Towards Understanding the role the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

By

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AED – Advanced English Dictionary

CD – Cultural distance

CHAT - Cultural Historical Activity Theory

CITC - Communications and Information Technology Commission

EIFM – Expatriate Information Flow Model

GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council

GSM – Generation Mobile Services

GTM – Grounded Theory Methodology

ISP – Internet Service Provider

KSA – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

PA – Positive Affect

SOC – Sense of Community

STC - Saudi Telecommunication Company

VPN – Virtual Private Network

VSOC – Virtual Sense of Community

WLB – Work-life Balance

ABSTRACT

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE THE INTERNET PLAYS IN EXPATRIATE ADJUSTMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

by

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The purpose of the study was to develop a substantive theory that would provide insight into the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Expatriate adjustment research has identified a number of challenges that expatriates experience when adjusting to the host country. These include spousal influence, cultural training/ understanding, fluency in the host language and the personality or emotional readiness of the expatriate. These challenges are amplified when considered in the context of the KSA, which has a large cultural distance when compared to the average Western culture and therefore, provides a setting for an interesting study. There are a limited number of studies available that consider the role of the Internet during the expatriate episode in general, but none that examine the role of the Internet on expatriate adjustment specifically. Furthermore, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no research that provides a grounded theoretical understanding of the Internet in expatriate adjustment.

The research project used a Grounded Theory based approach to develop a substantive theory on the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment in the KSA. The conceptual account emerged from interviewing expatriates living in Western compounds in Riyadh, the capital of the KSA. The core concern that emerged from this study is one that describes the mediating effect of the Internet. This study hypothesised that the Internet had a regulating effect on expatriates' degree of isolation and degree of information flow which would affect

both their process of adjustment and their state of adjustment. Both the expatriates' process and state of adjustment is expressed in terms of their well-being.

The theory building study presents a theoretical model, grounded in rich empirical data. The theoretical model consists of two substantive categories: degree of isolation and degree of information flow. The former explains what contributes to the feeling of isolation experienced by expatriates. It was shown that the degree of isolation is a multifaceted concept influenced by expatriates' living space, status, social support, mobility in the KSA and state of mind. The latter substantive category, the degree of information flow, explains the extent to which information can be exchanged between expatriates and other entities, be it family, friends or the outside world in general, including communication with other expatriates in the KSA. These two substantive categories were explained through the core category which was conceptualised by using the following metaphor: "the Internet a lifeline to the real world". Considering the lifeline properties of the Internet, the theoretical model explained how it positively effects expatriate adjustment in the KSA. It was shown that the Internet, as a mediator, had an effect when considering adjustment as a process, as a state, and as an expression of expatriate well-being. This research was guided by two key research objectives: (a) to add theoretical content to the understanding of the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment, and (b) to contribute to the IS body of knowledge by producing a theory that could be applied in practice.

To the researcher's best knowledge, this study is the first in IS literature to describe the significant role and the contextual issues that surround expatriate use of the Internet in the KSA. In doing so, the study developed an understanding, grounded in rich empirical data from the substantive field of expatriates. This new understanding contributes to both IS research and practice, and provides guidance for future research.

Keywords

Expatriate, Expatriate Adjustment, Internet, Isolation, Sense of Community, Information Flow, Activity Theory, Mediating Artefact, Internet Metaphor, Grounded Theory, Everyday Life vs. Real World, Culture, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Cultural Distance

PEER REVIEWED PAPERS FROM THIS RESEARCH

The following peer-reviewed research outputs have resulted from this research:

1.   Hattingh, M, Matthee, M, Lotriet, H 2011. 'Towards understanding how expatriates use the Internet in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' in *Proceedings of Web Society (SWS), 2011 3rd Symposium* (Port Elizabeth, South Africa 2011), IEEE, 46-52.

2.   Hattingh, M., Matthee, M., Lotriet, H. 2012. 'Internet use and Expatriate Adjustment: Understanding the Degree of Isolation experienced in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' in *Proceedings of SAICSIT '12,* October 01 - 03 2012, (Pretoria, South Africa), ACM, 167-177.

3.   Hattingh, M., Matthee, M., Lotriet, H. 2013. 'Internet use and Degree of Flow experienced by expatriates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' in *Proceedings of SAICSIT '13,* October 08 - 09 2013, (East London, South Africa), ACM, 167-177.

