



Demographic Profiles for Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Expatriates in Nigeria

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Abstract. This paper offers insight into the demographic profiles of expatriates for successful cross-cultural adjustments in the context of Nigeria. It considers the following demographics: age, gender, marital status, international work experience, and time spent in the host country. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research by utilizing a questionnaire to collect data from one hundred and fifty-two (152) expatriate residents in Nigeria, who relocated from 22 different countries and who have worked and lived in Nigeria for over six months. The paper discovered that marital status, international work experience, and length of stay in Nigeria rather than age and gender are the demographic profiles influencing and required for the successful cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in the Nigerian context. It concludes that the more organizations recruit, select, and deploy expatriates whose demographic profiles reflect the higher length of stay/time in Nigeria, higher level of international work experience, and single/unmarried, the higher the successful cross-cultural adjustment of such expatriates in the Nigerian context.

Keywords: age, gender, international experience, psychological adjustment, sociological adjustment

JEL Classification: M, M12, M16, M54, N3 N30, 015

1. Introduction

Skilled expatriates remain the most valuable assets utilized by foreign-owned organizations in Nigeria in developing the competencies of local employees, coordinating the establishment of new ventures, transferring technological knowledge, and stimulating the standardization of products (Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015). Unfortunately, many of the expatriates recruited, relocated, and deployed to perform such strategic roles in Nigeria were reported to have failed to complete

a time-based assignment occasioned by unsatisfying work settings, difficulty in communicating/interacting with the local hosts, exposure to different climate conditions, and difficulties to adjust well to the sociocultural conditions of Nigeria (Costa, Cunha, and Rego, 2014; Okpara, 2016; Heirsmac, Edwin, Agumadu, and Ohaegbu, 2015). This confirmed the Global Relocation Services (2016) report on expatriation that 40% to 70% of expatriates relocated and deployed to foreign locations across the globe usually experience maladjustment to the foreign assignment destination every year.

Consistent with theoretical and practical relevance, the failure of expatriates to psychologically adjust and perform well in foreign assignments may be contingent upon mismatching the demographics of the expatriates to the host location's social-cultural and work conditions. This assumption is based on a person–culture fit theory suggesting that demographics (differences in biological and physical make-ups among individuals), which are associated with unnoticeable personality traits, are personal resources enabling an individual to cope with the stress of living, working, and interacting in a difficult environment. Matching expatriates' demographics to the host location's sociocultural and work conditions tends to reduce maladjustment and its consequences on cognitive, psychological, and behavioural withdrawals from the foreign assignments (Stoermer, Haslberger, Froese, and Kraeh, 2018).

Extant studies (Salamin and Davoine, 2015; Selmer & Luring, 2013b, Nolan and Morley, 2014) have over time validated the theoretical assumption of person–culture fit that the greater the fit between expatriates' demographics and the host country's sociocultural values, the greater the psychological adjustment and the higher the intention to complete foreign assignments. They profiled expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment according to demographics for relocation, selection, and recruitment purposes. But demographic profiles of expatriates for successful cross-cultural adjustments and performance were conflicting across countries.

This conflicting evidence, therefore, called for the scholarly attention of Okpara (2016) and Eze and Awolusi (2018), who revisited the influence of demographics on expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment/performance in the Nigerian context to debunk or confirm existing findings and draw practitioners' attention to the demographic profiles of expatriates that are required for their success and adjustment to Nigeria. However, Okpara (2016) and Eze and Awolusi (2018) focused only on age, gender, and the previous work experience of expatriates, with little or no attention paid on how marital status, international work experience, and time spent in the host country directly influence expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in Nigeria. It is on the basis of these gaps that this study is being carried out to examine the influence of demographics (marital status, international work experience, time spent in the host country, age, gender) on expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in Nigeria.

Section 2 of this paper covers conceptual reviews on cross-cultural adjustment and its dimensions. Section 3 reviews extant literature focusing on demographics and their influence on expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. Section 4 contains the theoretical framework of the paper. Section 5 highlights the methodology adopted. Section 6 presents the results and discussions. Section 7 contains the discussion of findings, while section 8 covers the conclusions and policy implications of the findings of the paper.

2. Literature Review on Expatriates' Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment is used interchangeably with expatriates' intercultural adjustment, expatriates' intercultural adaptations, expatriates' cross-cultural adaptation, or expatriates' acculturation in cross-cultural management literature. It is a broad term, lacking a specific or standard definition. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) specifically hold that expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment is not a one-dimensional (adjustment to the work and host residents as well as the general environment) concept but a multi-dimensional (adjustment to the general environment, work, and host nationals) concept given that expatriates can get adjusted well to weather conditions, languages, the standard of living, and interactions with host nationals and yet (at the same time) maladjusted to new work roles in the foreign assignments. Searle and Ward (1990) concur that cross-cultural adjustment is a multi-dimension concept embedded in psychological and social-cultural adjustments.

