were women, the few men in the sample also wanted to build their teaching careers and therefore decided to move to the Arab Gulf to broaden their teaching expertise. Both males (Tony and Aiden) emphasised that being men and as the head of their households, they had to provide for their spouse/children and the teaching salary in a public school in SA was not sufficient to sustain them economically. While the men wanted to feel financially secure and to be respected more in the teaching profession, the women felt a need for professional growth and financial improvement (I elaborate on this further in section 4.3.1).

Race and Religion

An overwhelming number of South African migrant teachers were Indian (75%; n=15) and a religious segmentation indicates that they were also Muslim (55%; n=11). The rest of the participants in the study were Christian (40%; n=8) and one participant was Tamil (5%; n=1). This is of relevance as the destination countries in the gulf are Muslim and as such there are rules and regulations that pertain to foreigners needing to abide by Islamic laws. In this study, a small and equal number of whites (10%; n=2) and coloureds (10%; n=2) who were sampled migrated whereas there was only one black African participant who was Christian. My racial identity as an Indian may have impacted on the sample since I used snowball sampling and therefore my network of teachers was largely Indian. Incidentally, my sample is reflective of

the greater trend which indicates that the Arab Gulf is largely dominated by Indian migrants although these are reportedly from Asia.

Marital Status

The study revealed that half of the sample were married teachers (50%; n=10) who migrated to the Arab Gulf. Although many of the migrant teachers were married, not all migrated to the Arab Gulf with their husbands because their husbands were not prepared to leave their stable jobs in SA. Some married couples and divorcees took their children along to the Arab Gulf and either home-schooled them or sent them to international schools for expatriates (30%; n=6). There were also some single women (30%; n=6) who were never married before their migration to the Arab Gulf. The remaining four participants in the study were divorced (20%).

Main source country

Abu Dhabi was the most popular emirate that most South African teachers opted to teach at because of the higher pay compared to the other Arab Gulf countries. Out of the twenty participants, 60% (n=12) of the participants taught in Abu Dhabi, 20% (n=4) taught in Saudi Arabia, 15% (n=3) participants taught in Kuwait and only one participant (5%) taught in Oman. In an article by Govender (2018), she also mentioned that most South African teachers are migrating to the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which is known as Abu Dhabi. Miller (in Govender's article, 2018) from a SA-recruitment agency stated that "close to 80 teachers from a Cape Town teacher-placement agency had been recruited through the agency for Abu Dhabi posts in the past two years alone." The sample profile therefore correlates with Govender's (2018) article since 60% (n=12) of the participants in the present study migrated to teach at schools in the same destination, namely Abu Dhabi.

### 4.3 Reasons for teaching in the Arab Gulf

Most of the participants (n=12) explained that their decision to move to the Arab Gulf was based on multiple reasons underpinned by socio-economics, the political context and professional development. These reasons comprised for example, a much higher salary package, minimal expenses incurred upon arrival in the Gulf, ease of transport accessibility to many other places around the world based on the geographical location of the Gulf and the need for professional growth in their teaching careers. However, these were not the only

reasons and the above reasons are intertwined. South African primary school teachers revealed several reasons that impacted on their decision-making.

In this section, I provide a discussion of the information gathered from twenty migrant teachers' interviews (I) and two focus group discussions (FGD) with a total of six participants (both focus group discussions consisted of three participants each). The first FGD was amongst migrant teachers who taught in Abu Dhabi, where majority of my participants are predominately teaching and the second FGD was amongst the three teachers from Saudi Arabia. Most of the migrant teachers in the study shared many commonalities with respect to their reasons for moving to the Arab Gulf which are discussed below in detail.

### 4.3.1 Socio-economic, political and professional reasons

The socio-economic, political and professional reasons for SA migrant teachers choosing the Arab Gulf region as a destination are discussed below:

*a) Socio-economic reasons*

Majority of the teachers viewed SA's economy as being weaker in terms of a comparison between the strong Arab Gulf currency and South African Rand. The instability of employment contracts in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) was also revealed as a motivation for emigration. Below I provide some of the socio-economic reasons that led the migrant primary school teachers to emigrate[2] to the Arab Gulf.

**Financial stability**

A determining pull factor for all the participants in this study to teach away from home, was the exorbitant salary which they were offered to work in the Arab Gulf. The reason motivating migrant teachers to leave SA to teach in the Arab Gulf was the well paid salaries that they were going to earn in comparison to what they were earning in their home country.

[2] Emigration for this thesis is understood to be a cross border migration for more than a year of teaching in the host country

Tony (I, 2a)[3], a divorcee who taught in SA for 6 years and who held a temporary government position in Pretoria stated,

"*The financial side is just not worth it in South Africa. Why specifically here, like I said, it is one of the places where you get paid the most.*"

This clearly shows that Tony did not hesitate to relocate based on the appealing salary offered in the Abu Dhabi region of the Gulf. His choice of location was determined by the country that would recognise and compensate him the most for his professional services. Feroza (I, 4a) similarly stated that one of her reasons why she opted to leave SA was because of the attractive remuneration package offered in Abu Dhabi. Also, being divorced, she migrated with her three children and stated that the remuneration was very good despite her undertaking a family migration to the Arab Gulf as well.

Being the sole provider

Tasneem (I, 18a), a divorcee who taught in Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) as a permanent teacher in the Foundation Phase for five years did not migrate with her two children. She needed to provide for her children without the financial support of another income and she stated,

"*It was the best monetary wise…they were offering far more than I was getting in South Africa. Plus it was tax free and being a single mum, I have to look after two children, I am totally on my own so I was not managing with the salary I was getting in South Africa*."

Her explanation for moving to the Arab Gulf reveals that the good salary motivated her (with her two children) to leave her comfort zone of a permanent job in SA. She needed to make more money and SA's salary for a permanent teacher was not enough to meet her expenses as a single parent. Katy (I, 6a) being a young, newly qualified teacher with two and half years' experience explained that the good pay offered in Kuwait was also the reason she left SA. This move, was triggered because she could not find a permanent position in KZN, her home province in SA. In her face-to-face interview she revealed that at her last school in SA, she had taught multiple grades: grade 6, 7 and 8's at a combined school and she stated with dissatisfaction that teaching the grade 8s, which is high school when she is a primary school

[3] All participants have key information regarding their profile, captured in brackets. For example I, 2a refers to the instrument from which the data is cited (in this case, an interview), the number 2 refers to the coding of the transcript, that Tony was the second interviewee and the letter 'a' refers to the first interview with Tony.

teacher, was emotionally draining in addition to the movement from one school to the next, because she was a temporary teacher:

"*I had to move from school to school. I was never settled in one school and I had a lot of incidents with the Grade 8 students' behaviour, respect towards me as a young female teacher in the classroom…Like you just get comfortable in one school, get to know your staff, get to know the children, then it's time to move to the next school. Very unsettled!* "

The instability of her teaching position and the unpleasant behaviour and attitude of the learners led Katy to apply to teach in the Arab Gulf. The tax free money earned abroad and accommodation offered in Kuwait had drawn Katy to relocation as a feasible option. Kelly (I, 11a) a seasoned South African primary school teacher who taught in Gauteng for eight years, also migrated to Abu Dhabi with her two kids and husband because of the excellent monetary rewards in addition to needing a change of atmosphere:

*"I wanted to leave for a different reason…I was feeling a bit stagnated. I've been in that school for 5 years and I wasn't growing so I think a different experience and also money wise! Like we wanted to, it was offering a good package and also…so we thought let's go for the experience to also broaden my perspective as a teacher and for the money. That's why! (giggles)"*

Kelly majored in English and Mathematics and held a permanent government Level 1 post (similar to Tasneem) but she was unhappy with the amount of money she earned (her husband was also employed so they did have a joint income unlike Tasneem) and she therefore looked abroad for a country that could offer her a better salary package. At the same time, she hoped to gain international teaching experience by relocating to the UAE. Her mention of the word 'money' twice in the above quote reveals that her main reason for applying abroad was due to being rewarded more financially.

Aiden (I, 8a) and his wife Alice (I, 12a), a newly married couple, who are both in the teaching profession also relocated to Kuwait for financial reasons. Below are the reasons that pushed Aiden to leave SA as he explained:

*"Firstly, there were no opportunities in South Africa for the future in terms of finances for me because I was earning about R14 000 and after all my deductions, I was left with 5 or R6000 and Kuwait offered me more than double my salary. Like 36/R37 000 and so that was one of my reasons.*

*Number 2, I was getting married and I knew that I needed to build a future for myself and R15 000 was not going to sustain my wife and I. So we definitely needed to move.*

*Number 3, the Middle East has more opportunities in terms of finance and resources and they were looking for teachers. There was a need and I found it fit to satisfy that need.*

*When it came to the other reasons, some of the other reasons were that, I was made excess*[4]*. I was an excess teacher in my first school that I was placed in."*

It is clearly evident from the above reasons that Aiden wanted to build a more financially secure future with his wife by earning a much higher salary and it is evident that he did fear the possibility of an unstable teaching post (in becoming excess at the school in SA and thus being forced to leave the school because he was no longer in stable employment) if there was no longer a need for his services in SA. He wanted to safeguard himself financially and therefore he relocated. The concept of 'excess' in the above quote indicates that Aiden was regarded as a surplus teacher at his school which meant that his services were not needed at the school because there were already sufficient teachers based on the school's learner-teacher ratio which is determined by the number of learners at the school. This placed him at risk of being moved by the South African Department of Education to another school (anywhere in the KwaZulu-Natal province) which required his services and this process could repeat itself.

Another participant, Riona (I, 13a) who was a seasoned teacher in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, having taught for 28 years decided to leave SA for a teaching career abroad because she felt that she was overworked and underpaid in SA. She stated,

"*I mean because I was underpaid, I had to look for other means using my skills to get finances to meet my financial commitments at home …working for the South African government was not meeting my needs, ya. So I had to look for some place where I could work equally hard but be recognised financially for my hard work*."

This reveals that Riona believed that her salary was not commensurate with the work that she was doing. She also felt unappreciated in SA so she decided to apply to countries that needed teachers but at the same time that paid well such as the Arab Gulf and Sweden. She was

[4] When a teacher is declared to be in 'excess' , it means that his/her services are no longer required by the department of education after they have worked out the number of teachers required given the school population.

successful and she was accepted to teach in Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia and Sweden but she chose Abu Dhabi over the other two countries because when she researched the salary between the various countries, the UAE offered her a better salary package. Teysha (I, 19a) on a second migration abroad (she was teaching in Johannesburg upon her return after the first migration), also indicated that one of her reasons for relocating to Abu Dhabi from SA was also based on the financial opportunity which was an overwhelming deciding factor in motivating her to leave SA. Hence, financial gains were imperative in building an economically secure future and most South African migrant primary school teachers were seeking higher financial rewards (salary and other monetary perks) so they were seeking teaching opportunities abroad. In this study, the Arab Gulf was seen fit to satisfy this financial desire.

**The Ease of finding employment**

Migrant teachers in the study secured jobs in the Arab Gulf very easily because of the demand for teachers in the Arab Gulf. Caroline (I, 15a) who held a School Governing Body (SGB) post at a government school in KZN (unsecured employed) was of the opinion that her principal was misusing the finances of the school and when she questioned the principal about her concerns, the principal decided to terminate her contract. This left Caroline unemployed for five months and it forced her to apply for jobs abroad because she could not find employment in SA.

"*Well at my old school the principal was, she was very unfair. It was all about who she liked and there was a big investigation (into the finances) and she decided to let me go and I couldn't find a job in South Africa. So I decided, I always wanted to travel; so I decided to send my CV and then I got a job."*

Caroline quickly secured an international teaching position in Saudi Arabia within two weeks of applying after being unemployed for almost five months in SA where she struggled to find employment. She tried numerous schools in the KZN province of SA and was unsuccessful with her applications whereas the day she was interviewed by the school in Saudi Arabia, was the day she was successful in securing the job in the school abroad. This and Rooshee's articulations below, reveal that there are ample job opportunities for teachers who want to migrate, in the Arab Gulf, and these opportunities come with many incentives that are offered. Rooshee (I, 7a) was employed as a SGB teacher (a highly insecure teaching position

as it's not even a temporary government paid position) in KZN in the year 2013. She explained that prior to her successfully getting a job in Oman, she had previously worked in Abu Dhabi for one and a half years (Jan 2014 – June 2015) and then returned to SA because she was unhappy in the UAE. However, she opted to leave again to the Arab Gulf within a month of being in SA because of the lack of availability of jobs in her home country yet she claimed that it was extremely easy to get a teaching post in Oman.

*"When I returned to SA, there was a lack of availability of jobs in the area where I lived in SA, crime was huge and it was difficult to plan ahead and find financial stability so I applied to Oman and within one month, I secured a teaching post."*

Although she had only two years of teaching experience in SA when she applied to the Arab Gulf, she was successful in her interview and was signed on immediately to commence teaching whereas she struggled to obtain a permanent job in a public school in her home country.

**Worthwhile incentives offered**

The number of incentives offered to South African primary school migrant teachers made the salary package in the Arab Gulf more worthwhile; these packages were also offered to other migrant teachers who were qualified to teach in high schools. Samantha (I, 9a) explained the reason why she so enthusiastically signed her teaching contract to go abroad:

*"I think the UAE, one of the nice things about teaching here is a lot of your expenses are paid for, so you able to save about 70% of your salary…we have a tax free salary, free flights every once a year, our accommodation is taken care of, what else…medical insurance."*

She is also able to save which many migrant teachers want to do, so that if they come back to SA, they are still able to sustain their families whilst being unemployed and searching for another job. If they remained in SA, migrant teachers interviewed felt that saving was not possible because the SA salary was not sufficient due to the high cost of living in the country. Katy (I, 6a) similarly stated,

"*Salary, the fact that its tax free, less expenses, accommodation- I don't pay … we don't pay for lights and water either. As well as the holiday, they have really good holidays as well and it's nice and easier to travel from there as well, for myself personally."*

So besides the incentives offered, Katy also highlights the travel perk which was discussed earlier. Her mention of not paying for electricity and water indicates that this basic utility is provided at no charge which translates to a financial saving on her part and her only expense would be her groceries for the month. Katy also walks to school because her residence is close to her school so she has no travel expenses either. Rooshee (I, 7a) also moved to Oman because of the *"lucrative salary, smaller classes, medical insurance, accommodation provided by the school and a free flight once a year to go home."* Hence, the numerous incentives, many of which translated into financial savings are a major pull factor for migrant teachers to teach in the Arab Gulf as this amounts to huge financial savings for them in the destination country.

*b) Political reasons*

Another reason pushing many South African teachers' out of the country is their inability to secure a teaching promotion: a teaching position on a higher level through an application following the correct Department of Education employment channels. For example, Aiden (I, 8b) who taught in KZN compared SA to the Arab Gulf:

*"Because I mean leadership positions, they are done very corruptly but here (abroad) it's based on merit or the way in which you speak in an interview. It's done with alot of integrity and the best interest of the school is at heart. So when you think of a South African context, it's not the best interest of the school that's at heart. They rather think of their best interest of their relationship with someone that's at heart. You know, this is my friend, this person belongs to this union or that union, you know. So there was no room for us to grow there (in South Africa) as people. So we decided to come abroad."*

From the above quote, it is evident that Aiden believes that political corruption in SA schools is still rife. Aiden's referral to 'here' explains that in Kuwait, school leaders acknowledge a teacher's hard work and dedication even though one may be a migrant teacher working amongst other Arab local teachers. If a migrant teacher deserves a promotion in the Gulf, the post will be awarded to them as it is based on merit. He feels that the recruitment process to obtain a Level 2-4 post (in SA) is not based on what a teacher knows and their teaching capability but rather who knows them, that is their relationship to others, implying that nepotism is common. He believed that the more popular you are with teacher unions and others in leadership positions, the easier it would be to climb up the professional ladder in SA.

*c) Professional reasons*

In this study, many participants showed an eagerness to move to the Arab Gulf because of the wealth of physical resources offered such as smart boards, free Wi-Fi and laptops for each learner. They also wanted to improve their qualifications by studying further through correspondence because they felt they would have more time to study whilst abroad. Another reason pulling teachers to the Gulf was the smaller class sizes which many participants felt was necessary for a quality education which they valued. The above professional reasons will be elaborated in more detail below.

Aiden (I, 8a) wanted to migrate to the Arab Gulf because he felt that he needed to enjoy the teaching profession in a country that offered an abundance of resources so that he could change the lives of the students he was teaching. Having completed a B. Ed degree through the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) in Edgewood and then pursuing his Masters degree in Education, he explained that learning the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), but being unable to utilise the technology in the classroom was making him feel less competent as a teacher because his teaching methodologies were limited to the textbook and chalkboard in SA. He stated,

*"Off course the curriculum has changed over the years, we cannot dispute that but the delivery of the curriculum, I believe- my personal belief, the delivery of the curriculum must meet the standards of the children. Now we can't be using textbooks and blackboards in a time where smart boards and tablets and laptops and computers are the order of the day. So I found that I was not able to deliver the curriculum well to the students because we were using a model which was not working because we were not techno-savvy at all. We still used old textbooks and I found myself for some subjects not having textbooks. I would have to run up to the office, photocopy, come down. It became a bit of a strain, you know. It became frustrating and when I found out that the Middle East uses, you know, when we deliver curriculum in the Middle East; when I found out from my friends that they using smart boards, computers and laptops and you know, it's very well resourced. I decided, you know, South Africa is no more for me until, you know, the system up's itself a little bit, you know. Maybe about 4 or 5 times in terms of the way we deliver curriculum.*

*I thought it would be nice for me to move out and go abroad and enjoy teaching like I am enjoying it now. That was my aim when I left. I wanted to leave to enjoy this profession and to use the resources that are available to change the lives of the students that I teach*."

It is evident from the above quote that by moving to Kuwait in the Arab Gulf, he has accomplished his goal of becoming a techno-savvy teacher as well as gaining the satisfaction of being able to fully utilise his full teaching potential in the classroom. Aiden's comparison between the Middle East and SA reveals that he was swayed away from SA due to the lack of technological resources in the classroom and the poor physical resources (textbooks) which demoralised him as a teacher and this prompted him to want to teach in a school where ample resources were readily available. Additionally, listening to his friends speak about the availability of teaching resources in Kuwait convinced him to leave SA.

Interestingly, Teysha (I, 19a) shared similar feelings about the South African education system and her lack of professional growth. It was not Teysha's first migration to the Arab Gulf. She taught in Dubai previously and after completing her two year contract returned to South Africa because she missed her family. However, after returning to SA and teaching again, she was still unhappy, "*I really did enjoy it when I was here for the first time (in the Gulf) and I felt like I, I needed growth where I was in my life and just to be challenged, I think.*" She wanted to be challenged professionally by being able to use the vast array of resources available to teach in the Gulf. She went back to the Arab Gulf but this time to Abu Dhabi because she felt that she could be more effective in education and do more with her teaching specialisation in English and she further added,

*"So the opportunity for teachers, especially native English speaking teachers, they are well sought out here and there's just, I felt like I had something to offer. They (ADEC) were looking for teachers who have this globalised vision and they realised that they cannot only rely on their oil resources and they wanted… they want their students to be more open minded and I felt like I had something to offer and ya, so what I had to offer and what they were looking for matched perfectly. So it suited us just fine."*

Hence she grabbed the teaching opportunity in Abu Dhabi and at the time of the first interview, she taught English, Science and Mathematics to Grade 5 learners. Teysha definitely wanted to do more with her teaching talent but felt that SA was hindering her professional growth.

Another professional reason that motivated South African primary school teachers to teach in the Arab Gulf was the smaller class sizes. For example, Laaiqah (I, 5a) who taught in Gauteng province for three years mentioned that, "*the smaller classes (in Saudi Arabia) in comparison to teaching 40 kids in a class (SA)"* was one of the reasons that pushed her to

teach abroad. She felt that she would be able to cater for individual learners' needs more easily in a smaller class as opposed to a larger class which she had in SA.

### 4.3.2 Religious reasons

Many of the participants in this study viewed practising their Islamic religion freely in an Islamic country as an advantage of residing in the Arab Gulf. More than 50% (n=11) of the participants were Muslim and some wanted their children to grow up being able to practise their faith more openly at the schools they attended and they wanted to expose their children to a more Islamic background. SA is a multi-faith and it has a diverse socio-cultural environment and these teachers were looking specifically for a Muslim oriented lifestyle so they could feel more accepted and develop their identity more as Muslims.

For example, Aneesa (I, 3a) a mother who migrated with her children and husband chose the Arab Gulf location:

*"Because of their setup with regards to religion, because I'm Muslim. It would be easier to fit in. I want to expose my children to a more Islamic background."*

Additionally, Suraya (I, 1a) who teaches in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia stated,

*"I always felt I wanted to learn Arabic because I have been studying the Quran for many years and I just felt that being in the surrounding atmosphere where Arabic is spoken every day, I'll definitely pick up more Arabic and this will help me to understand the Quran much better…"*

She further stated that many people go to Jeddah because it's very close to Mecca and Medina:

*"You can do your pilgrimages, your umrahs and whatever, like really half an hour to 45 minutes and I mean people all over the world pay lots of money to get there. It's expensive."*

A school environment that respects and allows Islamic prayers to be done during school time was one of the reasons that persuaded Aneesa to take the job in Abu Dhabi. Teysha (I, 19a) similarly explained,

*"Because I'm Muslim, I feel the culture is familiar to me. The way that the people are here, it's not something foreign. Ya, so it suited me in terms of my religion. I felt like I was free to practice my faith openly here, ya so that for me was important so that's why."*

Kelly (I, 11a) also shared the same sentiment: "*So I also wanted to experience what they live like as Muslims and it would have been convenient for us because there's a lot of mosques and I wanted to experience their culture and see if it's similar to ours. That is why I chose the Arab country."*

The above quotes clearly show that practising their religion that is, being Muslim in the destination country was a very important factor in making the decision to migrate to the Arab Gulf. They (teachers) felt more at home and at ease because of the dominant religion of Islam because they were Muslims. However, Samantha (I, 9a) who was of the Christian faith explained that Christians were also welcomed to the Gulf and this convinced her to migrate despite her being of a different religious faith:

"*I think that if church was something that we were not allowed to, you know attend, that would be one of the deciding factors for me… I think the country is quite open as compared to the other Arab countries, for example, I am Christian and here there are many churches here. It's not taboo to be heard of to be going to church. Church happens though on a Friday morning instead of a Sunday.*"

She only decided to move to the Arab Gulf when she found out that she was allowed to go to church despite it being a country dominated by Muslims.

### 4.3.3 Travel opportunities

One of the incentives that prompted South African teachers to migrant to teach in the Arab Gulf was their wish to travel and visit the world which they felt they would only be possible through earning a higher salary away from their home country and teaching in the world's richest oil region which offered multiple incentives such as easy travel to European destinations.

Caroline (I, 15a) a young, carefree, 27 year old single woman wanted to enjoy her life travelling whilst working and stated,

*"Well I wanted to travel the world so it was basically my main thing that if I was still teaching in South Africa, I probably would never been able to do that. So that was like my main thing, being able to travel."*

Likewise, Suraya (I, 1a) a seasoned Post Level 3 teacher (Deputy Principal) with 34 years teaching experience who left to teach in Saudi Arabia and Samantha (I, 9a), a 27 year-old Post Level 1 teacher concurred that migrating to the Arab Gulf presented travel opportunities for them. For example, Suraya (I, 1a) stated, "…*and the other thing is that travelling which is a migrator's hobby is so much easier and cheaper from Saudi Arabia."* Similarly, Teysha (I, 19a) stated, "*There is enough time for teachers who like me, enjoy travel so I'm able to travel quite freely and frequently from here."*

The centrality of the Arab Gulf for travel is a work perk. Travelling was a perk because it was easy and cheap to travel around the world from the geographic position of the Arab Gulf. Since the Arab Gulf is situated centrally on the map, most airlines pass through the Gulf to get to other destinations and hence the participants saved much money flying to destinations out of the Gulf.

### 4.3.4 Social networks

Social networks were another reason why South African migrant teachers chose to migrate to the Arab Gulf. Some of the participants knew of family and friends who previously migrated and the Arab Gulf was the location whereto they moved.

*a) Family influence*

Three migrant teachers knew of family members in the Arab Gulf and therefore felt more comfortable to apply to a specific location. For example, Caroline (I, 15a) stated,

"*I knew an aunt that taught there and I obviously not being, not ever being overseas before, teaching wise; I asked her for advice and thought that would be cool – knowing someone, so ya, that's why… Because my aunt was there, I thought it would be easier knowing someone that could help me around basically for my first time overseas.*"

Caroline's main reason for specifically choosing Saudi Arabia in the Arab Gulf was socially influenced by the fact that she had a relative in that country. Similarly, Suraya (I, 1a) moved

to Saudi Arabia because her only child was living there and she wanted to spend time with her grandchild and also other family members who found work in the country, thus it was a chain migration. But she also stated how she expanded her social networks,

*"And in this job, in Jeddah, I meet people from all over, from America, UK, Australia, Africa, you know, Europe and I just feel that I have developed such a network of friends…"*

This reveals that Suraya views building social networks as a perk apart from attaining international teaching experience. Samantha (I, 9a) was fortunate enough to have her parents with her in Abu Dhabi (they are also in the teaching profession and are employed in one of the schools in Abu Dhabi). Hence, she is also a chain migrant as she followed her parents to Abu Dhabi to teach as well.

*b) Friends propelling migration*

Another participant, Jayde (I, 14a), a seasoned teacher who taught in the Western Cape province for more than 13 years, explained that her move to the Arab Gulf was influenced by her friends: *"It was because of the inspiration of a friend who also taught abroad. Ya, she inspired me actually to go…Yes. I also have friends, my friends are all here. I had a group of friends living there already and wanted me to come explore…explore Saudi."*

This reveals that social networks play an immense role in influencing migrant teachers' choices of their destination. Migrant teachers were keen to teach in a country where they knew at least one familiar person so that they could feel a sense of support upon arrival in the Arab Gulf, either a friend or a family member. Hence, social networks play an influential role in persuading migrant teachers to migrate to a country recommended by their friends and family members who presently work there (in order to offer the prospective migrant teachers support and guidance).

### 4.4 South African primary school migrant teachers' experiences in the Arab Gulf

South African migrant teachers' experiences were divided into two time-frames in this study: their experiences in the first six months[5] (initial experiences) in the Arab Gulf were explained in their first interview and then their experiences after six months were discussed in the second interview. Below the findings from the participants' individual interviews (interview 'a' and 'b')[6], focus group discussions and diary entries are discussed. An artefact discussion was carried out at the beginning of each focus group discussion to glean their key experiences during a particular time.

#### 4.4.1 Migrant teachers' experiences in the first six months in the Arab Gulf

South African migrant teachers' experiences in the first six months were varied: positive, negative, mixed with some positive and some negative experiences due to everyday heralding a different learning experience at their schools. These extended from being overwhelmed with feelings of excitement when getting the job to then being overwhelmed with feelings of fear upon arrival due to the numerous changes such as a new classroom climate with English Second Language (ESL) learners and planning lessons using a different curriculum which constituted a huge adjustment for many of the participants. A common response was 'Taking each day in my stride' in their first six months. In the next section, I provide detailed descriptions of the migrant teachers' experiences and I analyse each of the participants' teaching experiences as well.

*a) Fear of the unknown*

A fear of the unknown was a common response expressed by the migrant teachers and this was related to their school environment and society.

**Possible professional rejection**

Many participants were nervous and did not know how they were going to adjust to their new school environment and the learners when they arrived in the Arab Gulf. For example Le-

[5] I have used six months as representative of initial experiences since Manik's (2005) study found that during approximately the first six months of South African teachers' teaching in the UK, they experienced a great culture shock and these were extremely difficult times of adjustment compared to their return after the holidays to complete the school year.

[6] Interview 'a' refers to the first interview conducted with the participant based on their school-based experiences during the first six months and 'b' refers to the second interview with the participant based on their school-based experiences after six months in the Arab Gulf.