4.   Hattingh, M., Matthee, M., Lotriet, H. 2014. 'The Expatriate Information Flow Model: Towards understanding Internet usage in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', *South African Computer Journal*, 52:1-17.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of writing my thesis was one that I enjoyed immensely. It was a long journey, but one that has brought me satisfaction not only in terms of what I have learnt, but also in the way in which I have developed as an academic. I would like to thank my supervisors, Professors Machdel Matthee and Hugo Lotriet for not giving up on me along the way. Their ability to help me make sense of the data, link concepts, generate ideas, and provide me with stimulating articles was invaluable during this research process. Furthermore, their willingness to walk the Grounded Theory path with me is truly appreciated.

I would like to thank my husband, Mitch, for accompanying me along this journey (and all the previous journeys that brought me to this point). His support and trust continue to be invaluable. To my children, Mihan, Kyle and Ashley, thank you for trying to allow me to get on with my "homework". It was difficult at times, and it did not always work, but I love how you tried.

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I declare that

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is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

M.J. Hattingh

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The use of expatriates in the international labour market is both widespread and generally accepted. However, research suggests that good performance in the home country does not necessarily translate into consistently effective performance in the host country: "*Expatriation ... involves the adaptation of the worker to a new country, a new social organisation and a different way of doing things, encapsulated in a new culture*" (Pires, Stanton, & Ostenfeld, 2006, p. 158). For the purposes of this study, the term expatriation has been used with regard to Western expatriates living on Westernised compounds in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Continued research in the field of expatriate adjustment has improved researchers' understanding, which in turn helps organisations identify those factors that are likely to have an impact on the performance of the expatriate in the host country. Research has shown that expatriate adjustment is a complex concept and even defining what is meant by 'adjustment' has been viewed as problematic (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Given the ubiquity of the Internet in society, where it is estimated that 34.3% of the world population has Internet access (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012a) one may intuit that the Internet could have a potential impact on expatriate cross-cultural adjustment. Expatriates now have more opportunities to communicate with friends and family at home while living abroad. For example, expatriates can communicate and interact with family and friends with greater ease, keeping up to date with what is happening in their home country and doing personal administration by having access to information through the Internet (Blackman, 2004). The presence of the Internet has been notably recognised in studies on the cultural dimensions of expatriates (Tarentaal, 2005) and the use of websites to assist expatriate families in political crises through the provision of inexpensive information (Richardson, 2005).

The research setting for this study is Riyadh, the capital of the KSA. This setting was chosen because the researcher herself was an expatriate spouse living in Riyadh during the time that the research was conducted. Most of the expatriates who took part in this study were Westerners who experienced a number of lifestyle restrictions while living in the KSA. Many of these perceived restrictions were attributable to the cultural distances between their home countries and that of the KSA, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. However, Western expatriates, such as the researcher, can live a relatively normal life in the KSA despite the

presence of these restrictions. The concept of "normal life" in the KSA is fundamental to the understanding of the context in which the researcher positions herself and the development of the substantive theory. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

This thesis aims to understand how expatriates in the KSA use the Internet in order to clarify the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment. The Grounded Theory developed in this study explains how expatriates in the KSA use the Internet to adapt to life in the new environment. The substantive theory that was developed provides an understanding of the role that the Internet plays in curtailing the isolation experienced by expatriates.

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the research study and its findings. The chapter has been organised as outlined in Figure 1 below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Research origin, purpose and objectives
- Research Methodology and data
- Delamination of Scope
- Emerging Theory
- Outline of dissertation
- Summary
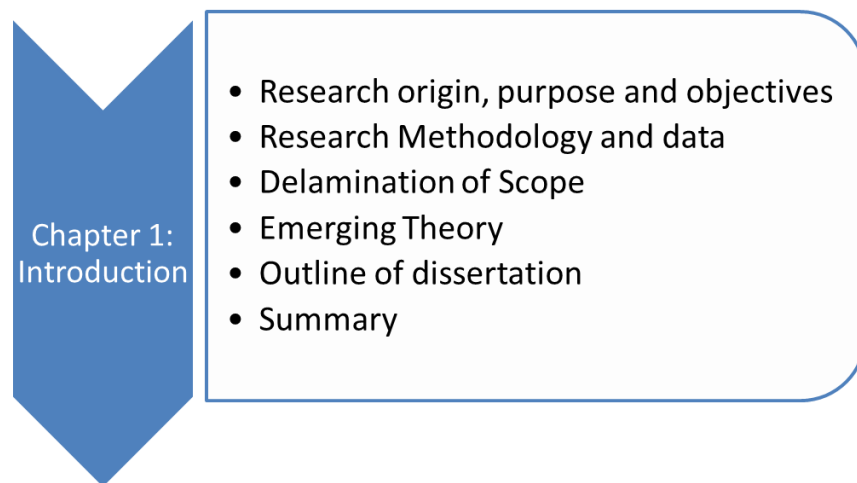
Figure 1: Outline of Chapter 1