Psychological adjustment is the degree to which expatriates are comfortable and happy living in a new culture (Demes and Geeraert, 2014). This is concerned with and related to overall satisfaction with living conditions in the new environment and the subjective well-being experienced by expatriates in residing and living in the host culture (Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova, 2005). Psychological adjustment focuses more on the attitudes and feelings among expatriates, which corresponds to the hypothetical concept of subjective well-being and contentment with regard to various aspects of life in the host culture (Sterle, Vervoort, and Verhofstadt, 2018). Over time, this has been measured using a subjective well-being scale, which contains several questions concerning how people are feeling and enjoying everyday experiences (Selmer and Luring, 2009; Selmer and Luring, 2014), are comfortable with and feel at home in the assigned country (Shaffer and Harrison, 2001), the amount of cultural stress and strains, including anxiety, helplessness, and irritability experience in the host country, which usually result in homesickness and longing for the more predictable and gratifying environment (Selmer and Luring, 2014).

Sociocultural adjustment is an expatriate's capability to successfully adjust to daily life and work conditions in the host locality (Ward and Kennedy, 2001). It involves the amount of ease in coping with a host country's living, working, and interacting conditions (Hemmasi and Downes, 2013). Social-cultural adjustment is the extent to which expatriates fit into the work and general environment of the host culture (Aycaan, 1997) or the ability or inability to fit in, effectively negotiate, and integrate into everyday life situations. It is grounded within the learning paradigm derived from sociocultural learning theory that emphasizes practical social skills, social behaviours, and the ability for adapting and coping with the culture shock, which occurs when one changes from one culture (work norms, friends, and living conditions) to another one that may be unfamiliar and demanding (Ong and Ward, 2005). Social-cultural adjustment corresponds more to the practical and behavioural parts of adapting to a new job, the language of host nationals, and living conditions, including weather, food, health facilities, security, and public utilities encountered in the host country (Malo, Tremblay, and Brunet, 2015).

Cross-cultural adjustments have also been categorized based on work, general, and interaction adjustment to enable content analysis and the easier development of measurement scales and to enable practitioners to focus on the specific characteristics of the social-cultural environment of the host country, which expatriates are less or more adjusted to for intervention purposes. Adjustment to the General Living Environment is the degree to which expatriates cognitively and psychologically adapt to and are comfortable with living conditions: for example, housing conditions, healthcare, and the cost of living in the host country (Nolan and Morley, 2014). It is the successful adaptation to and the satisfaction derived from the pattern of shopping for goods and obtaining services, store opening and closing hours, the common language of the people, security situations, transport systems, power supply, social and family relations, the nature and quality of food, policies and programmes of host countries, public life, order and conducts in a host country, religious beliefs and value systems of the host country as well as customs, social relations, and family relations in the host country (Haslberger, Brewster, and Hippler, 2013). It is the degree to which expatriates experience a state of happiness with the new environment or experience subjective well-being in the new cultures and cognitively adapt to living conditions, work challenges, and the cultural norms, values, and styles of social interaction in the host country (Searle and Ward, 1990).

Adjustment to work conditions is a cognitive adaptation to work demands in the host countries as well as a psychological comfort experienced among expatriates with various aspects of work (Selmer and Lauring, 2011a). Assessments are often made with respect to: how well expatriates are coping with and adapting to supervisory and job responsibilities; work roles and procedures (Zhang and

Oczkowski, 2016); the derived satisfaction in meeting work-related demands of the foreign assignments. The adjustment to social interactions is the degree to which expatriates have cognitively adapted to and are psychologically comfortable in developing an interpersonal exchange, interacting and relating with host locals in work and non-work settings (Selmer and Luring, 2014). This is also about the amount of positive/negative moods that expatriates obtain from communicating with host nationals, developing interpersonal relationships, and socializing with host nationals (Varma, Pichler, Budhwar, and Kupferer, 2012). The adjustment to social interaction is the extent to which expatriates integrate themselves into host culture identities (styles of communication, local language as well as behaviours, gestures, and stories of the host nationals) (Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh, and Tangirala, 2010), which has been addressed by intercultural communication including an effective understanding of the language, interacting with the language, and the effective tailoring of communication (Mordi, 2017).

Haslberger, Brewster, and Hippler (2013) assert that cross-cultural adjustment is not only a cognitive and psychological/emotional response but also a behavioural response among expatriates to the standard of living in the host country, host nationals, and job demands in the host environment. The behavioural adjustment is the acceptance or withdrawal from foreign assignments or early return to the home country (before the time originally planned), which is used to gauge an expatriate's failure in a global assignment (Haslberger et al., 2013). It also involves being alienated from the general environment (food, climate, living conditions, health facilities) in host cultures; working conditions (job tasks, roles, and responsibility) in the host culture, and social interactions, including the communication pattern and common language of host nationals in work and non-work settings in a foreign culture (Jannesari, Wang, McCall, and Zheng, 2017). Behavioural adjustment is occasioned by the experience of the negative emotional state resulting from a negative evaluation of host cultures (Hippler, Caligiuri, and Johnson, 2014), and it has been studied over time from the angle of premature return from foreign assignments, usually measured with expatriates' intentions to return earlier from a foreign assignment or foreign location.