Ann (diary entry) recorded the extent of her tension upon her arrival in Abu Dhabi in her diary:

> *The first day of school was terrifying and daunting. When I arrived at school my fears increased even more. The Vice Principal of the school informed me that since I am not cycle 1 trained, she cannot guarantee that the principal will allow me to stay on and if she does then I will be on probation for a long time. I just arrived in a new country to only be told that I might not have the correct credential for the placement I received. This is told to me as if it is my fault… when the placement was randomly given by the country's department of education. (June 2016)*

This diary entry indicates Le-Ann's fear of losing her job before she commenced based on the miscommunication between the school and the government's recruitment agency (ADEC). She is qualified to teach intermediate and senior phase learners but to her surprise, she was told that she will be teaching Grade 2's and she had never taught Foundation Phase learners before. This extract revealed immediate uncertainty about her job placement even after signing the contract in SA. It is evident that recruitment and arrival in the host school does not guarantee the migrant teacher a job until you arrive at the school that you are assigned to teach at and are accepted by the principal of the school. This acceptance is dependent on the phase specialisation of the migrant teacher and not only the overall umbrella qualification such as the Bachelor of Education degree.

**Learners grasp of English**

Kelly (I, 11a) added that when she arrived in Abu Dhabi she was unhappy because the learners struggled to understand what was taught and she feared how she was going to cope, and finding a way to communicate with the local Arab learners:

*Then the second week the kids arrived. Every class has 30 students…and in each of those classes you get children that don't know English at all. They don't know what you are saying. You can even say 'good morning' and to them it sounds like French. They don't know what you saying. I can't just say, like when I did my planning; I planned 'Oh, I'm going to start my*

*lesson with a video, oh after the video I'm going to explain the solar system then I'm going to give them a worksheet, then I'm going to explain the power point'. But you can't. When you play a video, they don't understand it. Anything that the video is saying… in the video, so they lose interest immediately…. and there was actually a part in my first six months when I wanted to leave. I said, 'I don't think I can do this!'*

Since the local learners in the Arab Gulf and in particular where Kelly teaches, that is, in Abu Dhabi are ESL learners, they would get bored and ignore her because they had become disinterested in her lessons when they could not understand English. Kelly felt overwhelmed with fear and did not think she was going to manage finding a way to teach the learners and she therefore wanted to return to SA when she had just arrived in the Arab Gulf because she did not anticipate the impact of ESL.

**Race and Mind set**

Caroline (I, 15a), a young, white blonde South African migrant teacher shared how scared she was based on her hair colour and skin tone when she arrived in Saudi Arabia:

*"So going there, I was super scared and uhm, I didn't know you didn't have to wear a head scarf. So when I first got there, when I was about to get off the plane, uhm like I wrapped the head scarf and put bobby pins in my hair to make sure that my hair doesn't stick out and the school said that they will wait there. They will meet me at the immigration but they weren't there so I basically waited 3 hours in the line making my way through and then when I went out of the airport, obviously just seeing all these Arab men, I didn't know what to do. I read that you can't look at them in the eyes and stuff so I was just basically staring at the floor and then I hear staff calling 'Miss Caroline' from JKS and I was like 'yeah'!!!. So that's when I basically met this person that was supposed to take me. So that was very scary, like I just wanted to cry because I didn't know anyone. I was all by myself, ya so that was very scary."*

Caroline (I, 15a), a young, white blonde South African migrant teacher shared how scared she felt when she arrived in Saudi Arabia. She had read about how expats are treated just based on their hair colour and skin tone. However, what she read about was nothing compared to what she actually experienced. As there was no welcoming contingent initially from the school, and she was scared about being alone especially with Arab men at the

airport and her not knowing the precise social norms that she had to follow. She further added,

*"Like because I've got the blonde hair, blue eyes – people would like whistle at you, you know. Make remarks or stuff but you just have to, like I told some of my friends. Some of my friends said they hate it there. Like, you have to go there with an open mind. If you don't go with an open mind, you're not willing to accept their way of living or anything, you know, it's going to be miserable."*

It is evident that Caroline embraced a positive mind-set in order to enjoy her teaching experiences despite the attention she received for her physical attributes. She overlooked the minor challenges stemming from her race, in a new society and she focussed on what her main intention was when moving abroad. Therefore, she did not allow her friends' negative comments about her physical attributes and the local responses to her, to make her feel like an outsider.

**Weather**

The extreme heat and warm wind upon arrival in the Arab Gulf was a huge adjustment for the migrant teachers in comparison to SA's cooler climate. Laaiqah (I, 5a) who taught in Saudi Arabia stated,

*"The first 3 months was challenging. First of all the major thing, when you touch down is the heat. So it's adjusting to that, knowing that you have to cover yourself completely. You get to the airport, going through passport control, the gentlemen don't speak English at all and they actually look at your passport and they treat you according to your nationality and should you be from India and Pakistan, then they would treat you differently because they apparently are the labourers."*

Laaiqah was made to feel unwelcomed upon arrival and became worried when her passport was first scrutinised. Her comment on her nationality reveals that Saudi Arabians appear to be guilty of xenophobia: degrading migrants based on the country they come from, namely India or Pakistan. She also stated that as a SA Muslim Westerner, she had to cover herself to respect the Islamic religion in the country although it was so humid and this made her feel more uncomfortable.

**The Unstable Employment Status of Migrant Teachers**

Before arriving in the Gulf, all migrant teachers signed their teaching contracts in their home country (SA). Most migrant teachers in the study were given two and some were given three year teaching contracts. A three year contract is something new in Abu Dhabi which allows migrant teachers to teach for a longer time abroad as most other Arab countries only provide two year teaching contracts. For example, Teysha, (I, 19 a) who started her teaching contract in September 2017 explained,

*"So my contract is a 3 year contract and it's renewed on a yearly basis at the end of your academic year. They will renew it and they will give you the choice of opting out of the contract if you so desire but I've signed a 3 year contract with them."*

In contrast, Kelly (I, 11a) who also taught in Abu Dhabi but started her teaching contract before Teysha which was in August 2015 stated,

*"The contract I signed was two years and thereafter, you can renew your contract every year, yearly. But I'm going home after these 2 years. I'm not staying longer."*

Similarly, Aneesa (I, 3a) who taught in Abu Dhabi since 2015 was also given a two year teaching contract and if her school management was happy with her performance, they could choose to renew her contract. So the migrant teachers, who signed their teaching contracts before 2017, were only given two-year teaching contracts in Abu Dhabi. However, these teaching contracts can be terminated at any time if the terms and conditions of the school are not abided by the migrant teacher. This was explained by Tony (FGD 1),

*"If you have one kid that doesn't like you and he goes to the principal and he says, 'He is a bad teacher!' Tomorrow when you rock up, he will give you a letter and you are gone, you are fired!"*

Feroza (I, 4b) also shared a story of one of her colleagues disappointing experiences in Abu Dhabi that could have caused her to lose her job based on a remark made in the classroom:

*"She's very witty and she was saying to them (the learners), you know, they were all laughing and she was saying to them, 'Right, you don't do your work now, I'm going to string you up and hang you up from the ceiling!' and they all laughed. One of the girls went to complain and said that she felt threatened by that and they wrote up on this colleague of mine- she was in the Science department from America."*

Based on this remark, Feroza explained that the migrant teacher would not get fired immediately but she would get her first warning in writing:

*"They can write you up but they'll give you at least 3 times… The third time, that's it. They'll end your contract. Finished! Because she tried to explain to the Head Teacher that you know it was just a joke, we all laughed about it afterwards… I wouldn't, how could I possibly, you know, even do something like that – string them up from the ceiling! There's no way I can do something like that and get away with it and she says, she told the Head Teacher, 'In America, I'm always joking with the kids because it lightens up the lesson,' and the Head Teacher turned around and said to her, 'well, that's not the way things are done here!'."*

So the nature of their employment contracts is quite delicate and SA migrant teachers realise this from their own experiences and that of other migrant teachers on their staff. Migrant teachers explained that they are always walking on thin ice and they do need to be mindful of what they say to their learners as the school's senior management do take the local learners complaints to heart without consulting the migrant teacher who is viewed as the foreigner. Thus there is no democratic process to discuss both sides of an incident if there is a complaint against a migrant teacher. The learner is highly regarded and the migrant teacher's services are terminated if there is such an event. Tony (FGD 1) stated that this is despite the host school knowing the extent *"to which the migrant teacher has made sacrifices to move abroad."* Migrant teachers thus view it as an extremely unfair labour practice that their contracts could be terminated without school management listening to the migrant teachers' articulations related to a complaint.

*b) An abundance of resources*

A pull factor to the Arab Gulf was the attractive classrooms that teachers gained and this made them feel more empowered to teach the new curriculum because the layout of their classrooms were spacious and classes were well resourced.

**'State of the art classrooms'**

When migrant teachers first walked into their new classrooms, the availability of a wide variety of professional resources for both the learners and teachers excited them and it heightened their feelings of optimism for achieving quality teaching. For example, Kelly (I,

11a) was thrilled stating that she felt '*over the moon*' when she saw how beautiful her new classroom was as opposed to her classroom in SA. She had everything a teacher could wish for and was excited to use her array of resources that were readily available to enhance her lessons. She had been placed in a public combined school to teach the local Arab girls Science through the medium of English and she stated,

*"The way they work here, what the government gives these kids is amazing. My classroom, the building – first of all the building is modern, it's beautiful. My classroom has everything you can think of. It has the most smartest furniture, the most…what you call it, good quality chairs for the kids, I have a projector, I have a big screen. I have a projector and a computer and it's connected to the Internet at all times. I can Google whatever, I can Google a YouTube video now and play for the kids. They can watch anything; it's like the state of the art technology. So when I got to my school, I was amazed. I said, 'Wow! I've never experienced this before!'*

*I feel like in South Africa we are really lacking coz they do so much for their children here, you know. And I couldn't wait to use the projector. I started planning my lessons. Couldn't wait to meet the kids. Ya so that was it (giggles) and then the principal was very friendly. She welcomed all the expats and so the first week I would say was, I had a very good feeling. It was, I was so excited."*

Kelly expressed how fortunate she felt with all the resources she had at her disposal and how enthusiastic she was to plan quality lessons. The resources could be used in the comfort of her own classroom, given that her classroom was fully equipped, gave her the motivation to plan fun lessons which her learners would enjoy. She also sent pictures via email to show me, the researcher, how proud she was of her '*state of the art classroom*' (See Figures 5 and 6). The tone and enthusiasm in her voice indicated that she was thrilled not to be short of any resources in her classroom and at having all of these teaching and learning luxuries that would make teaching a comfortable journey at the school for her and the learners. Her comparison between SA and Abu Dhabi classrooms shows that SA public schools are poorly resourced. Kelly's reflections about public schools in South Africa affected her negatively as a teacher. She also drew attention to the warm welcome that she received as a migrant teacher at the school.

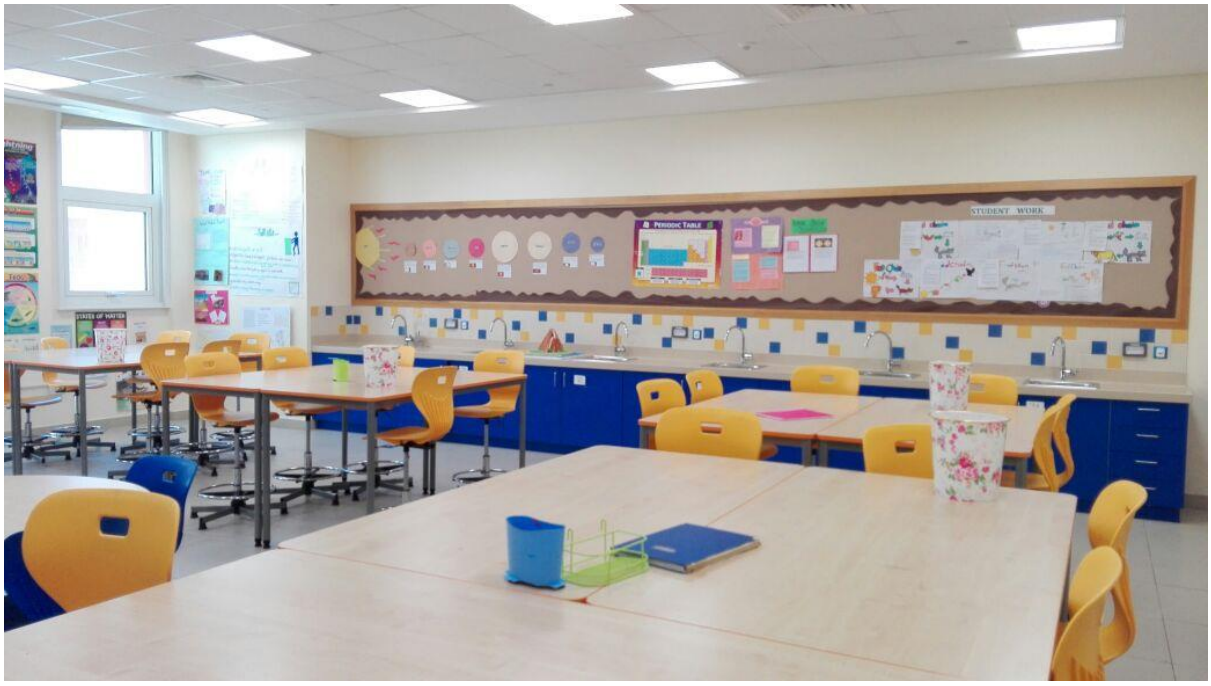



**Figure 5: A spacious classroom in Abu Dhabi**

**(Source: adapted from Kelly – I, 11a)**

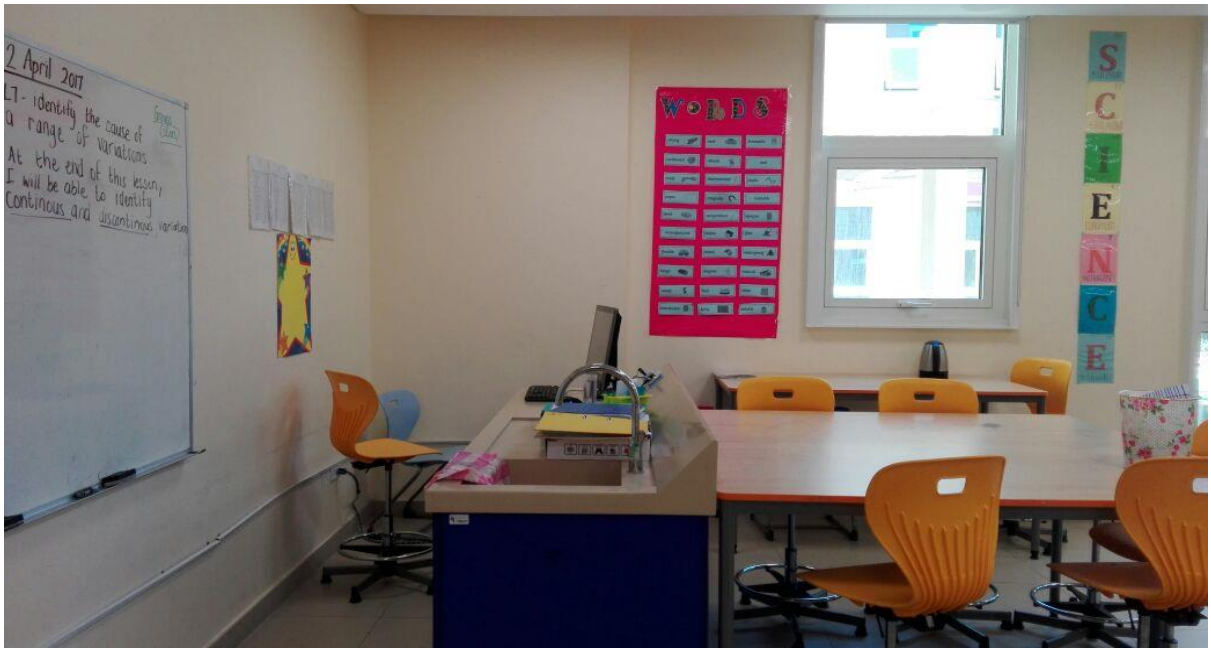



**Figure 6: Kelly's work station**

**(Source: adapted from Kelly – I, 11a)**

The images above reveal that she had a spacious classroom and an ideal junior laboratory for her Science lessons so that she could be more productive in her teaching using a variety of resources. Laaiqah (I, 5a) also stated,

"*Being in South Africa, we were not exposed to using ICT in the classes whereas being in the Gulf, it's the only thing you'd use. Everything is on their iPad and tablets. So we teach through PowerPoint. We only use the interactive board. Everything would be using technology. The kids would have all their textbooks and learning material on their iPads. They would do homework and submit their homework via the net."*

Laaiqah is also of the opinion that using ICT and utilising a paperless environment is key in this day and age and thus makes teaching and learning easier in the classroom. Katy (I, 6b) also pointed out,

*"We have like smart boards, whiteboards. It's not so much textbook work as well. It makes it much easier, more fun as well for the students whereas they just copying from a chalkboard. The activities, because our class size is so small, we able to do much more with them as well."*

The above quote also reiterates Laaiqah and Kelly's sentiment of the importance of keeping children techno-savvy so that they stimulate their minds through fun ways of learning. They drew attention to the enhanced quality of teaching they could provide as migrant teachers given the available resources. Katy did draw attention to the class size being small that is, the ratio of the teacher to the learner was significantly small and this facilitated teachers being able to accomplish much more work.

*c) Personal and professional interactions with staff*

The participants provided many examples of how they were treated by other migrant teachers, the school management team as well as the local Arab teachers at their schools. Their experiences varied as some participants had positive experiences whereas others had negative experiences. These included forming professional relationships with migrant teachers from across the globe, sharing ideas of the best curriculum delivery practices and common issues which they experienced in the classroom such as the language barrier and bad discipline of the learners.

**Support from the staff and school management**

Samantha (I, 9a) described her teaching experience with her colleagues and the school management as being a combination of both positive and negative in Abu Dhabi. She was very unhappy when she stated how the local Arabic teachers treated her,

*"Personally, they didn't come across as very friendly or helpful. They were very much to themselves. They would only really interact with you if you initiated contact. Professionally, there was a distinct cut between us and them professionally. There was no working together; there was no collaboration in the workplace. You did your own thing, we did our own thing. We never, you know, had any sort of interaction within the school, within curriculum wise. We were just left to do own thing. There was no assistance from them. Off course if you asked for help, they would try to a degree but you could tell that it's different to us as compared to the other Arab staff."*

Samantha felt that migrant teachers were treated as outcasts and not part of the Arab family. Migrant teachers felt isolated because it was not their home country but they were merely in the host country to fulfil their duties as teachers. Although Laaiqah (I, 5a) who taught in Saudi Arabia received training after every 6 months, she still needed assistance and guidance from the local teachers on an adhoc basis however, she was not successful all the time and stated,

*"I find that when you ask for help or you ask just how to do something, they feel that you can't cope. So just by asking for help, it's like what's wrong, you can't cope, you struggling! So you won't necessarily ask, you'll try to figure it out."*

So Laaiqah did not feel comfortable asking for help and this became a challenge for her. She had to think of alternative options to resolve her teaching and learning challenges when she could not get the needed assistance from the school management or her colleagues. Interestingly, Samantha also pointed out that the local Arabic teachers at the school where she taught in Abu Dhabi felt intimidated by the migrant teachers' modernism:

*"So I think they kind of see us as a threat to their culture, to the preservation of their culture. They're conservative in the way in which they dress, for example and then you would get a Westerner coming in and then the kids are like 'oh okay, we actually like the way you're dressing!', not really the way we're supposed to dress type of thing."*

The above quote reveals that the learners at Samantha's school were fascinated by the migrant teachers' western dressing especially those who were non-Muslim and this engendered negative feelings by Arabic colleagues who viewed migrant teachers as introducing socio-cultural change. Cross-cultural contact, which contributes to acculturative change, has led the Arab teachers to altering their behaviour with regard to Samantha's westernised dressing. She also shared in her interview that the learners asked her a lot of questions such as: "*The do's and don'ts and I think they like the freedom that comes with being a Westerner, you know, not constantly being constructed by certain rules like they are."* So, the local learners were also intrigued with the western lifestyle and they therefore warmed up to her creating an easy rapport amongst all of them. Samantha explained that the local teachers probably felt that she was less strict which in her opinion, was despised by the local Arabic teachers. She explained how this unfolded in her teaching and in the use of the Science resources,

*"Particularly in the Science department, I would find that they were very domineering with their belongings; not even their belongings! You know it would just… 'Now this is the Science staffroom and this is our things because we are the Cycle three teachers so if you need to use it, you got to ask someone to buy it for you.' You know, even though these are company resources but you can't really say, oh…*

*However, I must say in within the second month of arriving there was a local woman who showed so much of assistance and friendliness and she was very, very unlike all of the other Arabs and locals here in the country. To the point where I thought maybe she wasn't local. She was just very open-minded, very helpful, she didn't care that I was different; that the language was different. Her English was always perfect but she was very supportive, always trying to help and she now has grown to be one of my best friends here so I wouldn't say that the experience within the first six months was not all negative. I did have positive ones within too."*

Samantha's quote reveals that not all local Arabic teachers feel threatened by migrant teachers. Some local teachers on her staff gave her a difficult time so she had to conduct a few lessons without the use of certain resources. However, some did provide support and she was thankful for that because it made her teaching less difficult as she could eventually use the resources that were needed for the Science lessons with the assistance of the one local Arab teacher who became her friend.

Laaiqah (I, 5a) also pointed out, *"You are not easily welcomed because the teachers there feel that you being a Westerner and speaking English, you after their posts, their jobs. Maybe that's why their friends' contracts were not renewed because you were coming in, so they weren't very friendly and warming originally."* These statements revealed that the local teachers feel insecure when migrant teachers arrive; harbouring xenophobic views because they feel that either their colleagues or they themselves might lose their jobs to the foreign teachers and this created animosity towards the migrant teachers.

By contrast, some migrant teachers had pleasant experiences with their school management. In the second FGD, three migrant teachers who taught at the same school in Saudi Arabia all stated that they had very supportive staff and management. Caroline (FGD 2)[7] commented on her experience,

*"Well, for example, our Head of department, if you're not feeling well, Miss Casey, if you're not feeling well, she'll text you in the middle of the night to see how you are doing. If there's any problems back home, she will…they broke into our house back in South Africa, she was so worried, she would text me like three/four times, 'how's your family doing?' So that's more on a social level.*

*But then at work, if ever you have a difficult case or a parent being difficult with you, they will always assist you. For me, they always backed me up whenever I had any issue. There's only one incident where a parent complained where I wanted to keep the child for afterschool and Miss Hodien told me, 'don't write any more letters, just leave the child!' And the rest of the management disagreed with her and they even told her in front of everyone, 'Ignore her, just ignore her!' That was my only weird situation but otherwise, they're pretty supportive in everything. Like not just work related, emotionally, socially, everything*."

In the above excerpt, Caroline acknowledged how supportive Miss Casey had been on numerous occasions that extended beyond the school context. The time taken by her pastoral head made her feel welcome, more comfortable in her new surroundings and less worried about the house breaking incident that arose back home in South Africa whilst she was teaching in Saudi Arabia. Miss Casey was always there to support her on both a professional and social level and even when a parent complained about her method of disciplining, she

[7] FGD refers to the instrument from which this data is cited (in this case, a focus group discussion) and the number 2 refers to the second FGD done during the research.

still received support from the school management. Similarly, Suraya (FGD 2) shared her classroom experience of supportive colleagues,

*"I was actually surprised the other day, I sent an email, I sent a mail to maintenance and I copied in Miss Casey about water in my classroom. I had a big puddle at the back and the next few minutes I had Miss Grace come in with her secretary and everybody else and they came with towels and mopped up and she moved everything because I was busy with my spelling test. I could see she was like up and down checking, you know to see if they must move the kids out, take them to another room. Very, very concerned!"*

Miss Casey was one of the senior management team members who came to Suraya's rescue immediately when help was needed. She explained that response was quick (15 to 20 minutes from the time she logged her complaint) and she did not expect such efficiency within a short time frame. The school management team was a mixture of migrant teachers and locals and they practised an open door policy which the migrant teachers admired because they could discuss anything that troubled them. Jayde (FGD 2) also added to the above by indicating that she received extensive help of curriculum support from the management team:

*"Yes, I think that the school is pretty much very structured and basically most of the things especially with the curriculum support. Everything is there for you, everything is there! You can just go and collect whatever you need and if it's not there, they will even make it for you. In that regard, I think it's pretty much organised. The materials: support material, teaching material, reading material, everything is there. So you can just teach. Then if you need help with problems: discipline problems, they'll send you someone. They always come around to ask if you okay, do you need help.*

*Even with my class in specific, it's a boy's class. Now the boy's, the culture of the boys, it's just a multi-cultural thing, it's a Middle East problem, the discipline of the boys, okay…If it was bad they would ask you if need someone to come in and help. So I don't have a problem. If you have a problem, you just mention it!"*

It is clearly evident that Jayde, Suraya and Caroline were all fortunate to teach in schools in Saudi Arabia that provided adequate support to their migrant teachers. Being able to teach a new curriculum was not stressful because the school management assisted the teachers with support materials that were always readily available. Jayde's reference to the words, '*so you can just teach*', reveals how simple it was to teach because everything (all resources) that

they required was within easy reach and this was made possible through their efficient school management team.

**The Language barrier**

Migrant teachers engaged in cross-cultural changes, sometimes experiencing stress associated with acculturation and the overall challenges which they faced in a new cultural environment. A few participants described their day-to-day experiences with the local Arabic teachers at the school. Teysha (diary entry) described her struggle to communicate with the local Arabic teachers at the school where she taught in Abu Dhabi:

> *"The struggle is trying to establish a similar relationship with the Arabic teachers. Language is an obvious barrier. I've made it a point to greet each one of the Arabic teachers that pass my way. It helps to learn a few Arabic phrases – they appreciate it…Being Muslim has allowed me to cross some barriers that a lot of my non-Muslim colleagues seem to really struggle with. It's easier to let go of stereotypes and keep an open mind. I've committed to develop my opinions from personal experiences rather than the thoughts of others. "* (14-12-2017)

The above diary entry reveals that because of the language barrier, Teysha experienced problems communicating with her Arabic colleagues because of her inability to speak the Arabic language. But as time went by, she learned some phrases in Arabic and she felt that this made it easier for her to get along with the local Arab teachers. She has also mentioned that being of the same religion, namely Muslim, made it easier for her to overcome the obstacles that she would have otherwise struggled with, if she had not learned the local language.

Samantha (I, 9a) also shared Teysha's view of the local teachers struggle with the English language and she stated,

*"I think, I think a large degree was due to the fact that they struggle to communicate in English… I also think to a degree they are intimidated by us as well… I think just the*

*language and the fact that we come in and we sort of shift the mind-set of the kids and they start to think differently and behave differently."*

From the above, it is evident that both Samantha and Teysha acknowledged that the language barrier between migrant teachers and the local Arab teachers (based on fluency in English) created tension and there was a barrier because of their inability to communicate with each other. It seemed to Samantha that the local teachers were intimidated by the presence of migrant teachers because the learners had also taken a liking to the migrant teachers because they came from a different social context.

**A desire to learn from other migrant teachers and local colleagues**

The participants in the study alluded to the view that speaking to other migrant teachers and local colleagues as well as sharing their teaching ideas contributed to them learning from each other and this promoted their professional growth. Teysha (I, 19a) explained in her diary entry:

> *"Our grade teachers meet weekly to discuss and plan for the next week. This is helpful as we are able to exchange ideas and ensure that all the prescribed outcomes are met. The planning is exactly the same, but we're allowed the flexibility to adjust it as we see fit. The focus is on consistency. I'm quite fortunate as I have 3 other South African teachers in my grade. We all get along well."(14-12-2017)*

She draws on her advantage of having fellow South African teachers at her school which makes it less stressful because they are more approachable as they share the same home country. Samantha (I, 9a) also shared her experience of teaching with the migrant teachers in Abu Dhabi:

*"Personally I would find the first 6 months, the expats (migrant teachers) to be very helpful and very friendly. I think because they share the common experience of what it's like to be out here in a new country and you all by yourself so there's a lot of warmth and helpfulness that comes from them."*

In a new teaching environment, forming professional relationships to master your teaching skills and develop your teaching career is imperative and the migrant teachers turned to each other and their colleagues for professional support. Likewise, Riona (I, 13a) explained that networking extended beyond the school, *"I network with Science teachers. I have a whatsapp group with Science teachers. I get my support from there and then on Facebook there's a Science group."* Hence, learning from each other and exchanging ideas helps migrant teachers to become more confident in their classrooms.

Laaiqah (I, 5a) explained in her face-to-face interview in Johannesburg, SA during her Saudi summer school vacation about the support that she receives from the local teachers at the school:

*"Yes, there would be some that would invite you to their classes to show you how to use their curriculum document, how to use the interactive smart board to teach. So during my free periods, I'd visit different teachers just to see their teaching methods because our teaching methods with the kids in South Africa is very different to how we would teach the kids in the Gulf. So we have to learn from each other, learn from them and then they would have people from the curriculum that we're using – come in and train us on how to use the system to get the message to the kids."*

Some examples of the teaching methods that are used in the Gulf is the use of differentiated teaching (elaborated more in section 4.4.1.4) which works by acknowledging that each learner has different needs and such needs should be fulfilled through specifically designed instructional methods that address most of the learner needs whereas in SA, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum promotes Bloom's Taxonomy and also differentiated teaching to ensure inclusivity, however, large class sizes do not permit South African teachers to cater for each learner's specific needs.

**Preparing for daunting classroom lesson observations**

Each migrant teacher is observed teaching lessons at least once in a term in the Arab Gulf. This is the management's method of monitoring their strengths and weaknesses to make migrant teachers better at teaching the curriculum. Le-Ann explained this in her diary:

> *You are formally observed once per term and given feedback by the school management team. I had my observation at the beginning of the 2nd term and my feedback was brutal. I was told children were not learning from me and that I had terrible classroom management skills despite the fact that the children had been without a teacher for months and I was struggling to catch up work and establish a routine. I was informed that I would therefore still be considered on probation and would probably be terminated at the end of the school year. All this is said despite the lack of support from management. You are not orientated around what is expected in lessons. You only discover when you are told you did not have this in your lessons. School management supposes that support is directing you to the person who supposedly is doing it the right way. (June 2016)*

This diary entry indicated that her visit by the school management team destroyed her morale and professional identity as a migrant teacher, thus leaving her to feel incompetent. She needed guidance and support but she did not receive the necessary help to direct her by colleagues or management. It was not an easy start for Le-Ann but she persevered despite her poor observation report. Katy (I, 6b) explained that at her school in Kuwait, they also have class inspections:

*"Urh they have like maybe a group of 20 to 30 inspectors from England that come and they will look at, obviously they have their key things that they have to look for and they'll come like randomly to your class. Check children's books, like your way of teaching. Sometimes they'll come to you, sometimes they wouldn't. We like, our classroom doors also have to have a theme related to and then we have display boards which has to display the children's work and we have feed-back and feed-forward. Even in their books when we mark, we have to mark it like; if I teach them on a Monday, by Wednesday latest work needs to be marked with feedback like telling the child what they've done good and feed forward in how they can improve. Those are some of the few things like they look for. Not like teacher specific, it's like a whole school."*

Katy explained that the term 'feed-forward' meant advice is given to learners on how they can improve from being average to excellent. The inspections did not intimidate her in any

way because she always followed her daily routines and work programme set out by the school management so this made her gain confidence and be less fearful of the observations by management. Teysha (diary entry) also stated,

> *"We also had the added pressure of news of a school inspection set for mid-November. This is a big deal for the school as they wanted to achieve an 'A' aggregate as far as school ratings go."* (01-12-2017)

In her personal interview, Teysha (I, 19a) also mentioned:

*"So they come and they basically give the school a grading whether the school is an A school or a B school or a C school, or whatever. So our school is 7 years old and prior to me getting there, we had a B grading from IRTIQAA, it was conducted two years ago and so this inspection that happened while I was there, they come into your class, they observe your lesson. They must observe an English, a Math and a Science lesson. For all teachers, they will observe the Islamic studies and the Arabic classes for the Arabic teachers. They look at how the school is managed; they look at the safety of the school. They speak to each student, they speak to certain staff in the school and they give the school an overall rating and the school was very well prepared for this and we were very prepared as well. They told us what their expectations were and ya by the end of the IRTIQAA, we were given our A grading."*

Teysha expressed how excited and thrilled the school was upon hearing the news when they were given an 'A' grading. She further stated in a Whatsapp conversation (27-10-2019),

*"It was at least a month of vigorous preparation and planning prior to our inspection. We were given checklists and requirements to be fulfilled in order to be ready. The school ran a readiness check a week before the inspection. Regular meetings were held to encourage teachers to be at their best and ensure nothing was overlooked. Upon achieving our A, we had a huge appreciation dinner hosted by school management. We were awarded with gifts and certificates as a token."*

She explained that this grading was celebrated with a big party and gifts. Teachers received awards and certificates as it was very important that the school was seen as academically excellent. They strived to be an academically excellent school.

*d) Interactions with learners and their parents*

Migrant teachers had a mix of different teaching experiences with the learners they taught in the Gulf and the co-operation they received from the parents. The majority complained about the language barrier with the learners and the use of differentiated teaching in their classrooms which are discussed in the next section. None of the South African migrant teachers were bilingual, that is, able to speak in Arabic and English which could have possibly helped them to translate and communicate better when teaching the local Arab learners.

**The language barrier in teaching**

A teaching hurdle for many of the South African teachers, was trying to get learners to understand the subject they were teaching through the medium of English. Some participants agreed that there are a few learners who can understand and speak in English well; however, a majority of the local learners struggle with the English language and this causes many difficulties in learning such as a lack of concentration, noise and a poor quality of work. Since many learners speak and write in Arabic, they are mostly exposed to English, only in their classes.

For example, Katy (I, 6a) described the language barrier as a bad experience by stating,

*"I would just say it's the language barrier sometimes coz English for them is not their first language and especially with the parents as well."*

This therefore hinders effective teaching in their classrooms because learners find it difficult to grasp easy English concepts. The learners cannot gain assistance from their parents because they also converse in Arabic. Anna (I, 10a), aged 27 with a Science teaching specialisation and with four years South African teaching experience migrated to Abu Dhabi. She shared her stressful teaching experience with the learners in an inner city school:

*"Before I got there, the two months before I got there, they were being taught Science in Arabic. So when I got there, they were like in a shock kind of thing because going from Arabic Science to English Science, they had to adjust. So they weren't welcoming. The girls were like, 'No! We don't want you. You go back to ADEC to put you in the school where you came from!' and whatever…'Go back to your old school. We don't want you, we want the Arabic teacher to teach us and why did you come?' and I was like, 'ADEC sent me here.*

*There's nothing I'm going to do, I mean I have to be here!' So initially it was very challenging and then the girls started warming up towards at the end of the first trimester."*

The above quote is Anna's teaching experience at her second school placement in Abu Dhabi. Upon arrival in Abu Dhabi, Anna was first placed in a rural combined school in Abu Dhabi to teach Science to Grade 6 and 7's. However, ADEC, the recruitment agency decided that she was needed to teach Science to Grade 9 girls at a high school and therefore requested her to move from the combined school after two months of being in Abu Dhabi. As seen from the above quote, Anna has taken about six months to win the learners over with teaching them Science through the medium of English. It took time but eventually she created a good rapport with the girls and they began to understand the Science lessons.

Similarly, Riona (I, 13a) shared her initial experience of teaching Science to Grade 6 and 7 learners in Abu Dhabi:

*"But when you actually start teaching and then you realise you cannot compare the current students you have in front of you with students you had back home. It's not a fair comparison in any way. So one of the things you cannot compare is academic levels because…*

*1) It's a second language you teaching them in so it's a struggle there!*

*2) Next thing you cannot compare is behaviour because here the kids are brought up differently compared to home, back home. So the way you had disciplined in your school, back home, you cannot enforce it here.*

*…Then basically work ethic. These learners have a different work ethic compared to your learners back home and the emphasis on studying and homework is not as emphasised here than with our kids at home. So there's lots of things…the first thing I realised that I must stop doing is comparing! So you have to go in with an open mind and you have to take these kids for what you see in front of you. You have to delete, press the delete button on everything that you know from home with regards to how you want it to be because you cannot change what's in front of you, to change it to be like what you had back home."*

Riona acknowledged that the learners she taught in Abu Dhabi were different to the learners she taught in her home country. Acceptance of her identity as a newcomer who speaks English and which is as an additional language for the local learners, helped her to develop strategies to deal with the language issues in a professional context. She felt it would be

unfair to compare South African learners to the learners she taught in Abu Dhabi because each country has its own unique challenges for different reasons based on socio-economic circumstances. Instead of complaining and moaning about the situation in Abu Dhabi, she mentally prepared herself to adapt her lessons accordingly in order to meet the needs of the learners.

When Laaiqah (I, 5a) arrived in Saudi Arabia, she was told that she would be teaching Grade 1 boys four subjects: Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Science through the medium of English. She, however, never taught the subject Mathematics in SA as her teaching specialisation was English and she felt very stressed upon hearing that she would need to teach the subject at a Foundation Phase level. She stated,

*"It was challenging. My biggest challenge was teaching Math so I had to go home and prepare and read and the curriculum we use. Actually, had teacher notes where they provide you with a video to show you how to teach it. So it was a lot of preparation from my side the first year and actually coming down to their level for them to understand, you just not standing there and speaking coz 99% - most of them don't speak English as their first language and you teaching 4 subjects in a second language which is the second challenge that the kids are already facing. So you really have to break it down and use games and group work and interactive stuff or start with a video to get them to grasp the concept before you can actually get into the lesson."*

This quote reveals that as a migrant teacher, you need to be prepared for numerous changes when taking a teaching job abroad. Laaiqah had to learn how to teach a new subject which she had no previous teaching experience in and at the same time, find interesting teaching methods to connect with the little Grade 1 boys in simple English as English was not their first language. She further commented on the high, unreasonable expectations from the learners' parents at the school where she taught:

*"Honestly, in the Middle East, the parents, all of the parents think that their kids are like brilliant. They expect nothing under 95% in every single subject. They honestly work their kids to the core where the kids would come home and they would have a French teacher, Arabic teacher, it would be school after school for them! As long as their child can speak English and the child MUST speak English, they would make sure and go the extra way to spend all their money just to have their child speak English."*

This clearly shows the importance for parents to have their children educated through the medium of English and become more fluent in English. She emphasised this many times that the parents invest a lot of money to help their children learn. They are positive that their children are capable of doing well and therefore they are not hesitant to invest in their children's education.

**Teacher assistants**

A few migrant teachers had the privilege of having a teacher assistant who was a local Arab in their classrooms and this was considered to be a huge asset. The teacher assistant would help the learners who experienced learning difficulties such as those who struggled with concepts taught in English by providing examples and simplifying the information as much as possible. Sometimes they would translate the concepts to the learner's mother tongue which is Arabic so that they could better understand and be on par with the rest of the class. In SA, most migrant teachers complained about being stressed due to the workload but in the host countries, some migrant teachers were fortunate in seeing the positive impact of the teacher assistants in raising the academic standards of the local learners. Overcrowded classrooms and learner diversity in South African primary schools requires additional support from teaching assistants which migrant teachers did not receive in the home country. Hence, smaller class sizes with the benefit of teacher assistants was a delight in enhancing the quality of their teaching.

**Practising differentiated teaching**

Many of the participants practised differentiated teaching as part of their lessons so that all learners of different abilities were catered for in terms of coping with the language barrier in their classrooms. Teysha (I, 18a) provided an example of how she utilised differentiated teaching in her English lesson on adjectives to a Grade 5 class in Abu Dhabi:

*"Let's say I'm teaching them adjectives for the day… My lower level learners will be taught adjectives, so will my middle ability learners and so will my higher ability learners but the manner in which I teach it to the 3 different groups will be very different. So for my higher ability learners, I would ask them to maybe identify an adjective in a paragraph as an example. For my middle ability learners, I would perhaps give them one sentence and ask for*

*them to identify the adjective in that and then my very low learners, I would ask them to, I would give them a picture maybe of a dog and I would give them word cards and I would tell them 'what word here would match the description of the dog?' and they would pick one, for example, brown or scary or friendly, you know. So everything that you teach, English and Maths is differentiated*."

Riona (I, 13a) who also taught in Abu Dhabi added how differentiated teaching was practised in her classroom,

*"There are barriers, the first one is language. Language because if you take Science and you say, give a Scientific word 'osmosis'. You can't just say osmosis and expect them to know it. You've got to take that word osmosis and demonstrate it in the lab using some kind of practical which Science lends itself to it. So every big word that you give them, they know the basic language of communicating but when you're introducing new concepts, scientific concepts, that is a major barrier because you've got to show them video clips. You've got to show them different techniques in order to make them understand that one word that you trying to get across."*

Riona as an experienced Science South African primary school teacher, took her skills from her home country and empowered learners that she taught in Abu Dhabi by using alternative strategies to assist learners in remembering difficult terminology in her subject. Her use of videos clips stimulated learning in her classroom and helped her deal with the language barrier. She explained that there are different levels of learners in her classroom and maybe some bright ones will get the idea but as long as they have just an idea, she was getting through to the Arab learners. She further commented, "*It's not like they going to understand it fully but they will have an idea of that little concept*." That's the goal that Riona hopes to achieve at the end of her lessons, to scaffold learners sufficiently to understand the concepts in English. Learners with additional needs and those in need of more tailored support due to complex learning needs, including emotional and behavioural issues could be attended to in groups or individually during class time.

Teysha (diary entry) who taught Grade 5 girls English, Mathematics and Science at a public primary school in the UAE reported,

> *"We were provided with data from the previous year to see the learning levels of our children. With this data I am able to identify my weaker learners and stronger, more capable learners.*
>
> *Differentiated teaching is a big deal here and I can see why it works. I've used my data to group the girls in terms of their abilities and adjust my teaching to meet their needs.*
>
> *I have some learners who still struggle to spell their names and read easy HFW. I also have some learners who have the Reading Age of 14 year olds; so it varies in terms of their abilities."*(07-12-2017)

It is evident that Teysha has seemed to cope based on the idea of differentiated teaching. She has acknowledged that this method of teaching has many advantages as she is able to assist learners accordingly based on their level of abilities. The acronym HFW in the above extract stands for High Frequency Words which Teysha has described her learners having trouble to read. These are common words which appear very often in written texts but her 10-11 year olds found difficult to recognise. Interestingly, Kelly (I, 11a) shared her teaching experience of differentiated teaching in her classroom in Abu Dhabi,

*"I had to learn about what they really big on in this country. It's called differentiation. Everything is differentiation, differentiation, differentiation and at first I didn't understand what it is. It took me long to realise what it is but its every lesson that I plan, every single day has to have like 3 different lessons in it. One for girls who are not understanding anything that I'm saying; one for the very intelligent girls who understand everything and finding me boring and one for those who don't care."*

She showed an example of how differentiated teaching was practised in her classroom in the picture below (See Figure 7). Physical group activities boosted learner morale in the classroom as brighter learners assisted the weaker learners. Through using Oreo biscuits to learn fractions, Kelly's learners embraced the concept more easily.

**Figure 7: Fractions taught during a Math lesson using differentiated learning (Source: adapted from Kelly – I, 11a)**

Hence, differentiated learning caters for inclusivity in the classroom and it does not prejudice any child's education. So ESL learners need to be exposed to visual aids to help them through the learning process. Suraya (FGD 2) who taught Grade 3 boys in Saudi Arabia stated,

*"We follow the IB curriculum where they expect us to teach every subject. It has to be Inquiry Based and student led. So basically like the way we do OBE (Outcomes Based Education) back home but here they need us to teach students in groups, to set up six groups and then each group has a chance to move to the next station. That means each group when you set up the table; it has to have a different activity. Sometimes it's visual, sometimes you using manipulative, sometimes it's written. It can be anything, you know. They want us to expose the students to different types of learning."*

Suraya also explained that differentiated learning was also practised at her school through the Inquiry-Based (IB) curriculum. The use of the word 'manipulative' in the above quote means physical objects have to be used as teaching tools in order to engage students in the hands-on learning of mathematics. It was not difficult for her adjust in Saudi Arabia since it was very

similar to the South African curriculum. Group learning was new, however, because the Arab Gulf insists upon migrant teachers to group learners as they work better together.

**Discipline of the learners**

A common complaint from many of the migrant teachers was their struggle to control their classes. Leona (I, 16a) who taught in SA for 12 years in Gauteng as a Head of Department (HOD) with a Maths and Science teaching specialisation was employed to teach Grade 4 boys in Abu Dhabi and she explained,

*In the middle of the lesson, the boy's fight a lot and it would be fist fighting, serious fighting that will break out so learning is interrupted and also, I think, also because of the boys at home – they are on a pedestal. They are treated as men yet they are boys"*

In contrast, Kelly (I, 11a) also had discipline issues with the local girls that she taught in Abu Dhabi and stated,

*"So my first six months was very challenging. It was like a rude awakening for me and also, I also found out that a lot of them were very badly behaved. Like you know, I told you in my head they were amazing… Muslim girls who were decent, soft and lovely. No, no, no! They were crazy! Backchat and while I'm talking, they just be like, 'Blah, blah, blah, we don't know what you're saying' or they'll just ignore me completely because they don't know what I'm saying or they'll just start singing in the middle while you're talking because they don't know what you're saying.*

*It's like (pauses to think) and also I think, a lot of them, like some of them have wealthy parents or who travel a lot so they left with the nanny a lot who doesn't really teach them basic manners. So they don't know how to like greet. Not all of these kids, some of them like greet with manners or sit on the chair. Some of them just come to class and decide they want to sit on the table. Like basic manners, like you have to keep reminding them."*

So whether it's a girls or boys only class, the learners in both Leona's and Kelly's classroom seemed to be problematic and rebellious. Kelly was in deep shock with what she considered to be the bad behaviour of the girls because being Muslim and teaching Muslim girls (sharing the same ethnicity), she had preconceived ideas and she did not think that they would be so disrespectful towards her. Leona has pointed out that the boys are kept on a 'pedestal'

meaning that they are pampered and they will not get reprimanded for their wrong doings at home therefore they take advantage of their teachers at school. Similarly, Kelly also blames the poor behaviour of the learners on their upbringing because they lack parental involvement as the nanny takes on the role of their second parent but does not instil the values they ought to have been taught as children. This unfortunately has a detrimental effect in the classroom since their poor behaviour negatively impacts on the learners' behaviour in class leading to disruptive behaviour.

Tasneem (I, 18a) stated that her interactions with the learners in the classroom were horrifying during her first six months in the UAE:

*"In the first 6 months, it was horrible! The children, they are totally ill-disciplined, refuse to work. They have got no manners, they will never sit still. It's not like we have kids here (refers to SA because she was on holiday in KZN) when they are in school. They are very much aware, they have an etiquette of respect of sitting down when a teacher walks into the classroom, but there (UAE), there is no such thing! No culture…*

*Six months was very, very difficult because you have to come up with discipline strategies. I had to come up with discipline strategies that I haven't used in South African schools. So the only thing I could do was to research it, look at what other schools are doing. Look up what other professionals were doing and then trying out new techniques that actually worked with the children and that came in after the first 6 months."*

She explained that she had to engage in research to find techniques and best practices to discipline the learners. If she was having a 45 minute lesson, then every five minutes she would need to stop talking for the children to listen. This resulted in not much teaching unfolding. She also added that she had to think of innovative ways to get learners to listen to her which never happened in her home country, SA. So although she had five years of teaching experience, it did not help because the learners in the UAE were a totally new experience for her and she could not cope by using the discipline measures she utilised in SA because the school and social context was so different.

**Learners' preferences for teachers with particular characteristics**

A few participants shared their experiences of the importance of being energetic and physically involved with learners in the classroom.

Suraya (I, 1a) a 56 year old seasoned teacher explained her experience of teaching Grade 3 boys in Saudi Arabia,

*"I found that the boys are really in my opinion, over talkative. They are just too bubbly and too full of energy. They just have too much energy. Unless, offcourse, maybe I'm not that young enough to cope. Maybe a young person will cope with that kind of energy."*

Caroline (I, 15a) explained that when she arrived at her school in Saudi Arabia, she inherited a class of Grade 3 girl learners. These learners gave their previous teacher a difficult time and so she was requested to teach another class:

*"So there was a different teacher in the class at first. It was a very trouble making class so the teacher was taken out of the class and I was put into that classroom. The girls liked me, I had no problem. I think because I was much younger than the previous teacher as well. I was energetic so I would go play with them, you know in break time and stuff. So they enjoyed it and I had a good time…"*

The above quote reveals that children want vibrant teachers who make teaching and learning a fun environment. Caroline's method of spending time with the girls outside of classroom contact time won their hearts and made them warm up to her. Laaiqah (I, 5a) stated,

*"It was challenging, you had to win them over. You must remember a lot of them are not given love from their mothers, that's how I find it. They are raised by the nanny, so they come home, they come to school not having seen their mother. The maid or the nanny as they call them would bring them to school. All they want is love from you. So they don't really care about learning at that point, they just want you to show love and affection to them and care for them and appreciate them and when they go home after school, some of their mums are still sleeping, so the nanny would see to them. So basically you are the only real person who really cares for them during that time so they appreciate you if you show them the love and affection. But they can be extremely challenging as well. They would really test you!"*

Laaiqah highlights the importance of nurturing the learners whilst in her care at school because they seek this love and attention from their teachers. The learners go through social

issues at home which can negatively impact their learning so being aware of their home background, allowed her to be more affectionate towards them. In this way, she could gain some discipline in her classroom but this was not the case all the time as the learners were ill-disciplined on some occasions.

*e) Preparedness for transition*

In the study, participants had to adjust to a new school environment and whilst many were not prepared for it, a few were ready for the changes. The changes are separated into: adjusting to the new curriculum in the Arab Gulf and adjusting to the Islamic rules in their classrooms which are discussed below.

**Adjusting to a new curriculum abroad**

Many participants in Abu Dhabi made me aware of the curriculum changes that were taking place during their interviews. Riona (I, 13a) stated:

*"So the structures that are here are not permanent because the whole of ADEC is under transition, everything is constantly changing like last week we had a meeting and they said there's a new curriculum starting next academic year. So you've got to brace yourselves for that so I started last September with one curriculum, now I must pack all those files away and take out new files and start with something absolutely new, different. From an Australian curriculum, they are changing to the American curriculum so you have to brace yourself for change. The support, if you look at the support, they have different structures in place like something called AQCO's: Academic Quality Control Officers. So they have these meetings and they provide that support."*

As Riona has explained above, change is inevitable with a new curriculum and as migrant teachers they were being prepared for curriculum change mentally. Riona felt fortunate at her school because the teachers were mentored and guided so that they all understood the new curriculum. Teysha (diary entry) described her experience upon hearing the news of a new curriculum that was going to be implemented in Abu Dhabi:

> *"We have come to realise that ADEC is going through some big changes as the Council is now merging with M.O.E (Ministry of Education). This means big changes as far as assessments for learning are concerned. We now have prescribed books as well as pacing guides to help us along to finish the content of the prescribed curriculum. ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge) has now replaced ADEC. The curriculum is American; however, it has adopted what it considers 'best' practices from New Zealand, Britain and the UAE."* (01-12-2017)

Teysha explained that it was overwhelming at first as the curriculum change was very new to her and she was unsure of what to expect. So although she was scared and uneasy about the curriculum change, she gradually learnt coping mechanisms.

**The Three Levels of Questioning: Emerging, Developing or Mastering**

In Abu Dhabi, the use of levelled questioning is practised. All lessons must have an Emerging, Developing and Mastering question. Many participants claimed that this was a huge adjustment coming from a numerical system in SA where all subjects were out of 100%. Samantha (I, 9a) explained that in Abu Dhabi,

*"Here, they've got like a levelled questioning. So in a unit of Science or whatever you may teach, you've got 3 levels that you can achieve: Emerging, Developing or Mastering. So you got to now adapt your mind to testing for those different questions and get out of the numerical value mind-set…and then if you not getting it, it's called Not Achieved. So when you grade a student, you either give them an N, E, D or M. There's no A's, B's, C's. There are no values."*

The letter 'N' in the above quote stands for 'Not Achieved'. If learners are unable to meet the E, D or M levels, they are classified as not achieving any of the learning outcomes. Feroza (I, 4a) who also taught in Abu Dhabi added,

*"I give them a grade based on their participation in class. The grading is very…there's nothing definite about the grading. You pick it out of a hat. There is no mark system. They work on a 3 grade system: E, D, M they call it – Emerging, Developing and Mastering and*

*there's no standardisation so each teacher basically has their own system of how they give their children grades."*

This meant that if the grades were too low, they were asked to raise the grades because there is a lack of criteria for grading learners and the Head teacher had the final say before the grades were published. She would check their grades per learner and if she decided it was low, she would change it. Similarly, Teysha stated:

*"We have three levels, E, D and M. E means emerging, those are our very low learners, our very weak learners. Then our middle ability learners are called developed so our teaching is targeted at developing their skills meaning they know the content but they need assistance with it and then our M learners are our Mastering learners. Also our learners that we can challenge and you know for the most part are able to work independently and they are able to complete tasks on time which means we can actually push them forward on to the next level or on to the next concept or the next outcome. So all our teaching and it's very stressed upon us somehow, the management and the policy, we are expected to teach our learners at their level. So in this way, like if we teaching kids from back home, it's pushing content but making sure that they grasp it on their level and the outcomes are also differentiated. You know, which is very different to South Africa because in South Africa its one outcome and all learners are expected to know it. Here, it's one outcome but based on those 3 levels, that's the expectation."*

Teysha also clearly explains the importance of this teaching methodology in Abu Dhabi and how the school management insists on differentiated teaching as a 'one size fits all' curriculum is not possible when learners have diverse learning needs which needs to be catered for individually.

**Adjusting to the Islamic rules in class**

Katy explained that one of her experiences that she had to get used to in the first few months were the following: she could not teach learners through videos that played music when it was the 'call of prayer' time. She stated,

*"Well like when it's their prayer time, you always have to be mindful of it. I can't be playing videos in my class because of the music. Whenever it's time for prayer, then music,*

e*verything goes off. You have to be quiet. You have to allow some of the students that want to pray to go to the back of the class. So you need to give them 5 minutes to wash themselves and they do 5 steps that they need to be clean. So we need to be accommodating of that as well."*

This was a completely new teaching experience for Katy because she had never done this daily in her home country. All her lessons now have to be carefully planned because as much as she is allowed to play videos, it should be strictly conversational and not be musical in any way. Samantha (I, 9a) shared her experience of the culture shock in her first six months in Abu Dhabi:

*"I would say that it was quite a culture shock to me because there's many things about them that are just like ordinary kids but the culture is quite different in terms of, they very loud; they very chatty. They not used to classrooms that have a lot of rules and boundaries so it was a battle in the first few months trying to get them into routine coz they really don't have that in other classrooms. I found that with all the girls especially there was a lot of resistance that came from them. It took a lot of work to finally get them on the same page but in the first few, first six months were extremely challenging with the older girls."*

Samantha struggled with the Grade 8 girl's bad behaviour. They wouldn't listen to her instructions in class at the beginning when she was placed at the school. She felt that this behavioural trait could be attributed to their culture because they are very spoilt at home and given a lot of freedom so in a classroom they have the same expectations such as 'not to be reprimanded'.

**Coping mechanisms for Migrant Teachers**

An artefact discussion[8] was carried out for each of the focus group discussions to ascertain what artefacts were representative of each participant's teaching experience in the first six months and after six months. Below is an example of an artefact (Figure 8) that assisted with the participant's integration during her teaching in Saudi Arabia and it was perceived as her coping mechanism for the shock and negative experiences that she was enduring. Jayde (FGD 2) stated,

[8] The artefact discussion was part of the FGD.