3. Demographics and Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Expatriates

Demographics are associated with differences in biological and physical make-up among individuals. They are associated with gender, age, education, location, life experience, language ability, and marital status among others. This study, therefore, focuses on gender, age, marital status, international experience, and time spent in Nigeria.

Gender: Men and women tend to be characterized by different unnoticeable personality traits. This is given that men are assertive, competitive (focused on material success), aggressive, and emotionally stable, while women tend to be considerate, sensitive, emotionally unstable, and social activity-seeking in general. In the light of this, women are likely to experience low psychological adjustment levels in masculine cultures and experience high psychological adjustment in feminine cultures, while men are likely to fit in and experience psychological adjustment in masculine countries/cultures unlike in feminine cultures. This suggests that gender moderates the relationship between the cultural distance and cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates to host culture. Caligiuri and Tung (1999) empirically confirmed that men adjusted better to masculine and uncertainty avoidance countries but adjusted in an equal measure with women in feminine cultures, using data from 98 expatriates of American origin in Asia, Europe, and South America.

Sinangil and Ones (2003) revealed that the performance of male and female expatriates in Turkey is not statistically different. This confirms the findings of Fisher and Härtel (2003) that gender is not important in determining the success of expatriates in Thailand, using data collected from 30 females and 25 males. Luring and Selmer (2015) further empirically revealed that, except for job performance, males and females are not significantly different in the level of time to proficiency, job satisfaction, and adjustment to foreign cultures – data collected from 1,215 academic staff in 35 higher institutions in five Northern European countries. Similarly, Bastida (2018) demonstrated that females and males experienced the same levels in all the criteria for measuring success in foreign assignments. Empirical studies in Nigeria by Heirsmac (2015) and Eze and Awolusi (2018) further revealed that gender does not significantly explain the dimensions of adjustments and success in performance among expatriates in Nigeria. Even when males made up the majority of the expatriate population, Heirsmac (2015) and Eze and Awolusi (2018) concluded that the performance of males is not significantly different from that of females in a foreign assignment. These findings are, however, contrary to those of Okpara's (2016) study, which revealed that gender significantly influences the predictors of adjustment in Nigeria.

Making use of data on expatriates and their partners living in the UK, the US, and Spain, Haslberger (2010) also empirically showed that women generally tend to be better adjusted than men and are mostly ahead in contextual performance. Selmer and Leung (2003) also revealed that female SIE (self-initiated expatriate) academics perform better than their male counterparts – using data from 309 male and 79 female expatriates in Hong Kong – even when female and male business expatriates were significantly different in all of the six personal characteristics (age, tenure in parent's organization, length of stay in a host country, position and international experience, previous expatriate assignment, and marital status). Using data from 152 expatriates

from thirty countries, Salamin and Davoine (2015) further report that, except adjustment to the general environment, female expatriates adjusted better to social interaction and work. Selmer and Luring (2011b) also confirmed that males are less adjusted to social interaction and work in a foreign assignment as compared to females. Against this backdrop, it is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H₁: female expatriates experience a greater cross-cultural adjustment than male expatriates in Nigeria.

Age: age denotes the number of years one has lived. It is associated with greater self-control, sensitivity to ethical behaviours, and an increase in symbolic characteristics, especially in collectivist cultures (Asian and African societies), where respect for old age is particularly emphasized and perceived as high-quality personal resources (Selmer, Luring, and Feng, 2009). Exploring the role of self-control associated with age in the adjustment of expatriates to a foreign culture, Luring and Selmer (2018) demonstrate that self-control (discipline) tends to be more intense in older people than in younger ones, which has a significant positive impact on adjustment outcomes, including job performance, and negatively influences time to proficiency.

Moreover, growing older has also been revealed to increase sensitivity to ethical behaviours. This is especially valid in corruption, which in turn is revealed to influence adjustment to the host culture (Costa, Cunha, and Rego, 2014) because age is linked to greater lifelong learning, increase in self-cultivation, and greater sensitivity to unethical behaviour. Selmer and Luring (2013a) further revealed that as age increases the possession of high-quality personal resources increases too, which in turn impacts on the ability to adjust and perform well in the Chinese cultural setting. They recommended that organizations should not discriminate against older job applicants when using age in expatriates' selection in the context of China. This finding aligned with Okpara's (2016) from an empirical study conducted in Nigeria that age influences expatriates' adjustment in Nigeria. They also confirmed the content analysis of Mohr and Klein (2004) showing that older expatriates and older spouses reported a favourable adjustment to the host country's living conditions and higher satisfaction than younger spouses during the overseas assignment.

However, an increase in age may result in biological and psychological changes that may alter the physical strength, meta cognitive ability, and performance of the individual. In this regard, extant literature, including Fonseca, Dias, Baptista, and Torgal (2017), revealed that psychological distress increased with age among the three hundred and fifty-two Portuguese civil expatriates working and living in Angola and Mozambique. Eze and Awolusi's (2018) investigation on the critical challenges faced by expatriates in the Nigerian oil and gas sector also discovered that those expatriates who are younger and more experienced perform better. Okpara (2010) also found that age significantly influences expatriates' cross-cultural

adjustment in Nigeria. On the contrary, Lauring and Selmer (2015) showed that age does not play a significant role in the work outcomes (work performance, work effectiveness, and work adjustment) of expatriates. Similarly, Fisher and Härtel (2003) collected data from 30 females and 25 males and revealed that age was not important in determining the success of expatriates in Thailand. It is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H₂: the younger the expatriates, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment in the context of Nigeria.