*"The book is called, I love this book…it's called: The power of positive thinking and all this time being so negative and just wanting to quit, I changed it into the positive thinking. And in this book, there are such a lot of good things that I kept and I could still apply it to my everyday life of now and I just have it written it all over in my house and that kept me going. Really that kept me going!"*


**Figure 8: An example of an artefact**
**(Source: adapted from Jayde – FGD 2)**

Jayde would read the book as often as possible to remind her of her main reason for leaving SA. She explained that although the book was so old, it did the job of keeping her motivated to teach in Saudi Arabia when she felt sad or depressed to be away from her family in SA. So the book title is instructive. When she is feeling that her morale is low, then she returns to the book to boost her morale. Caroline (FGD 2) stated that the booklet titled: 'The Teacher's Planner' was an example of an artefact of value for her (See Figure 9):

*"Because it's got your whole curriculum and everything in it and we plan day by day so for me it was just easier to fill in everything and know exactly what I'll do for the whole cycle. If I didn't have that, I probably wouldn't have planned."*

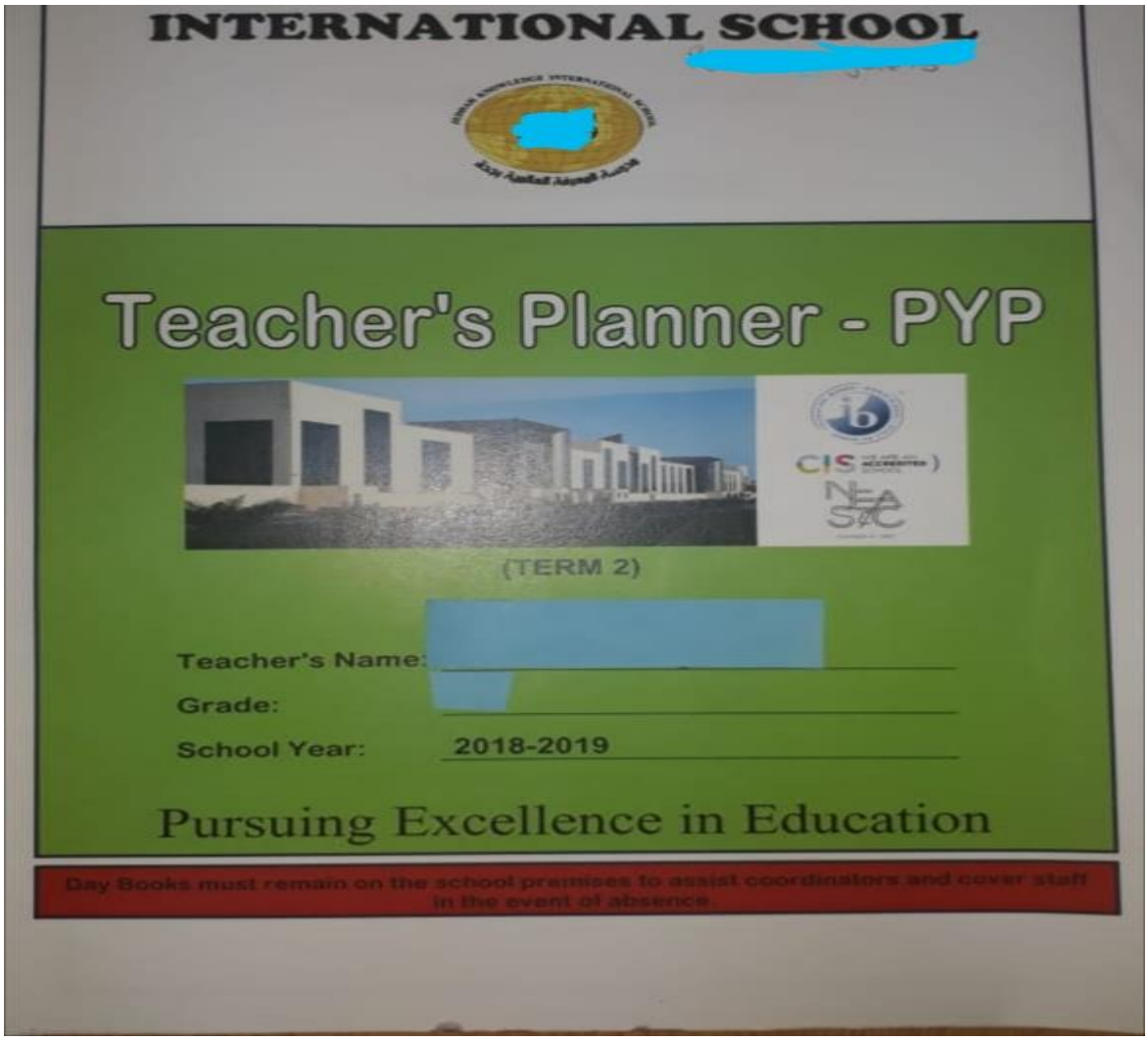
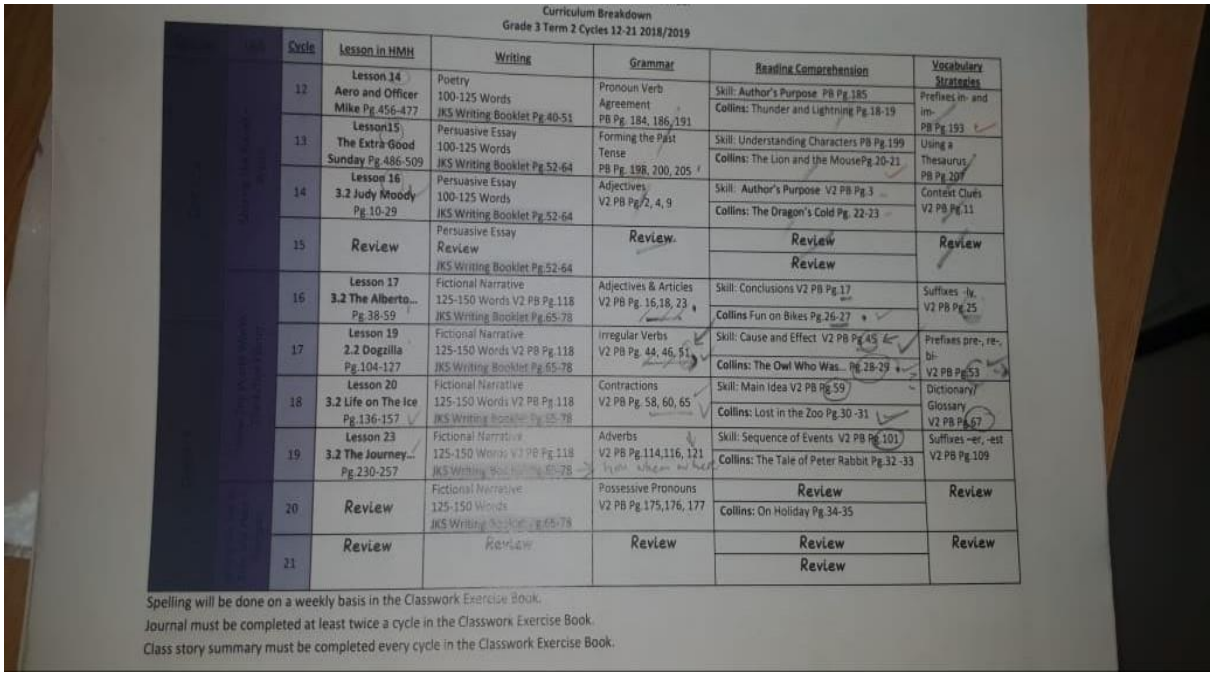



**Figure 9: Cover of the booklet titled 'Teacher's Planner'**
**(Source: adapted from Jayde – FGD 2)**

Caroline realised that she had to become au fait as quickly as was possible with the curriculum in Abu Dhabi in order to be a successful teacher. She explained through this booklet that she is now achieving her best at teaching because she is able to bring more creativity into the classroom which she enjoys. The abbreviation 'PYP' on the booklet cover above (Figure 9) means Primary Year Programme. She described herself as a young, energetic migrant teacher who loves being creative in her teaching methods with her Grade 2 boys and now she is actually allowed to create her own fun lessons with the Teacher's Planner because it is set by the ten Grade 2 teachers at her school, herself included. She is

now one of the authors of this Teacher's Planner and it makes her excited to teach from it since its tailor made according to the type of learners that she teaches. Suraya (FGD 2) added in the FGD, *"this is only an eight day planner so it's a breakdown of what you should teach, how many pages you should cover in your textbook, exactly what concepts need to be covered just for eight days. So each person gets a chance to plan one - for every subject."* (See Figures 10 and 11)


**Figure 10: Calendar layout of the 8-Day Cycle School Year**
**(Source: adapted from Jayde – FGD 2)**



Curriculum Breakdown
Grade 3 Term 2 Cycles 12-21 2018/2019

| Cycle | Lesson in HMH | Writing | Grammar | Reading Comprehension | Vocabulary Strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Lesson 14<br>Aero and Officer Mike Pg.456-477 | Poetry<br>100-125 Words<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.40-51 | Pronoun Verb Agreement<br>PB Pg. 184, 186, 191 | Skill: Author's Purpose PB Pg.185<br>Collins: Thunder and Lightning Pg.18-19 | Prefixes in- and im-<br>PB Pg.193 |
| 13 | Lesson15<br>The Extra Good Sunday Pg.486-509 | Persuasive Essay<br>100-125 Words<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.52-64 | Forming the Past Tense<br>PB Pg. 198, 200, 205 | Skill: Understanding Characters PB Pg.199<br>Collins: The Lion and the MousePg.20-21 | Using a Thesaurus<br>PB Pg.207 |
| 14 | Lesson 16<br>3.2 Judy Moody<br>Pg.10-29 | Persuasive Essay<br>100-125 Words<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.52-64 | Adjectives<br>V2 PB Pg.2, 4, 9 | Skill: Author's Purpose V2 PB Pg.3<br>Collins: The Dragon's Cold Pg. 22-23 | Context Clues<br>V2 PB Pg.11 |
| 15 | Review | Persuasive Essay<br>Review<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.52-64 | Review. | Review<br>Review | Review |
| 16 | Lesson 17<br>3.2 The Alberto...<br>Pg.38-59 | Fictional Narrative<br>125-150 Words V2 PB Pg.118<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.65-78 | Adjectives & Articles<br>V2 PB Pg. 16,18, 23 | Skill: Conclusions V2 PB Pg.17<br>Collins Fun on Bikes Pg.26-27 | Suffixes -ly<br>V2 PB Pg.25 |
| 17 | Lesson 19<br>2.2 Dogzilla<br>Pg.104-127 | Fictional Narrative<br>125-150 Words V2 PB Pg.118<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.65-78 | Irregular Verbs<br>V2 PB Pg. 44, 46, 51 | Skill: Cause and Effect V2 PB Pg.45<br>Collins: The Owl Who Was... Pg.28-29 | Prefixes pre-, re-, bi-<br>V2 PB Pg.53 |
| 18 | Lesson 20<br>3.2 Life on The Ice<br>Pg.136-157 | Fictional Narrative<br>125-150 Words V2 PB Pg.118<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.65-78 | Contractions<br>V2 PB Pg. 58, 60, 65 | Skill: Main Idea V2 PB Pg.59<br>Collins: Lost in the Zoo Pg.30 -31 | Dictionary/ Glossary<br>V2 PB Pg.67 |
| 19 | Lesson 23<br>3.2 The Journey...<br>Pg.230-257 | Fictional Narrative<br>125-150 Words V2 PB Pg.118<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.65-78 | Adverbs<br>V2 PB Pg.114,116, 121 | Skill: Sequence of Events V2 PB Pg.101<br>Collins: The Tale of Peter Rabbit Pg.32 -33 | Suffixes –er, -est<br>V2 PB Pg.109 |
| 20 | Review | Fictional Narrative<br>125-150 Words<br>JKS Writing Booklet Pg.65-78 | Possessive Pronouns<br>V2 PB Pg.175,176, 177 | Review<br>Collins: On Holiday Pg.34-35 | Review |
| 21 | Review | Review | Review | Review<br>Review | Review |

Spelling will be done on a weekly basis in the Classwork Exercise Book.
Journal must be completed at least twice a cycle in the Classwork Exercise Book.
Class story summary must be completed every cycle in the Classwork Exercise Book.

**Figure 11: Curriculum Breakdown of a Grade 3 Term 2 Cycle**

**(Source: adapted from Jayde – FGD 2)**

Figures 10 and 11 explain that an eight day cycle runs from Day 1 to Day 8 at the school. Jayde, Suraya and Caroline have five days to teach and three days to consolidate. Cycles 12-21 is the second term which is quarter three and four in line with the International Baccalaureate Continuum which is an American and British curriculum that has been integrated into one curriculum. A cycle is a lesson plan which stretches from Day 1 to Day 8 which means that the cycle plans run within the eight days and in eight days, a teacher is expected to get one cycle done. All three participants have agreed that this 'Planner' has made teaching their lessons more structured and easier for them to work at the same pace ensuring that they have completed teaching the same content within a specified time-frame.

Feroza (FGD 1) who taught in Abu Dhabi stated that the artefact that was integral to her teaching experiences was her hard drive:

*"So to me my hard drive is the most integral to my teaching. I don't go anywhere without it. It has served me well because it's my store of resources that I have, even though with the new curriculum, I'm able to pull out stuff because I taught Grade 9 last year and some of the topics in Grade 9 are now in Grade 8. So it helps me a lot. It really, really helps!"*

Hence, storing her resources over time has become an asset to Feroza as she is now able to benefit from resources she already has instead of searching the Internet every now and again. It also reveals that through the 'hard drive', which was Feroza's artefact, she is able to cope by banking the resources for future use. Tony (FGD 1) who was also part of the FGD but taught at a different school in Abu Dhabi added that the artefact that exemplified his teaching experiences in the first two months since he adapted within that time-frame was:

*"Basically trying to get them to learn through videos because they cannot understand, they don't have the mental capacity to understand what is on written paper. So you have to show them something …so what I do is, I go for the video teaching."*

So showing the local Arab learner's videos was one of the useful teaching methods to get them to understand basic English concepts which he taught and in this way, he believed that he was able to cope. They were not able to comprehend what he taught easily through worksheets or textbooks so the only option he had was to visually engage them in his lessons. Riona (I, 13a) also alluded to the notion of video teaching which the local learners enjoy in Abu Dhabi.

### 4.4.2 Migrant teachers' experiences after six months in the Arab Gulf

Most participants agreed that after six months in the Arab Gulf, they have gained more confidence in their teaching methods and in behaviour management. However, not all participants were happy to work abroad and they complained about the teaching environment in the Arab Gulf. Some counted the months until their contract was over so that they could return back to their home country because they were very unhappy. Below, I provide detailed school-based experiences of South African migrant primary school teachers in the Arab Gulf after their first six months.

*a) Teaching becomes 'smooth sailing'*

A common experience held by most of the participants was the view that the more familiar they were with their surroundings, the easier it became to adapt to their new teaching environment. They also discussed their difficulties with their colleagues during grade meetings to find commonalities and strategies to remedy the problems.

**Teaching pedagogy established and a familiarised curriculum**

As time was spent teaching in the Arab Gulf, migrant teachers were able to establish appropriate teaching styles based on what worked well with the learners and got used to the syllabus coverage. Katy (I, 6b) who taught in Kuwait commented:

*"I think I can handle the children better now. In a sense of supporting them academically and personally because it's an Arab country and … obviously Islam is the main religion. We all have to be mindful of them. The things that they can do, the things that they can't do. So I think I feel much more comfortable and confident in myself with the learners on a personal and academic level…With the curriculum as well, I know it better now so I'm much more comfortable teaching it."*

Katy's comment indicates that the more she understood that the centre of the Arab Gulf's culture was its religion, Islam, the more she became familiar with the social norms and curriculum expectations. She grew in confidence, and thus it was easier for her to communicate in the classroom. The teaching experience gained after six months in Kuwait empowered her to become bolder in her classroom as she was now able to be more assertive in her classroom discipline and she adapted to the school curriculum. Laaiqah (I, 5a) similarly grew in understanding and she also stated,

*"Then my second year[9] because I've been in the school, I knew the system, I knew how to use the curriculum, I knew what to expect, I was prepared. I was there on the first day and I had girls, it was smoother – smooth sailing. Totally different."*

Laaiqah highlighted that after her one year teaching experience in the Arab Gulf, she was adequately prepared on curriculum matters. Her reference to 'smooth-sailing' indicates that she had no hiccups or problems compared to when she had first arrived because of the teaching experiences she had gained. Leona (I, 16b) also revealed that after six months she began to learn which teaching methodologies would help her learners gain better results. She explained her initial high expectations and then spoke about her interactive lessons drawing from her learners' daily lives:

[9] The academic year in the Gulf begins from September of the first year to June of the following year.

*"I started on a super high level only to be disappointed because the children were not at the level that I expected for their age in the grade but I had to lower, so I had to lower levels so that I could be on par with where they are academically and then it's working much better."*

**Learning made easier through concrete teaching aids**

Leona (I, 16b) stated that teaching has to cater for learners' specific needs in order for all of them to understand the concepts she taught through the use of concrete teaching aids and she provided an example:

*"To see where their level of understanding is, I have to start really, really low and then pick up the level as we move along! Like find the things that they use in their daily lives and your mathematical patterns, your pattern blocks and maybe use your M & M sweets because they show different colours to see okay if this is a colour, if I use a different colour that's a pattern. If I repeat those colours because the patterns are repetitive, that's a pattern as well and also patterns in nature. Maybe a small part of what will be a zebra, how will a zebra look like, how will you identify a zebra because of the black and white lines. That's a pattern in nature and maybe like if you driving...certain cars that are driving in a certain direction will be on a particular side of the road. There's also another pattern that you find on clothing and you know…"*

This quote indicates that Leona learnt over time how to teach effectively and what would create successful learning in a classroom where English is a foreign language. Her use of concrete aids made learning easier for the different levels of learners in her classroom. By teaching at the lower level of concrete examples, she was able to ensure that all the different levels of learners from low to high have understood the mathematical concept 'patterns' instead of teaching at a higher abstract level and only gaining the understanding of a handful of learners.

**Confidence and strength gained in teaching**

The professional status of Teysha had been improved after six months in the Gulf through the school's recognition of her good teaching skills and hard work. Like Leona, Teysha had referred to similar growth in her diary entry,

> I feel I'm more settled now in the school. I have found my *fit* in my Grade 5 teacher group. I am more vocal at planning meetings and feel I am contributing positively to a well running team. The kicks of the first six months seem to have been worked out and my confidence is soaring.
>
> My vice principal I felt has always been a big support and a true mentor to me from day one. And her feedback of my lessons only elevated my respect that I already had for her. She highlighted all the positives and praised my professionalism. There seemed to be no definite negatives and her encouraging words truly put my mind at ease. This was the ultimate stamp of approval of my abilities as a teacher and I knew the worst was over.
>
> I decided to stop questioning my abilities and focus on the positives and use that to grow with each passing day regardless of how tough or stressful some days seemed. Good practices of teachers are shared and highlighted in professional development meetings and I was fortunate to be part of a select group of teachers who were acknowledged for their innovative classroom activities. (15-04-2019)

The above extract signals the struggle that she initially had about her professional capacity, where she was questioning her own ability as a teacher when she arrived. Now, Teysha appears to have adjusted well and she has found her method of coping at her school. She has gained in confidence and strength and is viewed as an asset to her team. It is quite obvious that her teaching journey has become 'smoother' due to the on-going feedback from her vice principal. Her vice principal has also boosted her morale with her encouragement which has made it less stressful for Teysha when she has to be observed the next time as part of the school assessment. Her professional development and grade specific meetings as well as the supportive, collaborative professional atmosphere, uplifted her teaching spirit and this is a space where her effective classroom practices are recognised. This therefore motivated her to improve and it also builds her self-esteem.

*b) Local Arabs' treatment of South African migrant teachers*

The local Arabs communicated well with migrant teachers initially, but as time went by, after six months or more in the Gulf, a few migrant teachers noticed that either the learners or local Arabic teachers treated them with disdain. It appeared that the perception of migrant teachers was generally that they were 'labourers'. The migrant teachers felt marginalised. Suraya (I, 1a) stated,

*"But unfortunately, when they see you as Indian, they sometimes ask you if you are from India or Pakistan because somehow in Saudi, they look down upon the people that are from India and Pakistan. I don't know why because basically the Indians and the Pakistanis are there mainly for the menial tasks, you know, in the labour force. But the moment you say you are from South Africa, then they are like 'Oh!!!'. They get all excited because they come on vacations to South Africa so they know about South Africa and then their parents also."*

Hence, as explained by Suraya who teaches in Saudi Arabia, the learners are observant of the kind of migrant teachers who come to teach in the Arab Gulf. The learners are under the impression that the migrant teachers who come to teach them are desperate for jobs and therefore leave the comfort of their homes. Feroza (FGD 1) similarly stated, *"I think because initially the Indian immigrants were brought here as labourers and the majority of them are labourers so hence, they see it that way."*

It is evident that these South African Indian migrant teachers were feeling marginalised because they are perceived by the local teachers and learners, according to the country's history. Her mention of the word 'labourers' indicates that Indians were employed in low skilled jobs previously and therefore teaching is now categorised as low skilled by the local learners and their parents. She also added that parents lacked respect for migrant teachers: "*The parent turned around and said to my friend, 'My government is paying you to be here, so you do your job!'"* This statement revealed that this parent felt that migrant teachers should be thankful to work in their home country, Abu Dhabi and that as a teacher she was ineffective and not performing adequately.

**Race and Gender discrimination**

A few migrant teachers also experienced racial discrimination based on the colour of their skin or the way they looked. Interestingly, Leona (I, 16b) being the only black migrant teacher (African) in the study expressed with disappointment, the extent of the racial discrimination in her classroom and her feeling of vulnerability being a woman:

*"…and so they lack respect for any female including their mothers. So the only person that they can and want to listen to is a male person. It's a male and if you are female, you still have to overcome being female and also for them, to give them instruction and they don't take it well if comes from a female. A foreign female, an African female. I have found that those with blue eyes and blonde hair, they, they get better respect than those (pauses)… females with the woolly and the curly hair.*

*I've seen it. There are a couple of times I've had, in most of the homes, let me just start, in most homes you find that the nanny's, the nanny and just the helpers at home, they are either black or Filipino. So those to them, those that's the lowest class of nationals, well with Filipino being the nationality and being black is of the lowest class according to them as well and therefore, here I am in class giving instructions. They will not, they tend not to respect that because the black female, they sit in their homes picking up after them and they expect the same."*

From the above quote, Leona emphasised that her hair and skin tone had an effect on the learners' level of respect for her. The learners whom she taught disrespected her and would not behave appropriately because she was a Black female but they treated other races better. This inferior treatment from her learners marginalised her professional and emotionally, it eroded her professional morale as the learners were very racially conscious. She felt that if she was not Black, she would definitely have gained more respect and she blames racial and gender discrimination on the learners' culture and awareness of the race and nationality of their helpers/nanny's at their homes associating Blacks or Filipino women with inferior jobs.

Leona's experiences with racial and gender discrimination concurred with Tony's (FGD 1) comment below on Indians being associated with menial tasks and how this impacted on South African Indian teachers' experiences in Abu Dhabi. Tony participated in the first FGD over Skype with two other participants, Kelly and Feroza who both taught in Abu Dhabi but at different schools. He stated,

*"Sorry this might seem little bit racist but luckily Feroza knows me and she knows that I'm not a racist. But if you look like Feroza and you look like you (referring to myself, the interviewer) and you look like Kelly, these kids see you as you are an Indian. You are an Indian, you are a labourer! Luckily, thank God, I've got a little bit of a white skin! Like Kelly and Feroza have a worse time than me because they look Indian. They are, they are Indian but these kids, if you think South Africa is a racist country……you have not been here! You have not come to the UAE!*

*They are labourers, they are nannies, they are God knows what but what these two at the bottom of my screen look like cannot be teachers. No, No! You are supposed to work in my garden and wash my dishes……and drive me to school."*

In addition to the above quote, Kelly (FGD 1) added in reply to Tony's comment,

*"I was remembering one experience I had…One of my students dropped her pencil case or pencil colours on the floor and she told me (stern tone), 'Miss, pick it up!'"*

These comments by Tony and Kelly are reflective of the rise of racism and existence of gender discrimination in Abu Dhabi. As mentioned by the participants, the darker skinned female migrant teachers have a harder time gaining respect from the learners. However, the migrant teachers have no choice but to succumb to this inferior treatment because they are just there temporarily for a financial purpose and they therefore bear such torment.

*c) Learner behaviour*

Many migrant teachers were eventually able to find ways of managing their classes. For example, Caroline (FGD 2) stated that when her Grade 2 boys in Saudi Arabia were naughty she would take away their free time as a punishment: *"I'm very energetic with my boys, we play soccer at least twice a week, we race at break time and that's just how I am. I play soccer with the boys so they (the naughty boys) just sit on the bench and watch us all play."*

So Caroline who loved being involved with her learners did not allow the disruptive learners in her class to participate in the soccer matches during break-time so that they could reflect on their bad behaviour and refrain from such practice whereas 40% (n=4) of the migrant teachers were so overwhelmed, they still could not address their learners' bad behaviour

through creative ways. Interestingly, the study found that the four migrant teachers who had behavioural difficulties with the learners all taught in Abu Dhabi.

**Poor learner behaviour persists in Abu Dhabi**

Even after six months in the Gulf, the teachers in Abu Dhabi struggled with controlling their learners. Kelly (FGD 1) explained in her Skype face-to-face interview of her teaching experience in Abu Dhabi:

*"I never really enjoyed teaching. I can't say I reached a point where I enjoyed teaching but I did reach a point where I coped because my class, no matter what I did they just don't 'shut up'! You can try and greet them, there's no like 'good morning class, good morning'. They come in with noise, they make a noise the whole time so what I did is, I put them in groups okay. So I let them come in, sit in their place with their big noise, I never even bother to say 'listen, shut up!!!' (Hits an object on the table to demonstrate)."*

At the time of the FGD, Kelly had returned to SA to teach because she had just completed her two year contract in Abu Dhabi and was more than happy to return home.

*d) Decision making about the future*

Many migrant teachers wanted their teaching contracts renewed after completion. However, some were hesitant based on their unpleasant teaching experiences as well as possible negative changes to the new teaching contracts if they decided on remaining after completion of their current contracts. These in turn, have made them wary and triggered a decision to return to their home country even if it meant going back to a much lower salary or moving to another country where there was a demand for teachers but with better working conditions. Frustration and a change of career were feelings verbalised by the migrant teachers who worked in Abu Dhabi particularly.

For example, Leona (I, 16b) stated with irritation,

*After 3 years I would like to move depending, well firstly depending how the situation is here. If it's still the changes that are happening now don't have any effect on me and in terms of the salary and the reason why I came in the first place then I will stay but if it has a major*

*effect then I will move onto other countries… I'm talking about, yes I'm talking about salary because when I came there was no VAT and salary was tax free. The changes since this year (2018), there's now tax added on everything. Which then effects the salary because in the beginning there was none so I could stretch the salary for much longer but now because of the VAT and the tax in other things that are added and also they may, this has not been confirmed yet, we may not get the annual flight at all so then it won't be…it will be meaningless to be here.*

She also added that she did not enjoy her teaching experience after six months by stating:

*"Well, enjoy would be a wrong choice of word. Yes I think for me right now, is just to teach. Enjoyment is not part of it because I would…something that I would enjoy would have interested, students that are interested, students that have respect."*

These negative experiences stemming from learners' lack of discipline and the financial implications that have now been lowered, has made her question whether she would want to remain in Abu Dhabi or emigrate to another country. Tony (FGD 1) stated whilst in Abu Dhabi,

*"I've been in the UAE 2 years. Hate every moment since about the start of this year (2017) and planning on moving on from the UAE after this."*

He also went on to compare his level of dissatisfaction in a school abroad (UAE) to his mum's South African teaching experience: "*No there's no job satisfaction. My mum was a teacher almost 40 years of her life…I think probably about 37 years, my mum was a teacher. She taught languages, English, Afrikaans and even though she complained a lot, I cannot remember that she never had a smile. She always had a smile on her face! Doesn't matter how bad the day was, she taught me English in Grade 9, standard 7. She was my English teacher in Standard 7. I sat right in the back of the class because I'm not gonna call my mum, 'Oh teacher!'*

*I cannot say that my mum came home one day without a smile. Ya, she was a teacher in South Africa, I think it was a year ago (2016) that she went on pension. But my mum came home every day with a smile."*

Tony reminisced over his school days back when he was in high school in SA and stated how happy his mum was to teach the learners. Unlike him, however, he is very frustrated to be in

Abu Dhabi. As his two year contract comes to an end, he is excited because he longer wants to teach there. His mention of the words '*no job satisfaction*' indicates that all the money in the world does not amount to happiness. Feroza (FGD 1) added that she would leave Abu Dhabi upon completion of her two year teaching contract only if:

*"If I get a teaching position but then after that, once my proposal is done, I just got two more modules to do, then I'm looking more for an advisory position because mine is an inclusion which is special needs so I want to specialise, I don't want to teach anymore. It's my age as well. I'm 45, my next birthday… Teaching is very demanding."*

This clearly shows that Feroza's teaching experiences have exhausted her to the point that she now feels that she needs a change of profession. She had become worn out and discouraged by the teaching profession due to her failure to make a difference in the classroom. She is mentally and physically fatigued by teaching and after she completes her Master's thesis, she wants to apply for a job in the United Nations, as in her opinion - her energy level is working against her based on her age. Alice (I, 12b) who taught with her husband in Kuwait fell pregnant after six months in the Gulf and this stressed her at the beginning of her pregnancy when she was downgraded by the principal from a classroom teacher to a learner support teacher because they found out she was pregnant, which is gender discrimination. She stated,

*"They said there's too little children in the school that enrolled this year and they had too many teachers and because I'm pregnant."*

This was the reason given for her to move from the role of a teacher to a learner support teacher which was not stipulated in her initial teaching contract that she signed with the school. She, however, explained that she still earned the same salary but she was unsure about her stability in the school as it seemed like she was no longer needed and therefore decided to start applying for teaching posts at other schools.