Marital Status: this indicates whether the investigated individuals are married, single, divorced, separated, or living with a partner in a foreign location. Examining the influence of marital status, Selmer and Lauring (2011b) showed that married western expatriates who relocated with their spouses tend to fare better, are more satisfied with their lives in a host country, and are healthier physically and psychologically than their unmarried and married peers who have not relocated with their spouses to Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Japan.

Lauring and Selmer (2015) further rate married expatriates higher than their unmarried peers for work performance and effectiveness. These findings supported the crossover theory indicating that spouses' sense of well-being (psychological adjustment) in a new culture spilled over into expatriates' adjustment, better effectiveness, and performance – especially among expatriates assigned to culturally and linguistically distant countries. However, the failure of a spouse to adjust well to a foreign country is usually harmful to the performance and adjustment of expatriates, and it is the most common cause of premature termination of the assignment (Shaffer and Harrison, 2001). The effect is stronger in male expatriate spouses given that female expatriate spouses receive more adjustment supports from organizations unlike the male spouses, who receive little or no adjustment support from organizations (Shaffer and Harrison, 2001).

Moreover, it has been demonstrated that married expatriates experience more difficulty in adjusting to foreign locations when their spouses find it difficult to get a job in the host culture. Often occasioned by host language barriers, visa and work permit restrictions as well as lack of marketable skills, educational/professional qualifications (Lazarova, McNulty, and Semeniuk, 2015), the inability of expatriates' spouses to get the desired job in foreign countries makes them lose their self-esteem (Shaffer and Harrison, 2001). This is especially true in cases when they were gainfully employed in their home country before relocating with their spouse. The changes in the identity of spouses tend to create conflicts in the family, which in turn spills over into expatriates' adjustment to a foreign assignment. This has been empirically supported when a study revealed that dramatic changes in the identity of expatriates' spouses from being gainfully employed in the home country to becoming caregivers or housekeepers in a foreign country mediate the effect of marital status on expatriates' adjustment to the host culture (Lazarova,

McNulty, and Semeniuk, 2015) because unemployment can make people feel frustrated, insecure, depressed, and anxious about their careers. Lazarova et al. (2009) and Lazarova, Westman, and Shaffer (2010) also reported that change in employment does not only create a stressful relationship but also makes married expatriates experience higher adjustment difficulties than unmarried expatriates. It is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H₃: expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment capacity in Nigeria significantly vary based on marital status in that single expatriates experience greater cross-cultural adjustment than married expatriates.

Previous International Experience: this is the extent to which expatriates have previously worked, lived, and studied in foreign countries before the current location's assignment (Shaffer, Harrison, and Gilley, 1999). Foreign international experience is measured by the number of countries previously lived, worked, and studied in as well as the amount/length of time spent living abroad or spent in each of the countries previously worked, studied, and lived in before the current location's assignment (Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, and Bross, 1998). The experience gained in multiple foreign countries, especially through direct observations and meeting nationals of other countries, facilitates global mobility orientation, which in turn increases the creativity and development of cultural shock coping skills (Albrecht et al., 2014). The experience gained in work- and non-work-related domains in foreign countries aids the development of values, attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge base, which in turn helps the affected expatriates to adjust and perform better in the current foreign job, which may be novel in terms of new job tasks, roles, procedures, policies, and task requirements in the new foreign country (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, and Bolino, 2012). The experience enhances expatriates' cognitive ability in reaching an optimal level of work outcomes and adjusting to different working styles, social interactions, and behaviours in a current foreign location (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak, 2005).

However, the knowledge gained through direct observation/participation in work and living conditions in a previous assignment location can only be effective in adjusting to other cultures when the expatriates are assigned to a country with a similar culture but not when they are assigned to countries with dissimilar cultures. This was confirmed by Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak (2005) when they observed that intercultural communication, relocation, cognitive skills, and other knowledge gained from working and living in foreign countries can only be transferred to, utilized or applied in another country with similar culture, but attempt to apply them across different countries may backfire. This suggests that cultural distance can mediate the influence of international experience on expatriates' adjustment, which is still subjected to empirical investigation.

Nevertheless, international work experiences have historically been employed when selecting, promoting, and appointing expatriates to head and manage foreign

assignments/portfolios (Takeuchi and Chen, 2013). This is because an increase in prior foreign experiences stimulates an increase in cross-cultural competence and personality traits, which facilitates expatriates' psychological comfort in interacting with work and non-work situations in the new international assignment.

In confirmation with this, several studies (Hemmasi and Downes, 2013) using global data from expatriates living in China, Taiwan, Hong-Kong, Singapore, Taiwan (Selmer and Luring (2015), and Northern Cyprus (Tanova and Ajayi, 2016) showed that global mobility orientation and international experience in terms of numbers and time-based measurements of international experience influence expatriates' adjustment. Similarly, Takeuchi, Li, and Wang (2019) examined the influence of different work experiences (international, job, and organizational) garnered before current foreign assignments on performance change patterns among expatriates during foreign assignments, using data from two hundred and thirty-seven engineers and one hundred and ninety-one expatriates' managers working in China. They observed that the performance of expatriates with work experience that is neither low nor high has a u-curve pattern. The performance of expatriates with high international work experience has a learning curve pattern. The performance of expatriates with high work experiences was high throughout the foreign assignments. The performance of expatriates with low work experiences was low throughout the foreign assignments.

In alignment with this, Zhu, Wanberg, Harrison, and Diehn (2017) empirically demonstrated that the initial level of cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates with previous foreign work experience was higher than that of expatriates without international experience. Waxin and Panacciom (2005) also empirically revealed that previous foreign work experience mediated the influence of cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment using data on expatriates originating from France, Germany, Korea, or Scandinavian countries and living in India. Similarly, Yedgarian (2018) examined and found that only previous overseas experiences influence adjustment among Americans living and working in Russia, using data from 197 American expatriates working in US-based multinationals in Russia. Albrecht, Dilchert, Deller, and Paulus (2014) tested data collected from 2,096 expatriates between 2005 and 2010 to reveal that openness to internal experiences (feelings) and external experiences (actions, ideas, and values) strongly influences accepting international assignments and significantly influences self- and other ratings such as general adjustment or interaction adjustment, except for job and life satisfaction among self- and organization-sponsored expatriates.

On the contrary, Selmer, Luring, Normann, and Kubovcikova (2015) empirically showed that foreign academic job experiences do not influence performance, job satisfaction, and adjustment among the expatriates in China and Taiwan. This finding is consistent with Abdul-Malek et al's (2015) finding that prior foreign

work experience is uncorrelated with the adjustment of expatriates and their spouses and the performance of expatriates. Emerging evidence also suggests that experience gained in different domains of work and life in one country may not help expatriates adjust to working and living conditions in another country given that those countries and organizations are culture-bound (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, and Bolino, 2012). Valuable international work experience acquired by expatriates can only help them to get along in similar work environments and unrelated work environments, which may be uncertain and complex (Takeuchi, Li, and Wang, 2019). In alignment with this, Selmer (2002) utilized data from western expatriates in Hong Kong to reveal that prior international experience outside Asia does not influence western expatriates' adjustment in Hong Kong but prior international experience within Asia does. Similarly, Froese and Peltokorpi (2013) revealed that international experience does not influence adjustment to social interaction but the length of international experience does. Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, and Lepak (2005) further revealed that the length of international experience in work and travel had a weak influence on adjustment facets but moderates the influence of current assignment tenure on only general adjustment. They also revealed that prior international experience positively influences adjustment to work, and this is stronger among those expatriates with less international experience. However, the positive influence of current assignment tenure on adjustment to social interaction and work is stronger among expatriates with more international experience. Moreover, prior international work experience moderates the influence of current assignment tenure on work adjustment, which in turn negatively influences expatriates' early return intentions. It is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H₄: the higher the international experience of expatriates, the higher their cross-cultural adjustment in the context of Nigeria.

Time Spent in Current Country: this is the number of years/months expatriates have spent in the current host country. The longer the time spent in the host country, the more the expatriates are familiar with different lifestyles, procedures, norms, and rules of the host country (Harrison, Shaffer, and Luk, 2005). The length of time spent in the host country also provides an avenue for expatriates to have better knowledge of the transportation systems, shopping patterns, housing, different local foods, and the cost of living in the host country. It provides more opportunities for expatriates to learn about the host country's language, work norms, behaviours, and rules through direct observations, modelling, and participation (Nasholm, 2012).

Following the learning curve theory, expatriates' adjustment to a new job abroad, living standards, and interactions occur over time. Expatriates who have spent more years in the current country are more likely to acquire more information to facilitate interaction and relationships with host country nationals. The duration

of stay in the host country can help expatriates to build and develop contacts. The longer the time in a current location, the larger the networks including the friends that the expatriates develop (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, and Bolino, 2012). The networks enable expatriates to adjust to self-behaviours and the host country. The networks offer social support to expatriates as well as enable the expatriates to learn new behaviours for effective coping and adaption to the new culture (Li-Yueh, Veasna, and Wu, 2013).

This assumption concurs with Tharenou's (2013) finding that expatriates with a longer stay in the host country have a wider social network, from which they can easily obtain more information about the host country's way of life and job tasks to adjust themselves in the foreign culture and deal with cultural friction. It also supports the work of Peltokorpi and Froese (2009), who opined that because expatriates with longer duration in the current host country develop larger social networks, higher social self-efficacy, and stronger cultural intelligence within the host country context, they may find it easier to overcome the uncertainty about many different aspects of both life and work, often faced by newcomers in the host country. This suggests that longer duration in the current host country facilitates socialization with host nationals, familiarity with procedures, values, expected behaviours, and social knowledge that govern the conducts of individuals within and outside the workplace in the foreign countries, which may help expatriates to adjust in the host country and improve their job performance. Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) further showed that time in a host country influences adjustment to host culture. It is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H₅: the higher the duration of time spent in the host country, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in the context of Nigeria.