*e) South African migrant teachers: a source of 'cheap labour'*

It appears that the Arab Gulf prefers employing teachers from the South as they accept salaries which are affordable to pay compared to teachers from the global North. Feroza (FGD 1) stated,

*"You'll find in recent recruitment processes, there's mainly South Africans being recruited rather than Americans or British teachers…They want cheap labour. Also, the Americans*

*and British, they won't tolerate. No offense to anybody but the South Africans are more tolerant because like I said, you have to be realistic. Most people are here for the money."*

Feroza's comment above indicates that the American and British citizens also have a strong currency but obviously these migrant teachers are not compensated sufficiently in their home country and therefore apply for teaching jobs to the Arab Gulf to earn better. With the unpleasant working conditions in the Gulf, Feroza explained that the American and British migrant teachers are not afraid to reprimand learners which at most times put their jobs on the line and boldly speak up when they are unhappy with management's methods of running the school. Hence, she further added that the Arab Gulf would rather employ more migrant teachers from SA, for example, because we have a weaker currency and are more tolerant as well as desperate for the money.

This means that when the Arab countries convert and adjust the amount of money that they need to pay South African teachers in comparison to Americans or British teachers. South African salaries are more affordable and cheaper than their western counterparts.

*f) Learner performance and parental involvement*

Abu Dhabi was one of the countries that migrant teachers still encountered endless problems with parents being uncooperative or unreasonable after six months. Teysha (diary entry) wrote about the girls in her Cycle one class and the lack of understanding from parents regarding the sad truth about their children's academic progress. She stated,

> I now know my girls really well. With the amount of assessments conducted, their strengths and weaknesses are evident and I am well able to tell if they are emerging, developing or mastering the concepts in class.
>
> We meet with parents once every term to discuss student progress. This is always a nerve wrecking task for any English Medium Teacher. Firstly, most parents aren't able to communicate in English (a translator is often needed) and secondly, they have very high expectations of their children. It's always difficult to explain to a parent that while their children might be proficient in Arabic, their English skills are less than good. I feel parents in the UAE don't take lightly to constructive criticism of their children. Anything less than an 80% is almost unimaginable and often blame is shifted onto teachers.
>
> As a teacher you have to deal with constantly being compared to your Arabic colleagues, who I feel at times are over generous when it comes to student performance and grades. Assessments and grading isn't always as transparent as one might expect it to be in schools here. Based on who the parents are, or if enough of a fuss has been made, grades can be easily 'adjusted'. Now this is a broad statement to make but I have a first-hand account of been politely asked to 'relook' at a specific student's grading in a writing exam. Even though the exam criteria are explicit and well-constructed, one's moral conscience is sometimes challenged. (15-04-2019)

Teysha pinpoints a number of important concerns in the above entry. She states clearly that there is an unreasonable expectation from parents for their children to do exceptionally well when they are not proficient in the English Language. Being ESL learners and as an experienced teacher, she does not feel that all learners are worthy of an '80%' and because of this, she has been judged as marking their assessments unfairly. Teysha's mention of the word 'relook' indicates the school's plea for her to check if she could raise the learners mark. She does not agree with this as she has done her job of giving the exam scope to the learner and marked the exam according to the memorandum which, however, did not earn the learner

an 80%. Parents do not agree when their children obtain less than an 'A' and the school management would rather satisfy the parent by adjusting the learners mark causing unethical practices and doubting her professionalism as a teacher. Tasneem (I, 18b) highlighted that after six months in the UAE,

*"The parents have shown a great interest in their children's academic achievement so I have harnessed that as well where I get parents to do what I cannot complete in the classroom. Since I get 80% of the teaching done because of discipline when all I need to do is tell them (the learners' parents), this is what I've done so the next day when the child comes, they already have a grasp of what I've taught them as well as what their parent has taught them."*

Tasneem stated that involving the learner's parents was one of her strategies that she used to help her overcome her delay in completing her syllabus because of their bad behaviour. She mentioned that this worked perfectly since only 80% of her syllabus could be completed daily and the parents' commitment to helping her, made her teaching much easier.

### 4.5 Time frame for adjusting to the Arab Gulf

During the second individual interviews and focus group discussions, it was important to understand how many months it took each participant to adjust to their teaching environment since all the participants had previous South African teaching experience. Below I provide a discussion of the findings from each of the FGDs and individual interviews.

#### 4.5.1 'You have no choice but to adapt as quickly as possible!'

In the first FGD, all three participants were from Abu Dhabi and agreed that it took them less than six months to adjust to the curriculum and teaching environment of the Gulf. Kelly (FGD 1, 11) shared her experience of adapting to the teaching environment:

*"I thought I'm going overseas, I'm going be teaching Muslim girls. They are going to be so amazing. I'm going to learn from them and everything but it was - absolutely crazy, is an understatement! So I think I was in shock the first two months but then when I started learning that everyone is in shock and I'm not alone and then I slowly started adapting and I*

*realised that the curriculum is not so, I don't know like it's not difficult and to mark is easy and then I started calming myself down. So I would say maybe two, three months."*

So Kelly felt comfort in knowing that she was not the only teacher going through shock and confusion but many other expat teachers as well. This gave her a sense of being more accepting to the situation and understanding the circumstances. The behaviour of the girls that she taught was appalling but the teaching curriculum and her load of marking was not stressful so she summed up her adjustment as two to three months. Feroza (FGD 1, 4) had previous international British teaching experience and explained that this made it much easier to adjust to the teaching environment in Abu Dhabi:

*"I had to get into it as soon as possible. It helped that I already had overseas experience. It makes a big difference. It really does. The irritation wasn't a problem at all. I had to fit in. I had two days of observation and then the following week I had to start so I spent the weekend planning. The curriculum is very easy. It took longer to get to grips, to get to grips with the assessments system because it was not a numeric system."*

Feroza stated that it took her about a month to adjust to the teaching environment although she complained about the use of the EDM (Emerging, Developing and Mastered) system in schools. Each school uses the EDM system but sets their own assessments so there is no consistency amongst the quality of school assessments for learners and Tony (FGD 1, 2) stated that the EDM system for assessing learner's academic performance is too broad.

Fatima (I, 20b) stated humorously, "*Yes, you have no choice if you want to keep your job!"* Similarly, Kelly (FGD 1) stated, "*You don't have a choice!*" To summarise why most of the participants took less than six months to adjust in the Arab Gulf, most of them reiterated the same sentiments regarding adjustment - that when you teach abroad as a qualified teacher, you have no choice but to find ways to adapt to the teaching environment.

In the second FGD, all the participants agreed that it took them 2 to 3 months on average to adapt to the local school context. Suraya (FGD 2) shared her experience of adapting to the new environment:

*"I made friends very easily coz I came here…before I started in January, I came on vacation in December and I was invited to school to spend a day at the school. So I basically knew everyone and made a lot of friends and also through tutoring you make a lot of friends. I have to admit, we have a very supportive lot of South African teachers. We have like 250 South*

*African teachers out of a staff of five hundred teachers. So we are basically at home. But I must say we have teachers from America, from UK, from all over the world and they are all very friendly."*

Half of the staff at the school, comprised SA migrant teachers and having migrant teachers from Suraya's home country, SA, made her adapt quicker to the new teaching environment. She does not feel that she is abroad because of the South Africans colleagues and they are very helpful. The other nationalities were also friendly towards her and this made her adjustment easier.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter commenced with a biographical profile of twenty South African migrant primary school teachers who participated in the study; their reasons for migrating to the Arab Gulf and their school-based experiences in the first six months and thereafter, after six months in either a primary, secondary or combined school. The study found that majority of the participants were married, young females between the ages of 20-29 years, of Indian nationality and Muslim who taught mostly in Abu Dhabi located in the UAE. More than half of the participants (n=13; 65%) taught in the Gauteng Province in SA and nearly all the participants migrated to the Arab Gulf for financial reasons. Other reasons were ease of travel opportunities presented and also the cheaper flights to travel from the Gulf because of the central location of the Arab countries as well as gaining the opportunity to earn international teaching experience.

Many of the participants experienced a major language barrier between the local Arab learners and the local Arab staff at the schools they taught at and poor behaviour from learners especially in Abu Dhabi. A few participants also experienced racism and desired to return to SA after their negative experiences in the Gulf. However, the positive experiences were the smaller class sizes, professional development and the wealth of classroom resources at their disposal.

The next chapter analyses the above reasons more critically with a discussion of the literature.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion merging the literature to the findings on the reasons for South African primary school migrant teachers teaching in the Arab Gulf; a comparison between their initial teaching experiences in the first six months and their teaching experiences after six months using the analytical frameworks (presented in the literature section that can be found in chapter 2). The reasons for migration are explained against the backdrop of international migration theories and Castelli's (2018) classification. In this study, Huberman's (1989) model wherein a teacher's career decisions are collapsed by the number of years that he/she has been in the teaching profession is utilised to analyse the school-based experiences. Additionally, Day and Kington's (2008) theory on professional and personal identity is also used to analyse the migrant teacher's personal and professional experiences in the Arab Gulf countries. The work of key teacher migration scholars who have undertaken research on professional and personal identity facets such as Miller (2019), Bense (2016), and Bailey and Mulder (2017) will be infused to analyse the findings.

Although it has been argued that teacher recruitment from a Global South to the North has been a "relatively recent phenomenon" (De Villiers, 2007, p. 1), it spans close to two decades in SA (Manik, 2018). The teacher recruitment agencies' main focus on the employment of migrant teachers has been to recruit teachers from SA. Bailey and Mulder's (2017) theoretical strands will also be used to discuss this highly skilled migration between the global South and North and migrant teachers' experiences in the host country. Their work explored three important themes which are relevant to this present study since migrant teachers from SA (South) were migrating to the Arab Gulf (North). Their themes explored the relationships between the "migrants' gender, identity and position in society; their life-course choices in relation to others in the host country and 'back home'; and the way employers deal with the destination countries' immigration policies and the ever growing need to attract the best talent" (Bailey & Mulder, 2017, p. 3). In the present study, it was important to take cognisance of the South African migrant teachers' professional and personal identity formation in the Arab Gulf and their daily school-based experiences as it would have impacted on how they perceive themselves as migrant teachers abroad and what were their plans for the future.

## 5.2 The Pull is greater than the Push: Reasons for emigration to primary or secondary schools in the Arab Gulf

Migrant teachers in the study were predominantly motivated by the pull factors in the destination rather than the push factors from the home country. Some teachers were concerned about discipline in the local SA schools: the bad behaviour of South African senior phase learners, government's temporary teaching contracts which offered them no stability, school governing body posts that paid too little in terms of salary and severely under-resourced public schools. Mostly though, the teachers were focused on what the countries in the Arab Gulf had to offer to them as migrant teachers when making their emigration decisions – the pull factors of the destination. South African primary school migrant teachers in this study were emigrating to the Arab Gulf (either Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or Oman) mainly for financial (economic), professional and political reasons which will be explained in greater detail below, although the social reason of travel was an incentive for their mobility. Majority (n=18) of migrant teachers were placed in urban schools in the Gulf compared to only two teachers who taught in a rural school. Most (n=15) migrant teachers taught in primary schools in the Gulf, three taught in secondary schools and only two taught in a combined school (teaching both primary and secondary learners). The economic advantages of migrating to the Arab Gulf far outweighed all the other reasons stated above.

Vester (2018) mentioned that the main reasons why teachers choose to leave SA for teaching careers abroad in Abu Dhabi are due to push factors from SA, namely the "country's high crime rate, religious intolerance, race-based policies, burgeoning class sizes and workloads and an ineffective curriculum." By contrast, as shown in Figure 12.1 and 12.2, the majority of the participants (n=18) in this current study reported moving to the Arab Gulf with the hope of becoming financially more stable. They expressed a commitment to teaching in the Gulf region through their two or three year contracts (some were one year) which is renewed annually after completion of the full contract and a lack of desire to return to their home countries within the few years based on the factors shown in the figures on the next page:

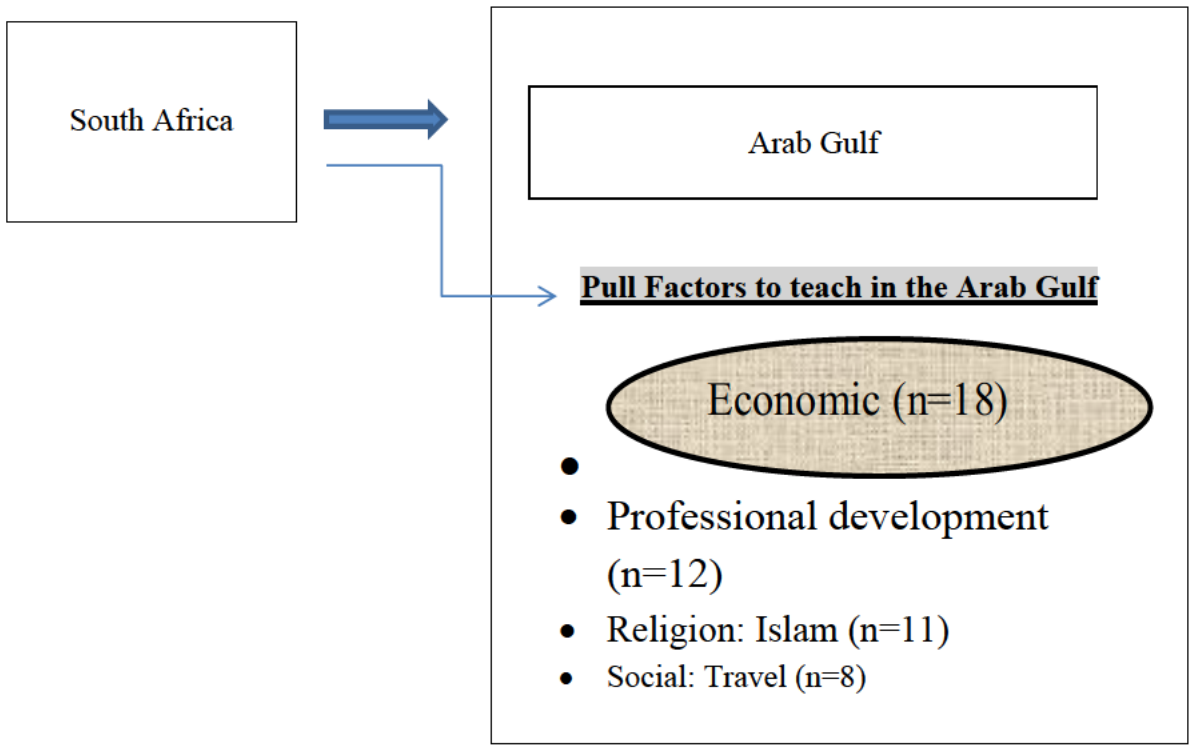



**Figure 12.1: Pull factors as a reason for migration to the Arab Gulf**

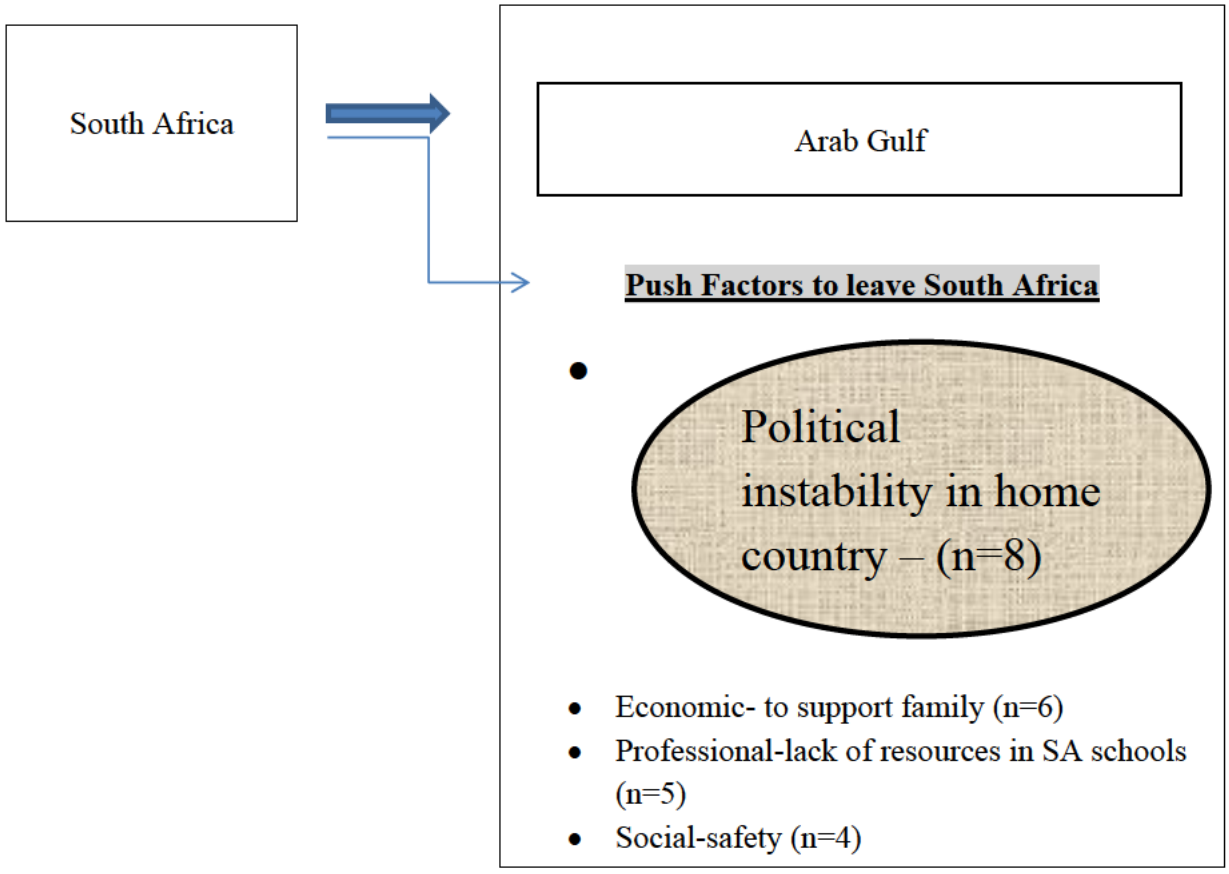



**Figure 12.2: Push factors as a reason for leaving SA**

The aforementioned figures reveal that the feeling of being financially unstable has been a major factor in pushing migrant teachers to leave SA for a better salary in the Arab Gulf which is further discussed below. An opportunity for professional growth was the second biggest pull factor to the Arab Gulf because South African primary school teachers felt that they were not receiving adequate professional development due to the number of constraints such as a lack of resources (textbooks and information technology-related devices) and overcrowded classrooms which they believed was hindering children's active participation and learning in South African primary schools. They wanted to be able to fully utilise their teaching potential through the wealth of resources offered in the Gulf and to broaden their teaching expertise. One of the benefits (a pull factor) of teaching in the Gulf included weekly compulsory Professional Development (PD) sessions which are offered to all teachers.

Besides lucrative salaries, safety also played a major role in teachers opting to work abroad. Ndhlovu (in Somduth, 2018), a SACE spokesperson stated explained teacher emigration, stating that "violence against teachers is spiralling out of control. They cannot do much to defend themselves against pupils, so when the opportunities abroad arises, they take it." Four participants mentioned that better safety is what they hoped to find by migrating to the Arab Gulf. Bertram et al (2006) had previously explained that the pull factors (such as the positive aspects of teaching abroad) were playing a much stronger role than the so-called 'push' factors (the negative reasons to leave SA) such as unemployment, the crime rate and poor working conditions. In this present report of the study, this finding resonates since newly qualified teachers were eager to earn a higher salary in order to travel (n=8) and save whilst teaching in the Arab Gulf. These reasons, however, were different for the more experienced South African migrant teachers who were more motivated to leave on account of poor working conditions in South Africa.

### 5.2.1 Economic and professional reasons

Practical concerns for a satisfying daily life in SA (economic reasons) with a higher pay and more satisfying work conditions were another reason impacting on migrant teachers leaving South Africa to teach in the Arab Gulf. The work conditions depended upon the preferences of individual participants and greater job security. Socio-economic reasons in South Africa played an important role in creating a desire for South African migrant teachers to apply abroad. De Villiers (2007) noted that it was mostly on account of financial reasons and the

opportunity to travel that South African teachers left their home country teach in the UK. This study also revealed that majority of the participants (n=18) left SA to teach in the Arab Gulf for financial gain. This is in keeping with neoclassical microeconomic theory where migrants seek economic returns equivalent to their skills level and the wage differentials between SA and the Gulf entailed migrant teachers needing to maximize their income by going abroad.

Dual labour market theory also has resonance here with teachers from developing SA migrating to the more developed Arab Gulf region where the pull factors were influential in attracting them. For example, Samantha (I, 9a) and Katy (I, 6a) were impressed by the worthwhile social and economic incentives offered in addition to their lucrative salary packages. As young migrant teachers in the Gulf, they categorized themselves into a higher social class since their professional skills were recognised as a huge asset abroad due to their higher earnings. When Katy was constantly transferred from school to school in SA, she acknowledged that she was very unstable with a temporary contract in SA, and this influenced her decision to migrate to Kuwait. Although she was on a two year contract in the Arab Gulf, she was happy to be in one school for a two year period and earn much more in comparison to being in her home country where she was employed by the school governing body (SGB) with no job security, a low salary and no benefits. Katy's situation is in keeping with De Villiers (2017) and Manik's (2005) findings. De Villiers stated that, "international teacher mobility is driven primarily by the prospect of earning more money. Teachers from developing countries can double their real income by teaching in some more developed host nations." In this current study, Kuwait was the country willing to offer Katy international teaching experience since she was a novice teacher and her salary was exorbitant in comparison to her local salary.

*a) Remittances*

Tony (I, 2a) stated that his choice of location chosen, Abu Dhabi was due to the best financial opportunity offered in comparison to other countries. He is working in Abu Dhabi for economic reasons: remittances – to send money back to SA so that his son has everything that he needs for school and to ensure that he is able to pay for his son's tertiary education. A study by Manik (2005) also found that South African migrant teachers' who taught in the UK found themselves economically stable and therefore sent remittances to their family members

in SA which they found very useful and this left South African teachers feeling financially empowered. Maphosa (2007, p. 1) highlighted that "the volume of remittances to developing countries has grown significantly in recent years." For example, Zimbabwean migrants working in SA transfer significant value to their families in the form of remittances. This is the most important source of income for many households in Zimbabwe. Thus, remittances to SA by the participants in the current study could be a significant way of investing in the home country.

Vester (2018) stated that "South African teachers who chose to leave the country end up in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates. In the Gulf, qualified teachers can earn between R50 000 and R78 000 a month. In South Africa, the average teacher earns R275 000 a year – which works out to around R22 000 a month. By contrast, the same teacher, with five to ten years' experience, earns around R750 000 a year in Abu Dhabi." This is three times more than the teacher would earn in SA. Thus, remittances to SA could be substantial especially if the migrant teacher has travelled abroad alone with family remaining in SA. In this study, 60% (n=12) of migrant teachers chose to teach in Abu Dhabi and 40% (n=8) chose to migrate without their families.

Lopez-Cevallos and Chi (in Tan and Co, 2014, p. 2) noted that international teaching "opportunities make the migrants earn income that they siphon to the families they left behind, enabling them to have something to spend for food, clothing, and housing; and to pay for the education of their children and even for the children of their relatives." The economic resources are generally the salaries they earn from teaching which according to the migrant teachers are close to three times as much as the amount they received in their home country before they migrated. Therefore, economically, it is worthwhile for the migrant teachers to migrate to the Gulf since it is financially rewarding for themselves as individuals and they can remit to their families to South Africa.

*b) A balance between professional skills and income*

Migrants tend to move to those countries where the economic returns for their professional qualifications are greatest (Massey et al, 1993; Maphosa, 2007) as is espoused in neoclassical micro economic theory. Riona (I, 13a) stated that she wanted to be adequately compensated for her skills in the teaching profession and she was being underpaid in SA. The salary

package offered in Abu Dhabi made her feel more recognised professionally and built her confidence in the teaching profession because she was comparing her prospective salary to what she would earn in her home country. Sives, Morgan and Appleton (in Bertram et al., 2006) similarly argued that talented teachers, were leaving for better paid jobs, both outside of education, and in a significant number of cases, within education but in other more developed countries. This current study reveals that in this sample of South African primary school migrant teachers, they are staying in the teaching profession but moving to more developed countries such as the Gulf where they feel that their skills and professional expertise can be fully utilised and they can be more than adequately rewarded, financially. They were feeling 'relatively deprived' as alluded to in the new economics of labour theory and this prompted their migration however their 'relative deprivation' (Stark, 1991) was due to them comparing their SA salary with what they could be earning in the Gulf.

### 5.2.2 Additional Professional reasons

A positive outcome of teaching in the Gulf may also be the new professional opportunities that are afforded to the migrant teachers who left their homes in SA to go abroad. The more altruistic motivations for migrating to the Arab Gulf has been due to migrant teachers' desire to contribute positively towards their professional identity, including the idea of contributing to Arab society as a whole through helping to shape the next generation, working in what they consider to be a worthwhile destination, and making a difference in the lives of individual children by maximising on the available school resources. Aiden (I, 8a) expressed that a lack of resources and equipment was the greatest challenge he faced in implementing the curriculum in SA and this therefore was one of his reasons that led him to teach in the Gulf. He also had the time to pursue his PhD part-time through university whilst teaching in the Kuwait. Manik's (2015) study of migrant teachers in the Middle East also found that teachers were improving their qualifications by studying through tertiary institutions in the home country and not the host country which implies that migrant teachers still have confidence in the standard of qualifications they have and can achieve in SA.

*a) The push and pull of Resources: a necessity not a luxury*

One of the greatest strengths in education in the Arab Gulf is their focus on technology. Learners are taught to be computer literate and schools are progressive in their approach to integrating technology into education. Kostogriz and Peeler (2007, p. 4) stated that "how workplaces of teachers are imagined, represented and conceived is directly related to the construction of teachers' professional identities." This finding by the authors mirrored the South African migrant teachers, who were astounded to have a wealth of resources at their easy disposal which made them feel more professionally equipped to teach their lessons. It boosted their professional morale and made their lessons more fulfilling and exciting for the local learners to enjoy learning the English language through various subjects.

Teysha (I, 19a) also added that a lack of age-appropriate, modern and interesting professional resources for primary school learners was hampering her work in SA. She wanted to feel challenged and excel professionally when teaching Mathematics and English to Intermediate Phase learners (Grade 4 and 5's) but the school did not have the finances to provide her with the teaching aids that she required in her home country. This left her feeling professionally stagnant as well as inadequate in achieving her teaching goals and it forced her to seek other options abroad where she could maximise her teaching efforts. Manik's (2005) study also found that South African teachers were leaving to the UK due to inadequate resources in public schools and this problem still persists today.

*b) Smaller class sizes*

Class size, defined as "how many students are in a teacher's class" (Munoz and Portes in Hill, 2008, p. 14), is a factor that affects teacher retention. Hill (2008) discovered that smaller classes bring about higher academic achievement from ESL learners generally; teachers experience less behaviour problems and produce higher test scores. Rooshee (I, 7a) was happy to leave for the Gulf because of the smaller class sizes in Oman as opposed to the overcrowded classrooms that she had to deal with in her home country. She felt that she was being restricted from making a positive impact in SA because she was unable to cater to every learner's educational needs because of the large class sizes.

### 5.2.3 Political reasons

Many South African migrant teachers in the sample left SA to teach in the Arab Gulf due to various political reasons such as violence and corruption in SA which are discussed below in more detail:

*a) Pervasive Violence*

Politics played a role in encouraging a push from SA and a concurrent pull to the Arab Gulf countries. In a news article by Cembi (in Masweneng, 2018) from the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), it was reported that the violence in South African schools has resulted in some teachers leaving the profession because they find their professional environment to be dangerous. He stated that South African teachers leave the profession because they cannot handle the violence. Although the South African teachers in this study left primary schools which are generally safer than high schools, safety was mentioned because they were also concerned about their safety and wellbeing after work hours as well as their children's safety in South African schools as many participants were of the view that SA is not a safe country. Similarly, Vester's (2018) study revealed that a high crime rate and the feeling of being unsafe was also a push factor for South African teachers to migrate to Abu Dhabi.

*b) Alleged Professional Corruption*

Aiden's (I, 8a) perspective and experiences indicated corruption in promotions. He became frustrated when he learnt that everything in SA, from getting a government teaching post (Level 1) to obtaining a higher Level teaching post such as becoming an HOD (Level 2 post) through promotion was done corruptly. He explained that as long as you belonged to a specific union and knew someone from that union, a plan could be made to secure a post or else it was impossible. This made him lose hope in getting promoted because although he was skilled and experienced to apply for a Level 2 post, the corruption in schools and unions deterred him from deciding to apply. This finding supports Manik's (2005) study on South African teachers migrating to the UK where she found that one of her participants decided to emigrate due to professional corruption: the lack of professional development and opportunities that restricted her from getting promoted in SA although she was teaching for more than 5 years.

Interestingly in this present study, this issue still seems to persist encouraging qualified migrant teachers to consider teaching positions in the Arab Gulf. Media has verified these views. In an online article by Gon (2016), she stated that City Press published an expose on 2 May 2014 which reported on union corruption influencing an array of professional aspects, "Crooked SADTU officials are selling not only principals' posts, but are manipulating the education system across provinces to control teachers' appointments, retirement packages and transfers in return for bribes of as little as R 6 500." The article further explained that SADTU office bearers are involved in criminal and disciplinary misconduct. They either "sold" teaching posts or influenced provincial officials to place people in positions. Similarly, a report by Gina (2016) pointed to the widespread practices of improper and unfair influence of teacher unions: "where authority is weak and inefficient, teacher union's move into the available spaces. Weak authorities, aggressive unions, compliant principals and teachers eager to benefit from union membership and advancement create a combination of factors that defeat the achievement of quality education by attacking the values of professionalism." This idea of corruption in the profession resonates with the case of Caroline (I, 15a) who was dismissed from her SGB post in a government school because she noticed her principal misusing the school funds. When she wanted to speak up about it, the principal safeguarded herself and got rid of Caroline from her staff by dismissing her.

### 5.2.4 Religious reasons

The majority of eleven female migrant teachers' believed that moving to an Islamic country would be a great advantage to them as well as their families that accompanied them. Their identity as Muslims was significant in their decision- practising their religion openly and having their weekend commence on a Friday and last to the Saturday gave them joy since a Friday was their holy day unlike in SA where a Friday is considered a normal work day. Interestingly, the reason for migrating to an Arab country did not align with their experiences with Muslim learners. This study found that the migrant teachers assumed that the Muslim learners they would teach would be more respectful and display exemplary religiously grounded behaviour but they were astounded when they arrived at their destination in the Arab Gulf only to find that this did not unfold. Kelly and Feroza (FGD 1) both reiterated the same views on the Muslim learner's (girls) they taught in Abu Dhabi: although they are taught from the same holy book which teaches values and respect, the learners don't behave

in accordance with their religious teachings and they display what migrant teachers believe to be worse behaviour than South African learners.

Berry's (1997, as cited by Joy & Gopal, 2017, p. 4) acculturation strategies framework states that acculturation deals with the process of "psychological and cultural changes happening with the migrants as they live and mingle with the host community." It refers to the period of transition and negotiation that migrant teachers encounter when they move into a new school context (Bense, 2016). Hence, Kelly and Feroza were in a state of cultural shock as they spent time with the local learners in the Arab Gulf and had to transition their minds to understand this kind of unacceptable behaviour by the Muslim girls that they taught. Joy and Gopal (2017) highlighted that since migrants have individual differences, not all migrants will face the same degree of difficulty in the acculturation process. This was evident in the present study since not all the migrant teachers' experienced discipline problems, only a few migrant teachers experienced challenges or cultural hiccups with the Muslim learners whom they taught.

### 5.2.5 Social reasons

Eight migrant teachers felt that they could easily travel to other countries from the Gulf at affordable rates for holidays since it is centrally located. This was voiced as an attractive perk since they could not afford to travel abroad with the salary earned in SA. Having family and friends in the Gulf also facilitated their migration by providing a support structure abroad to cushion them. This finding is in keeping with the pilot study conducted by Manik (2005, p. 122) where she discovered that more than fifty percent of newly qualified South African teachers who moved to the UK to teach had not been out of the country and that "travelling to the UK would be their first trip abroad." She explained that many migrants were leaving SA with the purpose of travelling. Likewise, Anganoo (2015) explained that migrant teachers' social networks with friends and family in SA helped them feel comfortable about their choice of migration to Johannesburg.

### 5.3 Teaching experiences of primary school migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf

This study revealed that migrant teachers from SA, a developing country, encountered both positive and negative experiences in the professional, socio-cultural and economic aspects of their lives and that of their families as a result of working in the Gulf (developed countries). Their experiences were dependent on their school and social environments and how they adjusted to being abroad. The migrant teachers in the study who have been successful in their integration have exhibited an openness to new ways of teaching the Arab learners and a certain degree of flexibility concerning their values and beliefs. The teaching experiences by primary school migrant teachers in this study are analysed according to Huberman's (1989, 1995) three main phases and Day and Kington's (2008) framework. The socio-cultural theoretical framework used in Bense's (2016) study for understanding the difficulties associated with professional transition in a new country is also used to analyse the South African migrant teachers' school experiences in the Gulf.

#### 5.3.1 An Analysis using Huberman's three main phases in teachers' life cycles.

Huberman (1989) has defined three main stages in teachers' life cycles: novice, mid-career and late-career. He maintained that as teachers gain experience in their teaching careers, they grow and develop in many diverse ways. This growth may be classified into certain stages of development. As teachers' feel stagnant in the teaching profession, they look for better opportunities in other locations and he explains that they often move from more pleasant pathways to less pleasant pathways. Teachers sometimes skip stages because of particular experiences or circumstances. The pseudonyms of the participants are listed under the three stages according to the number of years that they have taught in SA before leaving to the Arab Gulf.

**Table 5: South African migrant teachers' classified under Huberman's (1989) three stages of a teachers' life cycle by the number of years in the South African teaching profession**

| **Stage 1: Novice**<br><br>(Career entry: 1-3 years) | **Stage 2: Mid-career**<br><br>(Stabilisation: 4-6 years) | **Stage 3: Late-career**<br><br>(Experimentation and Diversification: 7-25 years) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Laaiqah (3 years) | 1. Tony (6 years) | 1. Suraya (34 years) |
| 2. Katy (2.5 years) | 2. Feroza (5 years) | 2. Aneesa (11 years) |
| 3. Rooshee (2 years) | 3. Anna (4 years) | 3. Teysha (8 years) |
| 4. Aiden (2 years) | 4. Tasneem (5 years) | 4. Kelly (8 years) |
| 5. Alice (2 years) | 5. Caroline (4 years) | 5. Riona (28 years) |
| 6. Samantha (2 years) | | 6. Leona (12 years) |
| 7. Le-Ann (3 years) | | 7. Jayde (13.5 years) |
| | | 8. Fatima (7 years) |
| **Total: 7** | **Total: 5** | **Total: 8** |

The table reflects that majority (n=8) of the South African primary school migrant teachers' fell under the third stage, the late career stage with more than 7 years of teaching experience in their home country. It is argued that before migrant teachers relocate abroad, they often have "accumulated a substantial amount of human capital in the form of teaching qualifications" and experiences (Collins & Reid, 2012, p. 45) and the above table indicates this. Although De Villiers (in Jones, 2012) stated that "foreign countries tended to recruit newly qualified teachers, the best and brightest and those who taught scarce subjects", in this current sample, this study found that more experienced teachers were in the Arab Gulf with a teaching experience of 7 and more years in the profession. Teachers in this stage of their career are supposed to seek out new challenges and stimulation (experiment) as well as increase the degree of differentiation in their classroom by motivating uninterested learners

(diversification). This would explain the migrant teachers' reasons for leaving SA in preference of the Arab Gulf.

It was interesting to note that not all the migrant teachers' in the study had the same/similar school-based experiences according to Huberman's theory based on their number of years in the teaching profession. Some teachers in the novice stage had positive experiences such as feeling confident about their professional skills and knowledge and settling quickly into a comfortable pattern of teaching upon arrival in the Gulf. This was because they were given all the necessary resources (for example, lesson plans which were already done) to begin teaching which matched stage 2 and 3 of the more experienced teachers in Huberman's model although they had only about 2-3 years of teaching experience. Other migrant teachers' experiences matched Huberman's experiences in each of the specific stages. Waite's (1999) study on the professional life-cycles and professional development of adult Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and the trajectories of the South African migrant teachers in the present study are similar to each other as Huberman's traditional career stages model is inappropriate for most of the participants. Waite's (1999, p. 428) study found that the stages "did not occur in any particular linear fashion and that many were recurring" unlike Huberman's model suggests. My discussion in the next section is collapsed according to the school-based experiences of the various South African migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf.

*a) Pedagogy customised to learners' needs*

Every migrant teacher had to teach lessons in simple English in order to be able to communicate with the learners they taught in the Gulf. Many found it challenging since English was a second language for the local learners which classified them as ESL learners. Cox (cited by Gentry, 2013) stated that by adjusting instructions according to the learners' appropriate level in assessments; it makes it easier for learners to gain better results. Feroza (I, 4) had to show numerous videos (visuals) to improve her Science marks because the Grade 9 learners struggled to understand scientific concepts using the English vocabulary in the textbooks.

Tony (I, 2) taught English to Grade 10 learners in a rural area (Bedouin), a desert in Abu Dhabi. He did not have any textbooks in the public school where he taught, so he compiled his own teaching resources. He tried various differentiation strategies to get his learners to improve their marks but he had tremendous problems as some learners could not even spell

their name correctly. At Grade 10 level, the learners constantly requested that he shows them videos pertaining to his teaching content which would simplify the concepts but he believed that it made no difference. They still performed poorly and this made him demotivated because as much as he tried to make a positive difference in the Arab Gulf, he believed that he failed in doing so because their English acquisition was quite limited in that time period.

According to Huberman (1993), Tony is supposed to be in the stabilisation phase (mid-career) which is characterized by teachers becoming more comfortable in their role, building their confidence and developing a sense of increased independence. This allows them to focus more on teaching practice and devote themselves to extending their pedagogical strategies. Tony is in a new professional environment and hence he is starting from scratch in terms of the stages and he is clearly not in the stabilisation phase (which he would have been in, had he remained in SA) as he has not had any experience teaching Bedouin learners whose first language is Arabic.

Despite being confident in teaching his subject content because he was knowledgeable, he still experienced moments of insecurity and frustration because he could not communicate with most of the learners in his class through the medium of English, thus his pedagogy suffered. Many of the learners in his school only started school in Grade 6 as well, so their lack of foundation skills (for example, basic phonics) made him frustrated and to feel like a novice teacher because of the new school context. He then decided to get a few learners who spoke good English to assist him with translating his lessons to the rest of the class. A study by Haricharan (2017) theorized this aspect: learners who help the teacher to translate and explain to other learners as 'learners as pedagogical tools' are helpful to the teacher; and by using other learners, Tony enhanced his lessons. Chrystall (2014, p.2) explained that "westernization refers to the strategy Abu Dhabi is using to reform its education system by seeking to import successful models of education from countries such as Finland, Canada and New Zealand, and hiring teachers and advisors from these countries as well as from countries such as the United Kingdom, SA, the United States and Australia." Thus using English as the medium of instruction is one aspect of westernisation of the curriculum but unfortunately the learners' home language is not English and thus their proficiency is limited.

Other characteristics of the stabilisation phase in Stage 2 was teachers extending their skills which included designing more interesting and stimulating lessons, feeling more at ease with their colleagues, and being able to find a balance between work and home life despite the

work demands placed upon them. Riona (I, 13) who taught in Abu Dhabi was able to design fun and interesting Science lessons to help the local learners better grasp the concepts and engage in her lessons by showing them experiments and doing lots of practical activities. Similarly, Anna (I, 10) also taught Science in Abu Dhabi and migrated with her husband and young son who required a lot of her energy from her, after working hours. She was able to create a balance between the work environment and home by taking advantage of the PD lessons that were offered to her so that she could feel more confident in delivering her Science lessons according to learners' age levels.

*b) Racism and Xenophobia: Not a hidden agenda*

Discrimination and racism took a number of forms in the Gulf. An unpleasant experience voiced by many participants was their struggles with their identity and professional status, being respected as teachers abroad. These were positively and negatively influenced by migration to the Arab Gulf. Whilst some participants in this present study experienced help from the local Arab teachers in a few Arab countries (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait), many participants in Abu Dhabi expressed their disappointment with the manner in which the local staff isolated them in school meetings and were resistant towards offering them professional support. Sinyolo (in Caravatti et al, 2014, p. 36) described the "love-and-hate" reaction to migrants as a teacher migration paradox. In his study of teacher migration in Southern Africa, he explained that "on the one hand, migrant teachers are celebrated for the diversity and positive contributions that they bring to their schools. At the same time, school administrators, colleagues, and the larger community often treat migrant teachers as outsiders, causing them to feel marginalised."

Leona (I, 16a) experienced racial discrimination because she was a Black (African) teaching in Abu Dhabi. The local learners already knew she was a migrant based on the colour of her skin tone, her hair and accent which she believed, made them disrespect her. The learners underestimated her professionalism based on her race and behaved poorly towards her due to her being Black. This type of racial discrimination is common in the Gulf as explained in an article by Small (2016) where he shared his experiences of racism as an expatriate living in the Middle East. He stated, "in most countries around the world, white people seem to be treated with the most respect. In the Middle East, native Arabs from the GCC region are treated with great respect, and then white people are sort of next in line. Meanwhile Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Filipinos, who, in the UAE for example, together make up

52.48 per cent of the total population, are noticeably treated as lesser individuals." Similarly, Reid et al (2013) and Miller's (2008) studies revealed racial discrimination against migrant teachers. Miller's (2019) study on Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) also found that there is discrimination that is evident, which is a double negative effect, of teaching in England. The first is "being migrant, coupled with being a migrant from a developing country", which are particular challenges to migrant teachers (Miller, 2019, p. 12).

This is also similar to the findings on discrimination in the Gulf. Feroza (I, 4a) noticed that the local Arab population perceive Indians from SA, for example, as desperate for teaching jobs because of the good pay whereas teachers of Indian descent from more developed countries such as the USA or UK are compensated much more. The South African migrant teachers noticed that they were not earning the same amount of money when they discussed amongst themselves. Small (2016) also added that "Indians are paid lesser than whites/Arabs for twice the effort, even though they have the same designation." Tony (FGD 1) concurred with the above findings (as mentioned in Chapter 4) as he also shared his experiences of being treated better because of his 'white' skin colour which earned him more respect than his migrant friends who were not of the 'white' race.

Bressler and Rotter (2017, p. 3) highlighted that with respect to their interactions with colleagues, some migrant teachers mention "experiences of marginalization, exclusion, or discrimination by colleagues." Yazan (2018, p. 20) explained that migrant teachers can achieve a more improved "self-knowledge", as they learn better what upsets, shocks, frustrates, and stresses them (negative experiences) as well as what stimulates and satisfies them (positive experiences) in their teaching practice. He further added that this self-knowledge also strengthens their competences to handle "emotion-evoking experiences to have appropriate emotions for particular situations and keep their individual integrity, commitment to teaching, and professional practice."

Interestingly, Laaiqah (I, 5) who taught in Saudi Arabia also explained that the local Arab teachers are very afraid of migrant teachers 'stealing' their jobs and therefore they refrain from being too friendly with migrant teachers. Hence, there is a feeling of xenophobia by the local Arabs towards the migrant teachers. So although the Arab Gulf experiences a shortage of teachers and more especially in specific scarce skills areas such as Mathematics, Science and English and thus employs teachers from abroad, this is not easily understood by the local Arab teachers at school. Manik's (2013) study on Zimbabwean teachers in KZN schools

teaching Maths and Science also showed similar findings. A study conducted in Oman by Worrall (2011) revealed that "in late August 2010, around 250 qualified teachers had protested in front of the Ministry of Education in Ruwi, demanding jobs and complaining that Arabic-speaking expatriates were being hired before Omanis. The ministry, though, insisted that the Omani candidates were not up to the mark as reflected in their entrance test results." The xenophobia experienced by a few of the migrant teachers was mainly due to the local Arab teachers' lack of understanding of the government's good intention of having qualified teachers through the employment of migrant teachers to contribute to the aim of creating a global knowledge economy.

Chrystall's (2014, p. 5) study revealed that one of the barriers to educational progress in Abu Dhabi was having Arab teachers teach scarce skills subjects and the strategy to remedy the problem was to include the systematic replacement of Arab teachers of science, mathematics and English with western native English-speaking teachers from abroad. He further explained that the Abu Dhabi New School Model (NSM) strategy was "intended to address concerns of low academic attainment in Arabic and English reading and writing as well as in mathematics and science. These skills were identified as being critical for students to be successful in the global knowledge economy. The other goal for students was to become fully bilingual in English and Arabic." Thus the role of migrant teachers in Abu Dhabi and the other Gulf countries was significant in raising standards in crucial subjects and to grow the next generation of workers for the fourth industrial revolution yet, migrant teachers were not acknowledged for the value they were bringing in fulfilling this key role and local teachers' perceptions could now include xenophobia as a result of job losses.

Migrant teachers were on the receiving end of hatred. Feroza (I, 4) also explained the disrespect that parents had shown towards them as migrant teachers. They would speak to them in a demeaning manner because teaching in the host country was seen as an inferior job because the view was expatriate teachers sacrificing time and being away from their home country, just to earn more money which indicated financial desperation to others. Day and Kington (2008) also explained that teacher identities are not only built from practical and emotional aspects of teaching (professional) and teachers' personal lives, but also from interactions between personal experiences and the social, cultural, and institutional environment. The cases of Feroza and Tony are instructive where they witnessed the impact of a harsh tone and demeaning words used by parents in Abu Dhabi towards migrant teachers. This, in turn, made them feel less of a professional and they could not respond

because they were being perceived as mere visitors in the destination country with no real rights.

A lack of respect for migrant teachers has emerged in the literature frequently (Manik, 2005; Makonye, 2017; Miller, 2019). Makonye (2017) also stated in his teacher migration study that the Zimbabwean teachers felt that because they came from a country with a struggling economy, their abilities and professionalism were reduced in SA given their treatment. They were seen as teaching out of desperation to gain employment and therefore they did not gain respect from the learners they taught in SA. Bradford and Kent (in Miller, 2019, p. 2) noted that in the "1950s, migrants from the Caribbean, India and Africa were valued for their manual and domestic skills, but were not considered part of the intelligentsia." In this current study, the Arab learners also viewed South African teachers of Indian descent similarly, assuming that they were from India or Pakistan in this study, and not from Africa and as Worrall (2011) explained, there is a dislike for Indians and Pakistanis amongst the local Omanis due to the types of jobs they execute. He stated that for the average Omani, the perception is that the Indians are everywhere and they control everything. "Working-class Omanis feel increasingly at a disadvantage, from the sheer numbers of South Asians employed in menial jobs, to those increasingly hired in more skilled occupations and the Indian business elite at the top, whom they regard as making excessive profits at the expense of ordinary Omanis." This also reveals xenophobia - that there is jealousy and bitterness amongst the local Arabs because they feel that the expatriates are taking over their territory in large numbers and becoming successful. Migrant teachers believe that this is discussed and heard in the home, so learners automatically stereotype migrant Indian teachers as working in their home country only as a result of financial desperation to gain employment.

*c) Gender Discrimination*

Gender discrimination was also found to be rife in the Arab Gulf by learners they taught. In this study, 90% (n=18) of the migrant teachers were female which are perceived to be "less dominant and are normally classified as co-movers" (Bailey & Mulder, 2017, p. 3). However, this is seen as untrue since majority of the migrant teachers were female (bolstering a feminisation of migration discourse) and they mostly migrated as single or divorced to the Arab Gulf, not as 'co-movers'. Women are classified as less skilled compared to men but this study reveals that women are just as much professionally empowered as men in their teaching careers and women are more likely to dominate the profession. Their teaching experiences,

however skilled they are, can still be intimidating and tormenting based on gender inequality from the learners who tend to fear males more than females. Various scholars have also agreed with this by finding that gender norms in countries of origin may act as push factors for skilled women to migrate, but these women may then end up facing other sets of discriminatory norms in host countries due to their migrant background and gender norms (Bagguley & Hussain, 2007; Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007).

There are mixed feelings about professional discrimination. In a study by Miller (2019), he alluded that all Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) (migrant teachers) are generally ambitious with the hope of being promoted in the host country. The reasons they provided for a lack of career progression were "mixed, and ranged from feelings of 'not fitting in' to self-doubt, arising from knock-backs and put-downs experienced" in their new teaching environment (Miller, 2019, p. 7). A few participants in his study expressed their concerns and frustration in the host country about their lack of career progression (for example: whether by not getting an interview or getting an interview but not getting a promotion) which was perceived as racial inequality and discrimination. Bressler and Rotter (2017, p. 3) explained that in a Canadian study by Carr and Klassen (1997 as cited in Bressler & Rotter, 2017), migrant teachers felt that they are often prejudiced with regards to "hindrances in promotion or hiring" in comparison to the majority employed at the schools, that is, the local teachers. By contrast, in this study, Aiden (I, 8a) was fortunate to be offered a promotion post in Kuwait as a migrant teacher and through this opportunity he was able to hold the host country in a high esteem as they were open to offering migrants a promotion even though he was temporarily employed.

*d) Society is Arabic and Schools are International: A disjuncture*

The Arab Gulf tries to educate learners to become global citizens and therefore, there is more emphasis on teaching Mathematics and Science in English. The learners are ESL and this makes it challenging for migrant teachers to communicate with learners especially in public schools in Abu Dhabi. Migrant teachers expressed the view that the learners in Abu Dhabi are also not keen on learning in English as they struggle to become proficient. They only learn the language in their classrooms from Grade 1 (7 years) but outside of school, they switch to speaking in Arabic.

**The Cambridge curriculum versus the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum**

The IB curriculum used in Saudi Arabia is an inquiry based approach to learning, where children explore topics using hands-on activities. Kampa and Vilina (2016) explained that there are no textbooks, just activities designed by the teacher, so it is very student-led and this allows them to develop thinking skills, teamwork and communication. Inquiry-based learning is a natural way to learn a second language. Kampa and Vilina (2016) also added that children come up with questions about topics and through activities and exploration they find the answers. It is argued that this also gives ownership to the children and allows them to find the best way that suits their learning. Hourani and Litz (2016, p.1) stated that the "Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) has initiated educational change and school improvements by utilising the Cambridge curriculum. As part of the school reform agenda, ADEC introduced school self-evaluation-Irtiqaa (SSE-Irtiqaa). This is to help benchmark Abu Dhabi public schools with international academic standards, by tracing the challenges faced during the SSE-Irtiqaa process." Such efforts are to improve the quality of education in Abu Dhabi.

Suraya (I, 1) also shared that her school is assessed by Irtiqaa; however, her school is international and private, unlike the public schools in Abu Dhabi. The learners from private schools in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait are mixed with local and international learners and their level of English is better than the local learners from the public schools in Abu Dhabi. The acculturation process was thus an easy one for Suraya since her years of experience in the teaching profession helped her deal with her transition into the new school context. For Suraya, her adjustment was easier as she believed that many aspects of the Saudi Arabian education system was similar to SA's educational system.

Professional identity transition is influenced by different aspects. Cohen (2008, as cited by Bressler & Rotter, 2017, p.3) asserted that the "direct work environment, i.e., the particular school culture, also seems to influence the professional identity formation" of migrant teachers. In the Arab Gulf, this evaluation by Irtiqaa has a positive impact for their schools since it is a motivation for principals and the teaching staff of any school to raise their standards and deliver progress towards excellence. It helps them to undertake a professional approach to the whole concept of education and when their school achieves good ratings, the positive results boosts the local and migrant teachers' morale, thereby strengthening their professional identity as competent teachers. Teysha (I, 18) explained that the evaluation makes it clear that the teaching methods used are in line with the best practices.

Culture, religion and language are also relevant in the transition process. Diallo (2014, p. 1) explained that while "Western-educated migrant teachers are the natural products of liberal and secular upbringing and education, local Arab students from the UAE (for example, Abu Dhabi) are not only the product of their Islamic education and upbringing but they also live and socialise in a conservative Islamic context." He added that "equally relevant to this educational setting is that, learning a foreign language is a complex process that involves constructing or negotiating new identities to accommodate new values in order to function effectively in the target culture" (Diallo, 2014, p. 1). Cultural resistance is similar to Berry's (1997) separation category, with members of the host community which are the local Arab learners in this category who are against the acquisition of alternate cultural norms, while upholding Arab ethnic customs. The present study concurs with the findings of Diallo where majority of the local Arab Gulf learners especially in Abu Dhabi struggled to learn the English language and they were also resistant towards embracing the language since they spoke Arabic at home and outside their classrooms. However, they were eager and curious about learning how migrant teachers lived in a country like SA as opposed to being curious about learning the English language that the South African migrant teachers' spoke.

*e) Comparison as a common attribute of migrant teachers*

Majority of the participants continuously compared their teaching experiences abroad to that of their home country in SA. As time was spent teaching abroad, many of the migrant teachers felt a new appreciation for their previous teaching of learners in SA whom they found grasped the learning content much faster than the Arab learners. The issues faced by migrant teachers during their professional transition into the host country are often compared with the internalised knowledge and strategies of schooling from the home country (Kostogriz and Peeler, 2007).

**The language comparison**

Migrant teachers were constantly comparing SA to the Arab gulf. Elbaz-Luwisch (2004, as cited by Bense, 2016, p. 13) explain that the difficulties (such as the language barrier) encountered in the host country are "the result of misunderstanding the language or the culture" of the local learners. Migrant teachers "lack the culturally specific educational

knowledge" (Peeler & Jane, 2005, p. 325) of the new schooling environment and therefore make comparisons between learners they have taught in SA to learners they currently teach in the Arab Gulf. However, some participants who taught at private schools in the Arab Gulf such as in Saudi Arabia, found that the Arab learners were very focused and went the extra mile to complete assessments which impressed the migrant teachers when they did compare learners. Chrystall (2014, p. 7) found that "if Abu Dhabi is serious about maximizing English language skills, in both conversational and academic English, as well as skills of innovation and collaboration in students, there needs to be greater parental understanding of and involvement in the support activities outside school that can help prepare students for greater progress in school." This parental involvement is seen in private schools in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait.

**Adaptability to a new curriculum**

Migrant teachers' comparisons of curricula were also evident. A study by Makonye (2017, p. 1) on Zimbabwean mathematics teachers who taught in SA, found that "teachers found it compulsive to compare some aspects of the South African curriculum with those from their home country. It showed that initially, the teachers had challenges in adapting to the new curriculum, such as understanding the philosophy of continuous assessment. Although they meet some challenges at the beginning, in time some of the immigrant teachers adjust." This was also found in the present study which revealed that although there was some initial tension upon arrival in the Gulf, South African migrant teachers eventually adjusted after approximately a few months in the Arab Gulf but however, they still continuously compared their professional school-based experiences abroad to that which they experienced in their home country.

**Change is the Norm**

In particular, migrant teachers' professional identities were evident in how they responded to professional or administrative changes (Bressler & Rotter, 2017). Migrant teachers frequently mentioned that changes in the teaching curriculum was inevitable, resulting from stocktaking or reassessment of their careers (reflection). Teysha (I, 19) found that it was challenging adjusting to the professional changes in Abu Dhabi with teachers receiving on-going training

in a new curriculum that would be more beneficial to the local learners needs. Furthermore, "Abu Dhabi's vision of a world-class education system as the basis for a knowledge economy includes goals to develop the needed skills of innovation and full bilingualism in students for mathematics and science" (Chrystall, 2014, p. 3). Hence, adjusting the teacher pedagogy to the learners' level of ability was seen as very important in the Gulf since it ensures that every child is able to pass at the end of their academic year. This required migrant teachers to 'learn on the job' and quickly adapt to changes in a new curriculum, find suitable pedagogy or innovate and create ways of suitable assessment such as strategic questioning, group work and quizzes.