4. Theoretical Framework

This paper builds on the person–culture fit theory as popularized by Van Vianen, De Pater, Kristof-Brown, and Johnson (2004) and Ward, Leong, and Low (2004). The person–culture fit is defined as the extent to which personality, values, ability, needs, preferences, and desires of expatriates match, align, and are compatible with various socio-cultural elements (values, beliefs, patterns of social interactions, consumption patterns, transport systems, housing conditions) of the host country. It specifically addresses the compatibility/fit between a person's characteristics and the characteristics of the broader external cultural environment (food, weather, traditional values, belief systems, and housing conditions). The theory upholds that the adjustment of expatriates to a foreign country can be contingent upon matching individual (ability, personality, demographics) to host location requirements as certain abilities (language/verbal,

analytic, or social skills) and certain demographics are usually required to meet environmental demands in foreign locations (Stoermer, Haslberger, Froese, and Kraeh, 2018). It posits that the greater the fit between expatriates' demographics and the host country's socio-cultural conditions (food culture, weather, transport systems, infrastructural facilities, social norms, values, and interactions with host nationals), the greater the psychological adjustment and the higher the intention to complete foreign assignments.

5. Methodology

Research Design and Sampling: This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design because the data needed on variables of interests (expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment and demographics) were collected with the use of a questionnaire, from expatriates resident in Nigeria, who relocated from 22 different countries to work and live in Nigeria for over six months.

According to InterNations (2019), 3.8 million people are fully registered as expatriates with InterNations as of April 2019. Of this number, 6,352 individuals registered with InterNations as expatriates currently living and working in Nigeria as of July 2019. This suggests that 6,352 expatriates constituted the population of this study.

To access, engage, connect, and contact such expatriates to fill copies of the questionnaire, the researcher, therefore, has been registered with InterNations since January 2019 under the Lagos forum, paying an annual fee of \$50 as an Albatross member. The registration has over time offered the researcher an automatic ticket to participate in the different weekly and monthly events organized by InterNations in Lagos as well as to connect and interact with and contact 381 expatriates who attended the different events organized by InterNations and to collect data on their well-being in Lagos, Nigeria. Expatriates registered with InterNations under the Lagos forum rather than those under the Abuja forum were in the researcher's focus because Lagos serves as a nerve centre and industrial hub of Nigeria. Besides, such expatriates, irrespective of the state they are working in Nigeria, are usually invited to weekly, monthly, and yearly events organized by local ambassadors of InterNations in Lagos, Nigeria. These events usually bring expatriates from a different location in Nigeria to Lagos to connect them to relevant others.

The 381 individuals contacted at different times in the course of their participation in the various weekly and monthly events organized by InterNations were informed about the nature of the study and were asked about their willingness to cooperate in filling in the questionnaire for the study. Of this number, 223 expatriates cooperated and volunteered to help fill in the questionnaire. The expatriates were given hard copies the moment they agreed to fill the questionnaires.

However, only 149 out of the total expatriates who volunteered to respond provided answers, and 127 questionnaire retrieved from them were filled in properly and valid. The rest of the expatriates who volunteered to fill in the questionnaire failed to do so because they were either too busy or left the events the moment the questionnaires were given to them. The low response rate, therefore, prompted the researcher to also resort to a Google form in the distribution of soft copies of the questionnaire to expatriates who had not been physically contacted and present at the different events organized by InterNations under the Lagos forum as expatriates working and living in Nigeria. The Google form link containing the questionnaire was sent to 160 expatriates who were on the researcher's contact list of InterNations. However, 48 expatriates responded altogether. Of these responses, only 25 were valid. The 25 valid responses were added to the 127 valid responses elicited previously through the physical distribution of the questionnaire. This brought the number of expatriates surveyed to a total of 152.

Measurement of Variables: The dependent variable is the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria. This was operationalized using a seven-item scale on adjustment to the general living environment, a four-item scale on adjustment to social interaction, and a three-item scale on adjustment to work in the host country, which was developed by Black and Stephens in 1989. The seven-item scale on the general living environment includes healthcare facilities, shopping, cost of living, nature of food, housing conditions, entertainment/recreation facilities, and opportunities. To the general living environment adjustment scale developed by Black and Stephens in 1989, the paper added 3 items, which include adjustment to transportation/road systems, state of electricity supply, and security conditions, obtained from the works of Costa et al. (2014) and Heirmsmac et al. (2015), reflecting the social-cultural environment of Nigeria. The adopted four-item scale on the social interaction adjustment of expatriates includes socializing with local hosts, interacting with local hosts on a daily basis, speaking with local hosts as well as interacting with them outside the work environment. The three-item scale on adjustment to work includes expectations on the job/standard for measuring job performance, supervisory responsibilities as well as specific job responsibilities. Each item was measured with a five-point Likert rating scale, which ranges from completely unadjusted to completely adjusted.

Method of Data Analyses: The data collected from the sampled respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics, which include percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics, which include analysis of variance and independent t-test. ANOVA and t-test were employed in testing the hypothesis formulated. The tests were done at a 5% level of significance.