**Behaviour comparisons**

From learner behaviour to classroom resources and language barriers, there was a huge disparity between the home in the global south and host country in the global north. South African migrant teachers found that credit can be given to their home country regarding certain aspects, for example, South African learners in public schools are better behaved than the local learners in Abu Dhabi public schools. Leona (I, 16b) stated that it took her a long time to feel comfortable with the values in the Abu Dhabi education system and culture that conflicted with the culture from which she came. Kelly and Tony, (FGD 1) mentioned that you can maintain discipline in your home country, unlike in Abu Dhabi where they had to accept and adjust their discipline methods according to how the school was run with noisy classrooms and learners who would learn if only they wanted to. On a positive note, most of the migrant teachers had ample teaching resources to assist them to deliver their lessons unlike in SA, where they expressed that it was an everyday struggle to get textbooks for learners.

*f) Laissez-faire culture impacts on classroom management*

Reconstruction of identity in the host country is a common feature for migrants. Bense (2016, p. 15) states that many previous international studies have revealed that migrant teachers experience great "challenges during their professional transition into a new teaching context (Bartlett, 2014 in the USA; Manik, 2014 in the UK; Collins & Reid, 2012 in Australia)." The "cultural identity of a migrant is totally redefined during the acculturation process and a new cultural identity is constructed in the host community" (Joy & Gopal, 2017, p. 4).

Reconstruction occurred due to the experiences of migrant teachers. In the Arab Gulf, the migrant teachers encountered numerous discipline issues which they believed stemmed from the social circumstances in the learners' homes. Migrant teachers' new professional identity involved their duty to instil good discipline measures in their classrooms to ensure quality learning.

**Discipline problems**

Discipline issues were attributed by migrant teachers to parental influence. Feroza (I, 4b) felt disillusioned and helpless because in Abu Dhabi (UAE), there was no parental involvement. From the 106 girls that she taught, she had only seen two parents on 'Parent's Day'. Parents felt it was the teacher's job to educate their children and discipline them. A study by Al-Taneiji (2001) also found that there is limited parental involvement in schools in the UAE. In contrast to most Western parents, parents in the UAE were less likely to help their children with learning at home and few parents respond to communications from the school (Al-Taneiji, 2001). The study added that parents in the UAE, therefore, may not have a store of social and educational capital to help support and guide their children. The "lack of social and educational capital would arise also from the fact that possibly about half of UAE parents of this age would have completed high school, with few having undertaken higher education" (Al-Taneiji, 2001).

The lack of discipline was also perceived to be related to the gender of learners. Russell, Coughlin, Walily and Amri (2005, p. 19) added that "restrictions on the behaviour and independence of girls could also be a factor in the finding that one-third of the UAE females indicated that hating school was a problem." Their study found that restrictions and strict control on girls contributed to a sense of a lack of liberty which resulted in discipline problems at school. A factor linked with girls hating school could be that the school is a context where they perceive a lack of liberty. Another factor contributing to hating school could be teaching strategies and the school curriculum, where one third of girls suggested there was a need for improvement if youth were to be successful in the future (Russell et al, 2005). South African primary school migrant teachers' experienced discipline problems daily but they had to find ways of coping in order to be able to teach and timeously complete the syllabus. Hence, migrant teachers articulated that a laissez faire culture dominates the UAE due to social circumstances and children's upbringing which negatively impacts on discipline in the classroom.

Kelly (I, 11) also experienced major discipline problems because of the culture of the girls she taught in Abu Dhabi. Although the local learners and Kelly share the same ethnicity, sharing common religious values, they refused to listen to her if they were not in the mood and she believed that she would not gain any joy if she complained or took up the matter with her senior management. It became a norm for learners to do work if they wanted to or they would just bunk class or make a noise in her class. This was one of the reasons Kelly returned to SA after completing her two year teaching contract in Abu Dhabi, because she explained that she never expected girls to behave so rudely and disrespectfully towards her and yet they shared similar religious values. Joy and Gopal (2017, p. 9) also point out that "migrants who identify themselves in a feeble manner with the host culture will experience more difficulties in sociocultural adaptation." Kelly's expectations (pleasant behaviour and high academic achievements) of the local Arab learners were too high and therefore she could not meet her expectations.

This supports the findings of Manik (2005) where South African teachers complained about the learners' behaviour in UK classrooms. Her study found that migrant teachers were employed to fill teaching positions in undesirable schools in the UK and this in turn, resulted in bad behaviour and poor academic performance from the local learners. However, Bressler and Rotter's (2017) study noted that Turkish immigrant teachers in Germany were able to discipline Turkish immigrant students better because they shared a commonality: Turkish ethnicity. The Turkish learners respected the Turkish teachers because the method of communicating used when reprimanding the learners was through the use of the Turkish language and not the German medium of instruction. The professional identity of the immigrant teachers were influenced by their Turkish ethnicity in comparison to other contextual factors. All the eight migrant teachers who taught in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman, taught in private schools only, of which three of them were Muslim. However, all twelve migrant teachers (eight Muslim migrant teachers') who were in Abu Dhabi, taught in public schools and therefore they struggled with the local learners' behaviour. In the private schools, learners' parents were more involved and belonged to a whatsapp parents group where they would share their concerns with the migrant teachers about homework, their child's progress or school projects but in Abu Dhabi, it was the complete opposite. South African migrant teachers felt that because parents were not present in school meetings or at home, this negatively impacted on their children's behaviour: the children therefore became wayward and uncontrollable.

*g) Professional Development and recognition of migrant teachers' professionalism*

Migrant teachers were delighted to be professionally developed and recognised whilst teaching in the Arab Gulf and this boosted their confidence in the classroom. This was through promotions as well as being praised in meetings and individually in their principal's office. However, migrant teachers pointed out that they also had to be very careful of how they spoke or treated the local learners because they could lose their jobs instantly and be required to leave the country if they complained to the school heads or their parents. These issues are discussed below:

**Recognition of skills and hard work = Improved professional status**

An acknowledgment and appreciation of their concerted efforts is what inspired migrant teachers to teach better, work harder and be motivated to work in their new school environment. A study by Day (2012, p. 5) alluded that "where they experience sustained support, both personally outside and professionally inside their workplace, they are able not only to cope with but also positively manage adverse circumstances, in other words, to be resilient." Whilst teaching in the Gulf, most migrant teachers (n=15) felt more valued, respected and recognised as professionals in the teaching profession. This was due to many factors such as getting paid well (which resulted in personal happiness) which motivated them to work harder; weekly professional development sessions that boosted their teaching confidence in the classroom; and staff meetings where senior management made the rest of the local and expatriate staff aware of migrant teachers who conducted impressive lessons (socially recognised). Many participants stated that they loved teaching in the Arab Gulf; they found the work stimulating, and felt that they wanted their teaching contracts renewed in the Arab Gulf upon completion of their contracts. Ballantyne, Kerchner and Aróstegui (2012, p. 212) defined teacher identity as "something that is not fixed, it is established through experience and the interpretation of that experience." Migrant teachers thus began to perceive themselves as competent professionals once they were recognised for their efforts and this is in keeping with the findings of Bosso (2017). Teysha (I, 19) who worked in Abu Dhabi was thrilled when she received gifts and a certificate from the principal for her outstanding result in her lesson delivery when the school was assessed by Irtiqaa. It boosted her confidence in the classroom and encouraged her to keep working hard.

Day and Kington (2008) explain that a teacher's professional identity is influenced by personal and social factors. This combination of various factors plays an important role in determining the professional status of the migrant teachers and a teacher's happiness. Day, Elliot and Kington (2005, as cited by Bressler & Rotter, 2017) explain that how migrant teachers construct their professional identities reflects a migrant teachers' commitment to teaching and their retention. Migrant teachers' professional identities mould their personalities, where they exert their energy, the ways in which they seek out professional development opportunities, and what obligations they see as essential to their role as a professional teacher (Bense, 2016). Similarly Yazan (2018, p. 1) alluded that a teacher's professional identity refers to "teachers' dynamic self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, which shifts as they participate in varying communities, interact with other individuals, and position themselves (and are positioned by others) in social contexts." Aiden (I, 8) was given opportunities to grow in a short space of time in Kuwait after being recognised for his creative and well delivered lessons as well as his contributions to extracurricular activities in his school. He then came to the realisation that the wellbeing of the learners is at the heart of education and there is no compromising in Kuwait. If you are '*worth your salt',* then even as a migrant teacher in a host country, you can still be promoted. Aiden was committed to teaching given his positive experiences which affirmed his value as a teacher and his "frame of orientation" (Bressler and Rotter, 2017) that entailed the progressive construction of his professional identity in the new work environment.

**An act of unprofessionalism could cost you**

If the South African migrant teachers did not behave professionally and give off their best, their contracts could be easily terminated. A study by Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji (2019) revealed that job security was not an issue for the local Arab teachers because they were not on short term teaching contracts in the Arab Gulf unlike expatriate teachers. Their study found that it was quite different for migrant teachers, whose contracts contained limited terms and who were subject to appraisals for renewal. "Expatriate teachers are typically offered two-year contracts when they are first hired, after which they are considered for renewal annually" (Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji, 2019, p. 7). It is also important to note that Huberman's (1989) normal career model does not align well for South African migrant teachers in this present

study because their careers lack career stability being employed in two and three year contracts in the Arab Gulf.

Teysha and Le-Ann who both taught in Abu Dhabi discussed the importance of getting good appraisals from the school management when their lessons were observed (diary entries). Le-Ann was not as lucky as Teysha when she was first observed and did not get good appraisals in her first few observations because it was her first time teaching Kindergarten learners and so her inexperience with the learners worked at her disadvantage. This scared her because she was afraid of losing her job due to her being professionally inexperienced in her first year. Teysha, on the other hand, excelled professionally and received positive feedback after each observation which made her work even harder to maintain her high points for appraisal. However, Alice was vulnerable because she fell pregnant in the Gulf after six months and this therefore altered her teaching contract to a learner support teacher as the principal was unhappy. Her initial teaching contract signed allows for a female teacher to fall pregnant and get a month's paid maternity leave, but as a learner support teacher she could be told at any time her services are no longer needed which she had no control over. She also mentioned that she would want to take more than a month's leave when her baby was born which goes against the contract and this could easily lead to her contract being terminated.

*h) Teaching in a different phase abroad*

Day (2012, p. 8 ) explained that migrant teachers, who take on a new role, change schools, teach a new age group or new syllabus, or learn to work in new ways in the classroom "will almost inevitably result in development disruption, at least temporarily." Huberman's (1995) work also provides an important analysis of linear, 'stage' models of professional development which ignore the complexity and dynamics of classroom life, the discontinuities of learning; and points to the importance of continuing regular and differentiated opportunities for deliberative, systematic reflection 'on' and 'about' experience as a way of locating and extending understandings of the broad and narrow contexts of teaching and learning, and reviewing and renewing commitment and capacities for effectiveness. Some participants (n=3) were very upset upon arrival at the schools in the Arab Gulf when they were told that they were going to be teaching Foundation Phase learners instead of the Phases they were trained to teach in SA whereas others adjusted quickly.

**Professional transitioning in the new school context**

Joy and Gopal's (2017) study noted that some migrants adapt very well to transition while others experience a great deal of difficulty in the new professional context. The experiences faced by migrant teachers during their professional transition in the host country are explained with internalised knowledge and strategies of schooling (Kostogriz and Peeler, 2007). The problems experienced by migrant teachers are the result of misunderstanding the language or the school culture of the host society (Bense, 2016). Having no previous teaching experience with six to nine year-olds, migrant teachers felt that they were starting their teaching careers from '*scratch*' but this time in a completely new environment abroad which made it a more stressful task.

It was evident that South African migrant teachers are not conforming to the stages in a new country because of new experiences they find themselves back as novice teachers which differs from Huberman's (1989) theory. Interestingly, this was not told when they signed their teaching contracts and so when they arrived in the Gulf; it was too late to question the school management or leave to go back home. Leann (diary entry) who taught at Abu Dhabi lost a tremendous amount of weight and went through sleepless nights when she was given a Grade 2 class to teach. She did not cope during the first six months but endured thinking of the pleasing financial rewards of working in the country.

Manik (2011) found that South African teachers found themselves being disregarded due to the feeling of reduced teacher authority when they migrated to the UK. Similarly in the present study, as visitors in the host country, South African migrant teachers were marginalized and did not have their opinions accepted because they were instructed differently upon arrival in the Arab Gulf, which was different to the agreement made in their teaching contracts before their mobility. Jayde (I, 14) was also very surprised upon arrival in Kuwait when she was given a Year 2 class and had no experience in teaching phonics or Kindergarten (KG) learners (known as Foundation Phase learners in SA) as she is senior and FET trained with Intermediate Phase in terms of her South African qualifications and experience. Although she pleaded to the school management to give her a higher grade to teach, she was unsuccessful in her plea and was still given a Year 2 class but with all the professional support she needed to help her to cope such as guidance with her lessons in teaching age appropriate lessons from her academic leader, grade teachers and senior

management. This motivated her and she found that she was capable of teaching smaller learners because of the support offered by the school.

*i) Multiple contracts in schools in different countries in the Arab Gulf*

The mobility of teachers is enhanced internationally as a result of the global labour market and transport and communication improvements. Bhengu (2011) explained that globalisation facilitates the ease of mobility from one country to another and migrant teachers in the study used airplanes to easily get to their destination country within a day of travel. He also explained that in the past teachers qualified in a particular country and could only teach in their home country. They could not consider teaching around the world as it took too long to travel, they were not made aware of travel opportunities elsewhere and there were no recruitment agencies to take you from one country to the other that actually facilitated and helped you with the movement. Today, through recruitment agencies and technology, it becomes very simple for migrant teachers to secure teaching posts through Skype interviews, emails, whatsapp video calls or face-to-face interviews in SA at various provinces during certain times of the year.

It was a second migration abroad to teach for five of migrant teachers in this study, thus serial migration was evident. Three migrant teachers migrated to the Arab Gulf twice but to different countries and two migrant teachers taught in the UK before, returned to SA for a while and then moved to Abu Dhabi. This shows that a quarter of the participants in the study wanted to explore the culture and curriculum of different countries as well as to gain more international experience with the knowledge obtained from teaching different learners in different geographic contexts. For example, Laaiqah (I, 5a) first taught in Saudi Arabia, then moved to Qatar and then back to Saudi Arabia - because she preferred Saudi Arabia in comparison to Qatar although she earned more money in Qatar. She wanted to go back to the school where she connected with the learners and colleagues better and she therefore returned to Saudi but within the same geographical location: the Arab Gulf.

*j) Yearning for more money abroad: tuition after school hours*

Many migrant teachers gave tuition to the local Arab learners after school hours to make extra money. This was legally not allowed and discouraged because they were already employed by the host country. However, because the learners' parents were desperate for

their children to perform with better grades and improve their English skills, they approached migrant teachers who went to their homes to provide support. Laaiqah (I, 5) gave tuition to the children from the Saudi Royal family whilst teaching in Jeddah. She stated that the extra income was worth making the time for since the hours were fine and flexible. The money was easily earned and she felt that instead of just sitting in the afternoons doing nothing, it was a wiser idea to engage in extra teaching one hour a day, 3 days per week. Aiden (I, 8) also stated he gave tuitions to make extra cash because his main aim was to earn more money by working in the Gulf. This is similar to Manik's (2005) UK study which found that teachers' additional earnings added to their income to maximise their earnings abroad.

*k) Social networks and Chain migration*

Relationships between people can be a significant reason for chain migration. According to Eurenius (2019, p. 2), chain migration is a common practice of today's migration patterns and it is defined as a "social process by which potential migrants, within a family or in a community, are influenced by previously migrated family members or friends and eventually follow them to a new place of residence." Caroline (I, 15) had decided to migrate to Saudi Arabia because her aunt taught at the same destination and if she moved there, she would not feel isolated in an unfamiliar environment. A study by Anganoo (2015) as well as De Villiers and Weda (2017, p. 4) on Zimbabwean teachers in SA also found that "having a spouse, a relative or a friend already living in South Africa was identified as a factor that influenced the decisions of at least six of the participants to migrate to South Africa."

Hence, migrant teachers tend to move to places where they are familiar with someone teaching there in order to feel comfortable. Also, through the existence of a social network, they can easily secure international teaching posts by family or friends already employed abroad that have recommended them to schools in the Gulf where they are currently employed. Samantha (I, 9) moved to Abu Dhabi because her parents were teaching in Abu Dhabi and this made her choice of location for teaching abroad easy because she wanted to be close to her parents if she taught in the Arab Gulf. Massey et al (1993) explains the concept of the social capital in migrant networks. Social capital enables relationships between people and the resources created as a result helps to expedite employment, provide financial help and other forms of support. Saudi Arabia was recommended to Jayde (I, 14) as a destination country since many of her friends taught at the specific country. Social networks therefore

provide a common ground for migrant teachers to settle in at due to a feeling of familiarity amongst their family or friends in a new country.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the reasons for South African migrant teachers being pulled to the Arab Gulf. It also analysed their school-based experiences in public and private schools with the literature. The main reasons for migration to the Gulf has been to earn a higher salary, develop professionally, live and practice their faith openly in an Islamic country as well as to travel abroad. The common experiences of teaching in the Gulf were the abundance of resources that assisted in the curriculum delivery, ill-disciplined learners and lack of parental involvement in public schools in Abu Dhabi, a language barrier across the Gulf, indirect xenophobia and the emphasis of customising lessons according to each learners ability so that all learners are able to pass at the end of the Arab academic year. As South African primary school migrant teachers' are sought after due to the Arab Gulf's need for international teachers to attain a global economy, they have encountered both pleasant and unpleasant teaching experiences. A culture shock upon arrival was the biggest challenge that hindered them from adjusting quickly and some have even been so traumatised by the poor behaviour and work ethic of learners due to learning scarce skills subjects through the English Language. Some of them could not wait for their teaching contracts to end so that they could return to their home country, South Africa.

# CHAPTER 6: INSIGHTS

## "I AM A VISITOR, THANKFUL TO THE HOST COUNTRY FOR THE INVITE"

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to gather together the substantial insights of the study that emanated from the data in order to best interpret and understand South African primary school migrant teachers' reasons for leaving SA and their school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf. The chapter begins by providing a summary on the biographical profile of the twenty migrant teachers in this study and the insights gleaned from this data; the second section discusses the reasons that have pulled and pushed migrant teachers to relocate to the Arab Gulf countries. The third section provides a critical analysis of the professional and personal school-based experiences in either the primary or secondary schools in the Arab Gulf depending on the migrant teacher's placement and the last section concludes the study by providing some recommendations to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and schools for addressing teacher retention in primary schools in SA.

### 6.2 Critical insights on the biographical profile of South African primary school migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf

South African migrant teachers exiting to some of the Arab Gulf countries (Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar) to largely improve their financial status and teaching careers for a variety of reasons and the cohort of migrant teachers who migrated to Abu Dhabi (UAE) were in the majority in the present study. This is consistent with the finding by Daniel (2018) that the majority of South African teachers end up in Abu Dhabi because of the lucrative salaries offered in the country as opposed to other Gulf countries. Majority (n=8) of the South African primary school migrant teachers fell within the category of late career stage with more than 7 years of teaching experience signalling that they were experienced teachers.

This indicates that seasoned South African teachers are sought after in the Arab Gulf countries and SA is not sufficiently attractive to its qualified teachers (this was also noted in a 2005 study on teacher emigration by Manik who found that both newly qualified and

seasoned teachers were being recruited to positions abroad). Clearly, there needs to be measures to address the exit of experienced teachers, in order to retain those, who are needed locally. They have helped the Arab Gulf to address to some level, the teacher shortages in scarce skills subjects such as Mathematics, Science and the English Language. SA is in the unfortunate position of also having a shortage of teachers in these very same subjects.

South African primary school migrant teachers who were part of this sample study made a positive impact in a host of primary and secondary private and public schools (both urban and rural) in the Arab Gulf countries. Majority (n=18) of migrant teachers were placed in urban schools in the Gulf compared to only two teachers who taught in a rural school. Fifteen migrant teachers taught in primary schools in the Gulf, three taught in secondary schools and two taught in a combined school (teaching both primary and secondary learners). Migrant teachers have been employed and retained in the host country on contracts depending on the quality of their teaching. Whilst it is evident that they are taking risks in the form of short-term contracts in the Arab Gulf to improve their personal and professional economic wellbeing by giving up their teaching posts in SA, they were prepared to take such risks for the short term benefit of high financial rewards. A participant in Vester's (2018) study stated that she did not stress if her contract in Abu Dhabi was terminated after one year of teaching there which, would then cause her to return to SA to get another teaching post. This was because the amount of money earned in one year in Abu Dhabi was so immense that it would take her five years in SA to earn the same. This means that even she was unemployed in SA for four years; she would still manage financially since the one year's salary in Abu Dhabi offset the duration of her unemployment. Hence teaching in the Arab Gulf has given South African migrant teachers hope for building a secure future despite short term contracts being offered.

### 6.3 The Transnational teacher: Primary school migrant teachers' reasons for moving to the Arab Gulf

There were numerous common reasons amongst the twenty South African primary school migrant teachers for leaving to the Arab Gulf in order to start afresh in a new geographical location abroad. Both push and pull factors were responsible for migrant teachers choosing the Gulf as their destination country. Although the pull from the Gulf, especially Abu Dhabi was greater due to economic advantages. Earning a more rewarding salary (economics) was

seen as a major determining pull factor to the host country. Professional development, personal reasons such as practising their Islamic faith (religion) and travel prospects were also amongst the other pull factors that have drawn the majority of the migrant teachers to the Arab Gulf. These reasons can be categorised according to three levels of reasons as espoused by Castelli (2018), namely micro (religion), meso (social networks - family and friends influencing) and macro (economics, social and political). The above reasons will be elaborated in detail below.

### 6.3.1 Financial Gain: A Pull Factor of the host country

With the weakening of the Rand, the SA currency, almost all the migrant teachers did not hesitate to relocate based on the exchange rate between the Arab Gulf and South African currency. The strong UAE Dirham, the Saudi Riyal, the Kuwaiti Dinar, the Omani Rial and the Qatari Riyal as opposed to SA's diminishing Rand value, translates into a high salary that can be earned in the Arab Gulf (macro driver of migration). This made it worthwhile for the participants to leave their permanent/temporary positions and in some instances, sacrifice time away from loved ones in their home country to teach abroad. The financial bills for South African migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf are minimal with the cost of electricity, gas and water being very affordable. By living in an "oil-producing country means running a car is quite cheap. Tax free wages allow many an opportunity to save a little, travel extensively and still have enough left over to live a very comfortable life" (Tierney, 2015, para. 4). In the present study, migrant teachers were able to go on holidays they would never have dreamed of going on, if they remained in SA. They were feeling 'relatively deprived' (Stark, 1991) as alluded to in the new economics of labour theory and kept comparing their SA salary with what they could be earning in the Gulf. Remittances to the home country was one of the ways South African migrant teachers felt economically successful and they knew that they were financially more secure in the Gulf:

**Remittances**

A common feature amongst migrant teachers was their need to send remittances to SA for their family members who depended on their incomes but they did not disclose how much money was sent home. Bailey (2010) noted that economic remittances are seen as significant resources which can influence economic development and Brown and Connell (in Bailey, 2010, p. 3) further clarified that a "remittance-based economy has greater potential to

contribute to economic development than has hitherto been realised." The trajectory is evident that the money sent home by the South African migrant teachers were to be used to pay for their children's education in the form of school and university fees which would allow them to enter the skilled labour market. Whilst working in SA, migrant teachers felt it difficult to 'make ends meet' and therefore could not afford sending their children to affluent schools or university but by gaining employment in the Gulf, their financial burden has lightened and they can now afford to fulfil their need to provide higher education for their children who would have been deprived had these teachers chosen to remain in SA. Hence, sending money to contribute financially to their families' well-being in SA was seen as imperative in making the financial burden lighter for their loved ones in the home country as well as in a contribution to the development of a skilled labour force.

**Professional recognition**

South African teachers are famous for being passionate about what they do (Manik, 2005). They are known to add significant value to the schools they teach in, often having a wealth of experience and skills in specialist subjects such as Mathematics, Science and English. They also have a reputation for progressing quickly and taking on leadership posts and other roles of responsibility which affirms their value as teachers and improves their "frame of orientation" (Bressler and Rotter, 2017) in the Gulf. In this study, experienced primary school migrant teachers were also leaving to teach critical subjects such as Mathematics, Science and English. Thus, earning a much higher salary in comparison to the amount which they earned in their home country, yielded a sense of professional recognition/value whilst they taught in the Arab Gulf. The high salary earned is equivalent to high professional recognition. This is in keeping with the neoclassical microeconomic and dual labour market theory since migrant teachers were seeking economic returns equivalent to their skills level and migrant teachers from developing SA were migrating to the more developed Arab Gulf region where the pull factors were powerful in attracting them. In respect of social class, individuals compare their "haves and have-nots" (Kraus, Park & Tan, 2017, p. 1); a behaviour that was evident in the present study since the migrant teachers compared what they earned in SA to what they are currently earning in the host countries; categorising themselves into a different social class due to their higher earnings.

An article in the Sunday Times by Govender (2018) reported that “the prospect of earning the equivalent of five years' salary in one year is luring South African teachers to classrooms in the Gulf.” Manuel (in Govender, 2018), a South African union executive director (NAPTOSA) explained that because South African teachers speak English, they are able to find employment easily abroad. He added that respectable teachers who do not feel professionally recognised because of a lack of promotion possibilities in SA, violence in schools not being addressed or poor teaching conditions move to locations abroad such as the Arab Gulf where they rightfully feel professionally empowered as opposed to feeling demoralised.

This was evident in the present study since majority of the South African migrant teachers experienced one or more of the above and therefore did not hesitate to relocate. They gained a higher self-esteem and respect for the teaching profession when they started working in the Arab Gulf because they would partake in weekly professional development sessions and grade specific meetings which uplifted their confidence when teaching in their classrooms. Migrant teachers lacked a feeling of professional empowerment in their home country but gained this in their host country especially upon arrival in the Gulf (I elaborate on this in section in 6.4.1).

**Contractual periods**

Vester’s (2018) study explained that previously migrant teachers were offered two-year contracts in the Arab Gulf countries. However, this has recently been extended to three years and at the end of the initial contract teachers may renew it on a yearly basis. Thus the skills of migrant teachers are clearly in demand in the Gulf. All the migrant teachers in the present study were asked to sign two or three year teaching contracts and in return, the Arab Gulf schools provided them with a vast selection of benefits as part of their salary package. This placed them at risk of becoming unemployed if their contracts were not renewed after two or three years. Besides excellent salaries, migrant teachers are provided with housing, medical insurance and flight allowances for the migrant teacher, spouse and up to three children. A month's salary is offered as a bonus for every year of service, received at the end of the contract period. The financial perks for family and teachers are huge; hence it encourages migrant teachers to keep renewing their teaching contracts.

Contracts can be renewed by mutual consent between the school and the migrant teacher. This was a huge motivating factor that stimulated them to push through their challenges and

hurdles whilst teaching in the Arab Gulf since their main goal was to earn more by teaching abroad. Interestingly, their contracts could be terminated very easily if they did not take care of their jobs and they had to ensure that they teach according to the rules set out by the Arab school management. Caravatti et al (2014, p. 93) noted that migrant teachers are not given enough time to scrutinise the terms of their contract and, "even when time is provided, they generally lack a detailed understanding of the legal framework of the country to which they are being recruited." Migrant teachers' are therefore very vulnerable and once a contract is signed, it often carries with it binding commitments and restrictions.

### 6. 3. 2 Professional reasons: A Push and Pull Factor

A lack of resources in SA, smaller class sizes in the Gulf and the time and need to study further were also reasons why majority of the migrant teachers left SA to teach in the Arab Gulf. Education is a major driver in the decision to migrate, "fuelling the search for a better life" and these migrant teachers were all highly skilled (UNESCO, 2018, p. 10). Education affects migrants' outlooks, ambitions and opinions, and "the degree to which they develop a sense of belonging in their destination" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 10). A more positive outlook and experience in the host country's educational system enables migrant teachers to feel more determined and motivated to make a meaningful difference whilst teaching in the Gulf and the migrant teachers in this study were committed to their profession and providing a quality education. The local nationals are not keen on becoming teachers in the Arab Gulf as it is elsewhere in developed countries as it is not considered a trendy profession. Therefore this creates a space and demand for migrant teachers across the globe and some South African teachers meet their economic and professional needs with their qualifications and years of experience. Migrant teachers left SA due to the following professional reasons:

#### - Lack of Resources

South African primary school teachers have often had to work in challenging environments, with a lack of resources and support in schools in the home country. Migrant teachers had a wealth of resources at their fingertips. This is in keeping with the findings of El-Sanabary (1992, p. 51) that the Arab Gulf has been in the "unique position of having abundant financial resources for education." This has motivated South African teachers to invest more time and

valuable energy into their teaching by preparing exciting lessons through the use of ICT (smart boards, videos, personal classroom access to the Internet) since their home country lacked basic resources. Despite the professional hurdles such as the language barrier, migrant teachers were dedicated to the teaching profession and the Arab Gulf schools. Arab Gulf schools also offer support to migrant teachers and they provide resources for the students to raise their attainment levels.

**- Smaller Class Sizes**

Migrant teachers reported that there was no overcrowding of learners in the Arab classrooms which made it an easier task to cater for the individual needs of learners. With a small number of mixed ability learners, South African migrant teachers could teach with differentiation because they had sufficient time as opposed to teaching in their home country which comprised of the teacher-learner ratio being one is to forty. Learners with additional needs and those in need of more tailored support due to complex learning needs, including behavioural issues could be attended to in groups or individually during class time.

### 6.3.3 Religious reasons: A Pull Factor to the Arab Gulf

A new dimension to the emigration of South African teachers was religion (micro level of migration). Islam is the main religion in the Arab Gulf and majority of the participants were Muslim in the study. South African Muslim migrant teachers "felt a sense of belonging and acceptance when teaching in Abu Dhabi" which is an Islamic country (Vester, 2018, p. 115) and this was also evident in the present study. Louber (2015, p. 21) explained that Islam provides its followers with a set of morals and values which helps and directs their behaviour. A factor encouraging South African migrant teachers to emigrate to the Gulf, was the convenience of travelling to their holy land, Makkah from any Gulf country. Louber's (2015) study found that by living in an Islamic country and performing religious duties like going for the pilgrimage to Makkah made it worthwhile for Muslim migrant teachers to teach in the Gulf. While some South African migrant teacher's main reason was to improve their financial standing, others wanted to work in a country where they could practise their Islamic faith more openly in their holy land.

The religion expects Islamic followers to "act in adherence to the Divine Law as highlighted in the Quran and the Prophetic traditions." One of the ways migrant teachers were able to act in accordance with the Quran, was being able to learn to speak in Arabic so that they can read

the Quran with understanding since it is written in Arabic. A few Muslim migrant teachers cited learning the Arabic language in the Gulf which was an added advantage besides being employed there, hence assisting in acculturation in the host country. Learning to speak the Arabic language is also considered as a "religious duty" (Louber, 2015, p. 16). By being exposed to the language on a daily basis, the South African Muslim migrant teacher's chances of learning the language would be greater than their existing knowledge.

Given Islamophobia, which is defined as an "irrational fear of Muslims" (cited by Beydoun in Bahdi & Kanji, 2018, p. 3) and the fact that the Arab Gulf's dominant religion is Islam, a few South African migrant teachers who were not Muslim were still attracted to the Gulf given the appealing financial incentives. They could still practise their religion by attending church on a Saturday as opposed to a Sunday in their home country since the Arab Gulf's weekend is on a Friday and Saturday. Having churches in a Muslim region, revealed to them that the host countries demonstrated religious tolerance as well and this in turn, encouraged them to relocate to the Arab Gulf.

### 6.3.4 Social Networks

One of the methods that South African migrant teachers' in the study found out about available jobs in the Gulf was through social networks when they spoke to family members or other teachers who taught in the Arab Gulf (meso level according to Castelli's (2018) levels of migration reasons) and this led to chain migration. Friends and family members also referred them to particular recruitment agencies. Recruitment agencies are a new meso level reason for migration in this study, not considered by Castelli (2018). Recruitment agencies constantly advertised available teaching jobs in the Gulf on social media which encouraged South African teachers to apply for positions abroad. However, at times the school principal would avoid the recruitment process via an agency by enlisting the help of existing migrant teachers on the staff to attract others. Portes (2000, in Bartram et al, 2014, p. 59) explained that "social capital refers to one's ability to gain access to valued resources and benefits as a member of a social network." Manik et al (2006) study found that the majority of the South African migrant teachers who were interviewed by recruitment agencies had an existing social network in the UK, either friends or relatives. In this way, participants in the study gained access to information about possible jobs through their social ties such as referrals to specific recruitment agencies or the names of schools that they sent their curriculum vitaes directly to, so as to benefit from their social ties.

*The different categories of movers*

There were no migrant teachers as tied-movers in the present study since all the migrant teachers secured teaching jobs in the Gulf before leaving SA and they did not go to the Gulf on the spouse's strength. A new reason has been theorised from the present study, with the discovery of *unencumbered movers*. *Unencumbered movers* do not bear any burden. They would include single migrant teachers (who have never been married and have no children) and are therefore able to move freely abroad. In the present study, six migrant teachers can be categorised as unencumbered movers. Women are normally categorised as "co-movers" (Bailey & Mulder, 2017, p. 5), a concept also called 'tied movers' by other scholars demonstrating that they are moving abroad because their husbands have secured jobs in other countries. However, the present study found that women are just as highly skilled as men, because the teaching profession is feminised and few migrant teachers' husbands were the tied or co-movers in this study as they had not secured jobs abroad at the time of their departure to the Gulf.

## 6.4 School-based experiences in the Arab Gulf

South African migrant teachers had both positive and negative experiences whilst teaching in the Gulf. The positive area was predominantly in professional environment which included well-resourced classrooms, teaching fewer learners and therefore having the time to provide support to learners who struggled with the English language, promotion opportunities, embracing a new international curriculum and gaining international teaching experience, acquiring teaching knowledge from migrant teachers across the globe and weekly professional development sessions. In contrast, the negative areas of teaching in the Gulf were professional (ill-disciplined learners) and social (uncooperative parents especially in the UAE, racism and xenophobia from the learners). It was also a major culture shock at the beginning of their arrival especially the language barrier with English being the medium of instruction in the recruited schools yet learners were not proficient in the language as it was not their home language.

Kenny (2015) reported in an online article on the experiences of Irish migrants in the UAE which was very similar to South African migrant teachers. She also found that it took Irish migrants at least six months to adjust in the Gulf. Migrant teachers in this study explained that from hearing the call to prayer from the local mosques every few hours, the extreme heat,

or the word "inshallah" (If God wills it) being used, the way of life in the Gulf is very different for them compared to SA. Most of the migrant teachers had more positive experiences and adjustment but only enjoyed the Gulf experience after some time had passed. Majority of the teachers adapted after a few months of teaching in the Gulf but it was not longer than six months to adapt.

### 6.4.1 Professional Life Cycle of South African primary school migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf

Huberman's stages of a teacher's professional life cycle in the teaching career did not apply in the present study. Due to South African migrant teachers starting their professional lives in a different location, they therefore felt like novices in the profession although a majority of them had more than 3 years of teaching experience with an average of 8 years of teaching experience. Migrant teachers' professional experiences from this study, can be segmented not according to their total years in the profession but according to the months and years in their new professional context, namely that of the Gulf. The figure below is based on the context of South African teachers migrating to the Arab gulf countries based on a two or three year teaching contract:

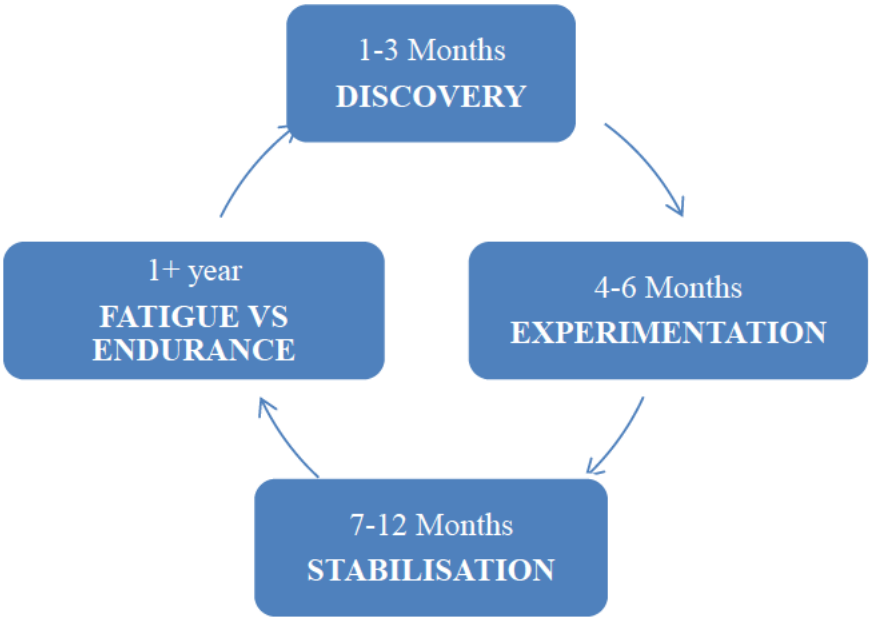



**Figure 13: Professional Life Cycle of SA migrant teachers in the Arab Gulf**

The stages of the professional life cycle of the SA migrant teachers (as shown in Figure 13) are explained in detail below of how their career transition took place in the Arab Gulf over the duration of their teaching contracts.

**Stage 1: Discovery (1-3 months)**

SA migrant teachers felt like beginner teachers upon arrival in the Gulf because their experiences entailed learning a completely new curriculum and methods of teaching together apart from many unanticipated challenges. Some migrant teachers discovered that they were no longer going to teach the grade they initially signed up for prior to relocating to the Gulf and this stressed them. For example, having no experience in the Foundation Phase and having to teach the local Arab learners English as their second language in the lower age group was a daunting task for three migrant teachers. They attended the induction and mentoring sessions in the first week with great enthusiasm to strengthen their teaching skills and discover new ways of teaching ESL learners which assisted with gaining pedagogic skills.

Although all of the migrant teachers had a minimum of two years of South African teaching experience, teaching English to Arabic and rural Bedouin learners for the first time was a perplexing task for the majority of the migrant teachers. The language barrier between the migrant teachers and the learners as well as the local school staff created difficulties in communication. Some were fearful that they might not be able to teach in the Arab Gulf because they had become overwhelmed with their new teaching experiences. Every day was a new learning experience and while some migrant teachers such as Jayde, Samantha and Teysha started to get a grip of the school culture whereby learners struggle with English and will only concentrate if lessons are made simple to understand, others kept re-discovering problematic issues and hoped the months ahead would make their stay better.

**Stage 2: Experimentation (4-6 months)**

After three months in the Gulf, most migrant teachers got more comfortable and were willing to experiment with what works and what would not work regarding teaching strategies and discipline measures. The experimentation stage in Huberman's (1989) theory fell under stage 3 and was experienced between seven to twenty five years, however, in the present study; South African migrant teachers experimented after three months in the Gulf which therefore makes it Stage 2. They were afforded regular classroom visits by the school management to let them know how well they were delivering their lessons and what areas needed improvement. This motivated them to experiment with their teaching methodology and use

their prior South African knowledge to their advantage in order to get good scores for their lesson critique.

Given the plentiful resources which they lacked in the home country and felt that they were being deprived of, they could now experiment with fun and interactive lessons using 'state of the art' technology. They also formed professional relationships with migrant teachers from across the globe, sharing ideas of the best curriculum delivery practices and common issues which they experienced in the classroom.

**Stage 3: Stabilisation (7-12 months)**

This stage encompassed professional and economic stability. During the second half of the academic year, SA migrant teachers felt more confident and better experienced pedagogically in the host countries. They learnt the school routine and understood their learners' barriers to learning and they could cater for the learners' support needs through a teaching strategy called differentiation. Migrant teachers also voiced that it was not completely 'a bed of roses' but they discussed their difficulties with their colleagues during grade meetings to find commonalities and strategies to remedy the problems. They were excited about getting to travel to holiday destinations that they could not afford previously as well as sending remittances home and this made them feel more financially stable.

**Stage 4: Fatigue vs. Endurance (1+ year)**

After a year in the Arab Gulf and towards the end of their two year teaching contracts, 25% (n=5) of the SA migrant teachers articulated that they were drained by their stay in the Arab Gulf. They had become mentally and emotionally fatigued by the learners' poor behaviour, low literacy levels, the language barrier in getting across to the local Arab teachers and learners. Delivering the curriculum according to their grade level was not deemed satisfactory since many of the local learners were below the expected grade levels as well. Frustration and a change of career were the feelings verbalised by the migrant teachers who worked in Abu Dhabi particularly. Although Abu Dhabi pays migrant teachers better in comparison to the other Gulf countries, the professional identity and resilience of teachers is highly tested in very difficult circumstances. They felt that they were becoming redundant in the teaching profession as they could no longer see a positive impact being made on the local learners. The rest of the migrant teachers endured their feelings of loneliness which stemmed from not

making enough friends on the staff and hardships such as dealing with the learners bad behaviour as well as the language barrier by thinking about the financial incentive that initially brought them to the Gulf.

### 6.4.2 Racism and Xenophobia

Racial discrimination based on skin colour, hair and foreign accent was experienced by a few migrant teachers. Local Arab learners picked on migrant teachers by elucidating bad behaviour in the classrooms because they did not look 'white' or Arab. Jureidini's (2005, p. 49) study noted that in Arabic, "the term 'Abed' is used to denote both a 'black' person and a 'slave' and it can still be heard with reference to Africans and Sri Lankans." He explained that it is in this light that black (African) migrants and Asians (such as South African Indian teachers) are "physically distinguished and often looked upon as inferior or simply ignored or dismissed in the Middle East." Similarly, Reid et al (2013) and Miller's (2008) studies revealed racial discrimination against migrant teachers. The migrant teachers in this study were regarded as desperate for jobs and lower class if they were Black or Asian and darker in complexion as well as if they could speak fluent English which made it easy for the local Arab learners to differentiate between an Arab local national or a migrant worker.

The female migrant teachers also experienced more behavioural problems compared to the male teachers because they were seen as being 'softer' in their approach to discipline. Hence, gender discrimination was also evident in the Arab Gulf. Migrant teachers also noticed feelings of xenophobia from the local Arab teachers who showed resistance towards making them feel comfortable, by not offering assistance in the school environment. This was because they were unhappy by the number of migrant teachers occupying teaching posts in their country, with the mind-set that migrant teachers were taking away the local nationals jobs which would reduce the number of available posts available to locals.

### 6.4.3 Poor Discipline in schools in the host country

South African migrant teachers needed support to adapt to a new professional environment in the Arab Gulf. The inability of the local Arab learners to grasp the English language easily in various subjects and particularly in Abu Dhabi, led them to behave poorly in the host country. The learners became bored and therefore bunked lessons, spoke unnecessarily and

disrespected the migrant teachers. In addition, being pampered at home by their parents and given freedom since many learners lacked parental supervision and were looked after by nannies, created bad classroom behaviour.

An interesting finding from the study was that the local learners undermined and treated migrant teachers with a lack of respect. Peterson's (2016) study added that due to the Arab Gulf's expansion of schools and the increase in the number of learners admitted to schools, an increase in the demand for teachers was required. Migrant teachers from Jordan, Egypt and Palestine were requested to fill the gaps for teacher demand since local nationals were not keen on taking up the teaching profession. His study found that although the migrant teachers were paid more than in their home country, the host nation (Arab Gulf) regarded them as "servants" since the teaching profession ranks low in job aspirations of national citizens (Peterson, 2016, p. 308). Local learners in Abu Dhabi categorised teaching as a low-status career and this contributed to their disrespect towards the South African migrant teachers.

The triumph of any international teacher recruitment depends heavily on socio-cultural orientation and professional development. South African teachers were familiar with the teaching and learning cultures of their home country and were surprised with the environment to which they were introduced, for example, classroom management was difficult and a major challenge that hindered their teaching. The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report explained that "increased diversity in classrooms has challenges …but it also offers opportunities to learn from other cultures and experiences" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 10). Hence, it is important for recruited teachers to receive on-going support to ensure that they are able to be as effective as possible in the classroom.

### 6.4.4 Teaching English to Arabic first language learners

Arabic and Islam are vital components of the Arab Gulf nation. However, through globalisation, English seems to be playing a rising importance, particularly in education, which poses a number of problems in terms of the Arabic and Islamic identity. Louber (2015, p. 41) stated that as English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, many Western Muslims who choose to migrate to teach English in the Gulf act as "active agents of westernisation and hegemony." Morrow (2007, in Louber, 2015, p. 11) explained that because the Arabic

language and the Islamic faith are inseparable, the various language "policies in place in the Arab world resulting from globalisation and the global spread of English constitute a threat to Arabic and Islamic identity. He also explains that by trying to learn a new language" by eliminating Arabic (or Islam), Muslim learners become secular which separates them from their religion.

South African migrant teachers taught English to international and local learners in private schools in Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar whereas the migrant teachers who taught in Abu Dhabi (UAE), taught local learners in public schools. ADEC is the governing body for educational institutions in the UAE. They seek to improve the level of English being taught in government primary and secondary schools across the region by employing migrant teachers from across the globe. South African teachers in the study were placed within either of these schools, both in the Abu Dhabi city and out in the desert. For many migrant teachers, it is a very challenging, daunting and slow changing professional system to work in, as the local Arab learners are resistant to learning English as their second language since they only use it in their classrooms. Teaching in private schools, however, is more systematic and structured, with routines easily set and maintained so some migrant teachers enjoyed teaching English to the learners who were eager to learn.

### 6.4.5 Striking a Balance – Money versus Happiness

Earning more money does not engender happiness abroad. Miller (in Govender, 2018) from SA-recruitment, a Cape Town teacher-placement agency, stated that "most of the candidates who apply with our agency request to teach in Abu Dhabi specifically. The draw cards would have to be the tax-free salaries which can range from $2,500 to $4,000- plus this all depends on experience and qualifications." When the migrant teachers left SA, they wanted to earn much more money and enjoy the lavish benefits offered to them such as free medical insurance, housing and furniture allowance. However, some migrant teachers revealed that after spending time in the Gulf countries, they realised that 'money couldn't buy them happiness'. They had become worn out and discouraged by the teaching profession due to their failure to make a difference in the classroom and the lack of respect given to them as migrant teachers by the local learners.

The salary earned no longer gave them job satisfaction and two migrant teachers were going to return to SA after their teaching contract ended because they very unhappy. This is similar to Berry's (1997) study which revealed that migrant teachers tend to 'separate' themselves from the host country when they cannot adapt to the new environment. Adams (2015b, para. 8) reported that "once you reach an equilibrium where you can cover your expenses, put away some savings and pay for nice things like generous gifts, nice furniture and vacations, you can spare energy to think about other important parts of your job." Hence, after spending months in the Gulf, migrant teachers had time to think about their professional growth and they realised that they were not growing and learning much more, so thoughts of not renewing contracts and returning to SA were in the minds of five migrant teachers. Flexibility and a work life balance were important for SA migrant teachers. Professional contentment leads to personal happiness but not all migrant teachers felt satisfied with teaching abroad so they had to weigh their happiness against the money earned in the Gulf. In comparison, it was a second migration abroad to teach for five migrant teachers in this study because they wanted to maintain the high salary earned abroad by relocating to the Arab Gulf despite missing their families and friends in SA.

### 6.4.6 South African visitors in the host country: Less Complaining and more Embracing

These were the sentiments expressed by many of the migrant teachers trying to remain positive in a very challenging Arab environment. In order to have a successful stay in the Gulf, it was important to try not to compare the Arab Gulf with SA, which migrant teachers found difficult to do. Migrant teachers at the beginning of their teaching contracts were not happy about a few matters upon arrival in the Gulf such as the method of assessing the local Arab learners and the use of the Arabic language during morning staff briefings. They realised that as visitors in the host country, they did not have a choice but to be tolerant and understanding to their schools' culture and traditions even though it did not make sense most times. If they complained, they were afraid to be disliked or their contract gets terminated, hence they followed the school rules and policies set out for teachers.

## 6.5 Recommendations from findings

It is recommended that South African universities focus their curriculum and preparation of teachers for a diverse teaching context, and not only for the school contexts within SA but also beyond SA borders, taking cognisance of the professional, socio-economic and educational conditions abroad as well, so that graduating teachers are better able to acclimatise should they choose to emigrate and work abroad.

For South African primary school migrant teachers who are teaching in the Arab Gulf, a recommendation from their school-based experiences is that schools and agencies abroad provide adequate initial personal and professional support so that they are able to cope during the first six months at school and in a different society.

Host school management could provide mentoring support at the school and or twin SA teachers with colleagues from neighbouring schools for enhanced professional support and development.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) in SA including private schools should consider the following recommendations listed below in order to retain in the long term and better manage primary school teachers in SA. In this study, the interventions are seen as important so that SA migrant teachers can leave and then return to the system because they have gained in knowledge and experience and will thus be an asset to their schools on their return (as stated by Manik, 2005):

- Create security and happiness in the home country schools (both public and private) by making the teaching environment safer.

- Improve the attractiveness of teaching profession as listed in the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (CTRP)

- SA has to allocate and invest more finances towards professional resources and ICT as well as training teachers to become better equipped to use these resources. South African primary school teachers are dependent on technological resources to teach younger learners in primary schools since children remember visuals and prefer more interactive lessons. This will encourage them to look forward to planning exciting lessons.

- A smaller class size provides teachers with more opportunities to interact with learners which creates a warmer professional ethos and it ensures quality teaching.

- Strategies to retain teachers in the home country should aim to nurture collegial interactions, address teachers' workload, respond to their needs for job security, and provide adequate opportunities such as promotion within teaching.

- South African management policies need to recognise and relieve the high work load which some teachers have, for example, by employing teacher assistants, and to regulate and ensure equality among the workloads in the different levels of teaching professionals such as teacher, HOD, deputy principal and principal to maintain morale, and invest in professional development.

## 6.6 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore SA primary school migrant teachers' reasons for migrating to the Arab Gulf countries and their school-based experiences in these Arab Gulf countries. At the beginning, the financial incentive pulled migrant teachers to the Gulf but ultimately, money was not sufficient to ensure happiness as their professional identity was being constantly altered. Whilst some migrant teachers had become frustrated and demotivated, others endured the hardships because of the lucrative salary which they earned every month. Most significantly, there is the need to capacitate South African primary school managers to influence school characteristics and conditions positively so that teachers are satisfied in their local schools.

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**APPENDIX A**

**First Interview for South African migrant teachers:**

**School-based experiences of South African primary school migrant teachers' in the first six months of their teaching contracts in the Arab Gulf countries**

**Demographic Data:**

**Male/ Female: _____ Marital Status: _____**

**Age: _____ Race/ Ethnicity: _____**

**Nationality: _____ Qualification/s: _____**

**Circle the correct alternative: Teaching at a Public primary school/ Public secondary school in the Gulf?**

**1. Where about in South Africa have you been teaching in a primary school?**

_____

**2. How long have you taught in South Africa?**

_____

**3. What is your qualification and teaching specialisations?**

_____

_____

**4. What phase, grades (including the age group in that grade) and subjects have you been teaching at your last primary school in South Africa?**

_____

_____

**5. Did you hold a permanent or temporary post in South Africa and indicate the Post Level (1 - teacher, 2 -HOD, 3 - Deputy Principal or 4 - Principal)?**

_____

_____

**6. What is the name of the Arab Gulf country that you have migrated to?**

_____

**7. What subject/s are you teaching?**

_____

**8.1. Is this your first migration? Yes / no**

**8.2. Why is it that you opted to leave South Africa for a teaching career abroad? Also, explain what was the trigger reason/s that motivated you to leave.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**9. Why have you selected to teach specifically in an Arab Gulf Country?**

_____

_____

_____

**10. Why in particular to the _____ (Abu Dhabi, for example)?**

_____

_____

**11. For what length of time have you been teaching in the Gulf?**

_____

**12. Is this your first teaching post in the Gulf?**

_____

**13. Does your qualification allow you to teach in both a primary and high school or only one?**

_____

**14. Explain the incentives that have led you to take on a teaching job in the Gulf?**

_____

_____

**15. How many schools have you taught at thus far, since your arrival in the Gulf?**

_____

**16.1. Have you undertaken any other jobs since your arrival apart from teaching? _____**

**16.2. If yes to the above question, please state the job and explain why you needed to engage in it?**

_____

_____

**17. For what length of time have you been teaching in this primary/secondary school?**

_____

**18. What phase or cycle are you teaching (including their age group in that grade) and what subjects do you teach?**

_____

_____

**19. How long is your contract? Explain**

_____

_____

**20. What are some of your key experiences of teaching in the Gulf in the first six months thus far [personal and professional interactions with staff (including management) and students]?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**APPENDIX B**

**Second Interview for South African migrant teachers:**

**School-based experiences of South African primary school teachers' after six months of teaching in the Arab Gulf countries**

**1. Approximately how long did it take you to adapt to the local school context?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**2. What are some of your key experiences of teaching in the Gulf after six months of teaching [personal and professional interactions with staff (including management) and students]?**

**2.1. Do you enjoy teaching in the Gulf now in comparison to when you first arrived?**

_____

_____

_____

**2.2. Would you say that you have adapted to the teaching environment? Yes/ No?**

**Explain.**

_____

_____

_____

**2.3. Would you like your contract to be renewed? Yes/ no. Explain.**

_____

_____

_____

**2.4.1 What are some of your current teaching experiences?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**2.4.2 Are they different to your previous experiences when you first arrived? Yes/ No. Explain and provide some examples.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**APPENDIX C**

**Focus Group Discussion:**

Example of FGD 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date** | **18 November 2017 (Saturday)** |
| **Place of meeting** | **Skype interview** |
| **Time** | **10h00 (CAT)** |
| **Duration** | **90 minutes** |
| **Number of participants** | **3** |
| **Topic for discussion** | **South African primary school, migrant teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries.** |

**Ice breaker: Introductions**

- Where about are you teaching in the Gulf?
- What subjects and grades are you currently teaching?

**Rules for engagement in the FG**

Participants can agree or disagree with one another, add to comments or views.

**Two separate artefact discussions**

First part of the discussion entails each participant describing:

- How long it took you to adjust in Abu Dhabi? How many months?
- One artefact that exemplifies your teaching experiences in your first ____ months (depending on the number of months given in the above question)? Why?

  *Tony:*

  *Feroza:*

  *Kelly*:
- One artefact that exemplifies your teaching experiences after _____ months?

  *Kelly:*

  *Feroza:*

  *Tony:*

Second part of the discussion is on your common teaching experiences in the Gulf

**Key issues to be discussed: Common Experiences derived from the individual interviews for in-depth discussion**

**Issue 1: Problem of communicating with the local Arab children in class**

**Issue 2: Rude, bad behaviour of most learners and there are no consequences for their actions**

**Issue 3: No support from the school management**

**Issue 4: As an expat teacher, learners look down upon you**

**APPENDIX D**

**Diary: Open narrative**

**Date:**
**Diary entry:**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

4 May 2016

**Mrs Lucille-Dawn Naidoo 206500599**
**School of Education**
**Edgewood Campus**

**Dear Mrs Naidoo**

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0406/016D**
**Project Title: South African migrant primary school teachers' school based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries**

**Full Approval – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received 21 April 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

**The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.**

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**
**Humanitities & Social Scinces Research Ethics Committee**

**/pm**

Cc Supervisor: Dr Sadhana Manik
Cc. Academic Leader: DR SB Mkhize
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

**Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**
**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building**
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**Website:** www.ukzn.ac.za

## APPENDIX F

Social Sciences Cluster, School of Education
Edgewood Campus,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,

**PROJECT TITLE:**

**South African migrant primary school teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries.**

**Dear Participant**

My name is Lucille-Dawn Anganoo. I am an Education PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I am conducting my PhD research that aims to understand South African migrant primary school teachers' school-based experiences in the Arab Gulf countries which include UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

To gather the information, I am interested in asking you some questions.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the challenges of your community relating to resource scarcity, peoples' movement, and effects on peace.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded:

| | Willing | Not willing |
|---|---|---|
| Skype interview | | |
| Focus group discussion | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Diary | | |
| Pictures | | |

I can be contacted at:
Email: anganoo_lu@yahoo.com
Cell: +27833826088

My supervisor is Dr. S. Manik who is located at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
Contact details - email: manik@ukzn.ac.za  Phone number: +27312603706.

You may also contact the Research Office through:
P. Mohun
HSSREC Research Office,
Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT  DATE

……

……