6. Results and Discussions

Demographic Profile of Expatriates in Nigeria

Table 1 presents the demographic profiles considered in this study. Expatriates' demographic profiles consist of: gender, age, the length of time spent in Nigeria, their international work experience, and marital status.

Gender: male expatriate respondents constituted 127 (83.6%) while the surveyed female expatriates 25 (16.4%) of the total respondents, as indicated in *Table 1*. This suggests that male expatriates formed the majority of the respondents.

Age: The age distribution in *Table 1* shows that most expatriates, comprising 56 (36.8%) of the total expatriates surveyed, are within the age-group of 41–50 years, followed by expatriates within the age-group of 31–40 years, which comprised 44 (28.9%) of the total respondents. Expatriates within the age-group of above 50 years constituted 32 (21.1%), while expatriates within the age-group of 25–30 years and below 25 years accounted for 16 (10.4%) and 4 (2.6%) of the total respondents respectively.

Length of time in Nigeria: *Table 1* also reveals that the majority of the expatriates surveyed, which comprised 72 (47.4%) of the total expatriates surveyed, have spent 1–2 years living and working in Nigeria. This was followed by expatriates who had spent 3–4 years working and living in Nigeria, which constituted 41 (27%) of the total expatriates surveyed. Expatriates who had spent 5–6 years working and living in Nigeria accounted for 18 (11.8%), while those expatriates who had spent above 6 years and less than a year working and living in Nigeria comprised 14 (9.2%) and 7 (4.6%) resp. of the total respondents.

International Work Experience: *Table 1* shows that most expatriates surveyed, which comprised 42 (27.6%), have 2–4 years of international work experience, which means work experience outside the home and the current host country. This is followed by expatriates with 5–7 years of international work experience, which accounts for 35 (23%), expatriates with less than 2 years, which constituted 26 (17.1%), expatriates with 8–10 years of international work experiences, which also accounted for 26 (17.1%), and expatriates with over 10 years of international work experience, which constituted 23 (15.1%) of the total respondents.

Marital Status: *Table 1* further reveals that most expatriates surveyed are married. This category of expatriates constituted 82 (53.9%) of the total respondents. Expatriates divorced or separated from their spouses comprised 51 (33.6%) of the total respondents, while single expatriates accounted for 18 (11.8%) of the total respondents.

Table 1. *Demographic profiles of expatriates in Nigeria*

S/N	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Sex	Male	127	83.6
		Female	25	16.4
		Total	152	100.0
2	Age	Below 25 years	4	2.6
		25–30	16	10.5
		31–40	44	28.9
		41–50	56	36.8
		Over 50 years	32	21.1
		Total	152	100.0
3	Length of time in Nigeria	less than 1 year	7	4.6
		1–2 years	72	47.4
		3–4 years	41	27.0
		5–6 years	18	11.8
		Over 6 years	14	9.2
			152	100.0
4	International work experience (excluding the one in the current location (Nigeria))	less than 2 years	26	17.1
		2–4 years	42	27.6
		5–7 years	35	23.0
		8–10 years	26	17.1
		Over 10 years	23	15.1
			152	100.0
5	Marital status	Married	82	53.9
		Divorced/separated	51	33.6
		Single	18	11.8
		Total	151	99.3
		Missing	1	.7

Source: researcher's fieldwork (2020)

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 presents the demographic profiles for the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria.

Table 2. *Demographic profiles for cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria*

S/N	Variable	Category	Mean	F-statistic	P-values	Remarks
1	Female expatriates experience a greater cross-cultural adjustment than male expatriates	Male	2.6507	.440	0.508	Rejected
		Female	2.5848			
2	The younger the expatriates, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment in the context of Nigeria	Below 25 years	2.6310	.441	0.779	Rejected
		25–30	2.5238			
		31–40	2.6331			
		41–50	2.6811			
		Over 50 years	2.6362			
3	The higher the duration of time spent in the host country, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in the context of Nigeria	less than 1 year	2.3333	10.682	0.000	Accepted
		1–2 years	2.4858			
		3–4 years	2.7184			
		5–6 years	2.8836			
		Over 6 years	3.0425			
4	The higher the international experience of expatriates, the higher their cross-cultural adjustment in the context of Nigeria	less than 2 years	2.3462	24.233	0.000	Accepted
		2–4 years	2.4138			
		5–7 years	2.6401			
		8–10 years	2.9386			
		Over 10 years	3.0466			
5	Cross-cultural adjustment expatriates in Nigeria significantly vary based on marital status	Married	2.4684	25.641	0.000	Accepted
		Divorced/separated	2.7537			
		Single	3.0926			

Source: researcher's fieldwork (2020)

The P-values on the gender and age of expatriate respondents, which are 0.508 and 0.779 respectively, are less than the 0.05 (5%) critical value (level of significance). This is indicated in *Table 2*. However, the P-values on the length of time, international work experience, and marital status of expatriate respondents, which are 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000 respectively, are greater than the 0.05 (5%) critical value (level of significance).

Based on the p-values, the stated hypothesis that female and younger expatriates experience greater cross-cultural adjustment is rejected, while hypotheses stating that the higher the duration of time in the host country and the higher the international experience, the higher the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment are accepted. Moreover, the paper accepts the hypothesis that expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment capacity in Nigeria significantly varies based on marital status.

The mean value, as depicted in *Table 2*, further shows the differences in the level of cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria based on the length of time, international work experience, and the marital status of expatriates, which are the demographic factors influencing the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria. The mean value suggests that the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria is higher among single expatriates, those with a greater length of time spent in Nigeria, and those with a greater international work experience.

7. Discussion of Findings

This paper discovered that marital status, international experience, and time spent in Nigeria are the demographics influencing the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria. It has been observed that the higher the length of stay/time in Nigeria, the higher the level of international work experience and the higher the level of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in the Nigerian context. The paper also discovered that age and gender have no significant influence on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria.

The finding of this paper that the higher the international work experience, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment in Nigeria corroborates the position of Hemmasi and Downes (2013), Selmer and Luring (2015), Tanova and Ajayi (2016), Zhu, Wanberg, Harrison, and Diehn (2017), Yedgarian (2018), Zhu, Wanberg, Harrison, and Diehn (2017), and Takeuchi, Li, and Wang (2019). However, this deviates from the studies of Selmer (2002), Selmer, Luring, Normann, and Kubovcikova (2015), Abdul-Malek et al. (2015), and Froese and Peltokorpi (2013). The finding of this study also confirms the social learning theory that posits that expatriates with foreign experience can easily learn from past mistakes and use the knowledge and skills gained from previous foreign locations to improve on future expatriation including adjustment to work and social interaction in the new international assignment.

Moreover, the finding of this paper that the longer the time spent in Nigeria, the higher the cross-cultural adjustment in Nigeria corroborates the position of Harrison, Shaffer, and Luk (2005), Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, and Bolino (2012), Li-Yueh, Veasna, and Wu (2013), and Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) that time in a host country influences adjustment to the host culture. This confirms the learning curve theory that the adjustment of individuals to a new environment occurs over time. The higher the duration of stay in the host country, the greater the knowledge about the lifestyles and behaviours of the hosts, which is the foundation of cultural intelligence or the formation and development of cognitive frameworks required for effective coping and adaptation to the new culture.

The finding of this inquiry that single expatriates experience a higher cross-cultural adjustment in Nigeria disconfirmed the position of Selmer and Luring (2011b) and Luring and Selmer (2015) that expatriates who have relocated with spouses tend to fare better, are more satisfied with their lives in a host country, and are physically and psychologically healthier than their unmarried and married peers who have not relocated with their spouses. The lower cross-cultural adjustment among married expatriates as compared to single expatriates in Nigeria could be attributed to family exposure to poor electricity supply, poor transportation systems, poor healthcare facilities, insecurity, deplorable road networks as well as a decaying educational system. This may lead to poor family/spouse adjustment, which in turn could spill over into the poor adjustment of married expatriates.

The finding of this investigation that gender does not significantly influence the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria supports the studies of Sinangil and Ones (2003), Fisher and Härtel (2003), Heirsmac (2015), Luring and Selmer (2015), Bastida (2018), and Eze and Awolusi (2018) that female expatriates are just as successful as their male counterparts overseas as men and women expatriates on average were rated quite similarly in time to proficiency, job satisfaction, and adjustment to foreign cultures.

The finding of this paper that age does not significantly influence the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Nigeria supports the position of Fisher and Härtel (2003) and Luring and Selmer (2015) that the age of expatriates is not important in determining their performance, work effectiveness, and work adjustment. However, this contradicts the studies of Okpara (2010, 2016) and of Eze and Awolusi (2018) that age significantly influences expatriates' adjustment and performance in Nigeria.

8. Conclusions and Policy Implications

This paper offers insight into the demographic profiles of expatriates for successful cross-cultural adjustments in the context of Nigeria. The paper concluded that marital status, international work experience, and length of stay in Nigeria rather

than age and gender are the demographic factors that should be considered when recruiting and selecting expatriates to manage firms' operation in Nigeria, in order to eliminate the maladjustment of expatriates and its consequences on their failure and performance in the Nigerian context. It can be concluded that the more organizations recruit, select, and deploy expatriates whose demographic profiles reflect a higher length of stay/time in Nigeria, a higher level of international work experience, and the marital status of single/unmarried, the higher the successful cross-cultural adjustment of such expatriates will be in the Nigerian context.

This supports the applicability of the theory of person–culture fit in the selection, relocation, and recalling of expatriates in the context of Nigeria.

The paper also concludes that the overall cultural integration of expatriates in Nigeria is poor, which is consistent with the position of existing literature that expatriates find it difficult to adjust well psychologically to the socio-cultural conditions in Nigeria. Such poor cultural integration and its consequences on the intention to complete time-based assignments in Nigeria can be mitigated when expatriates with a higher length of stay/time in Nigeria, a higher level of international work experience, and having the marital status of single/unmarried are recruited, deployed, or relocated to work and live in Nigeria.

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