1.1. Research origin, purpose and objective

The desire to conduct this research emerged out of personal experience. The researcher, an expatriate living in the KSA since April 2006, developed an interest in formalising the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment in the KSA. The KSA is one of the top five countries for expatriate deployment after the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and the United Arab Emirates (National Foreign Trade Council, 2013). The KSA is a young, developing society as the Kingdom was only founded in 1932. The discovery of oil in the 1930s facilitated significant increases in revenue. The Kingdom moved very quickly towards a modern society, which includes use of technology such as computers and telecommunications. For the most

part, the Saudi population are well aware of the longer-term benefits of modernisation, and are willing to accept these changes on condition that they take place within an Islamic context. However, individual Saudi reactions to modernisation have not always been positive. Since there are traditional as well as contemporary elements in any society, an awareness of the negative impact of rapid modernisation, such as problems of adjustment for both the local population as well as expatriates, should be taken into consideration (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011).

The Internet was introduced into the KSA in 1994 for state academic, medical and research institutions. The Internet was officially made available Kingdom wide in 1997 and was accessible to the public by 1999 (Internet.sa, 2014). Internet content is filtered in the KSA. Filtering is a means of prohibiting access to web pages containing pornographic, illegal, or otherwise objectionable content. This filtering is extended to pages containing information related to drugs, alcohol, gambling, terrorism and bomb-making, account theft, and copyright infringement, all of which are blocked, as well as a limited number of websites containing extreme cases of slander or abuse directed towards the Islamic religion or Saudi laws and regulations. Instead of displaying the offensive page, a block page will be displayed. All websites visited by the Internet users, local and expatriate, pass through the content filtering system (Internet.sa, 2014).

According to the census conducted in 2007, the KSA has a population of approximately 27 million people of whom 5.6 million are expatriates (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011, p. 64). Whilst expatriates are in the KSA they are subject to the laws and moral standards of the authorities and people of the country. These laws and customs are considerably stricter than those in other Gulf States, Western or Asian countries. Unacceptable practices related to dress code, alcohol use and moral behaviour, which are not crimes in any of the aforementioned countries, are treated as punishable crimes in the KSA (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011). Expatriates in this study were "protected" from the harsh reality of life in the KSA by residing in Westernised compounds (Glaze, 2006) that afforded them more freedoms. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Against this research setting, the researcher undertook a review of expatriate literature that identified a number of challenges for expatriates during adjustment to their host country. These challenges include early departure due to factors such as spousal influence (Tung, 1987; Black & Stevens, 1989; Fish & Wood, 1997), lack of cross-cultural training/ understanding (Tung, 1986; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005), fluency in the host language (Tung, 1986; Selmer, 2006) and expatriate personality or emotional immaturity (Tung, 1987;

Johnson, Kristof-Brown, Van Vianen, De Pater, & Klein, 2003; Shaffer, Harrisson, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006).

Due to the increase in deployment and use of expatriates by organisations (Global Relocation Trends Survey 2010, n.d.), high costs associated with expatriates (Shaffer et al., 2006), and the emotional upheaval for expatriate families (Tung, 1987), the success of the expatriate is imperative.

A number of studies have been dedicated to the subject of expatriate adjustment (for example Black & Stevens, 1989; Shaffer et al., 2006; Selmer, Chi, & Shenkar, 2007; Pires et al., 2006). All of these studies focused on a deeper understanding of the aspects related to the expatriate adjustment process in order to improve successful deployment of the expatriate in foreign countries. Examples of facets investigated include how deployment success relates to training (Harvey, 1983), the presence of spouse (Black & Stevens, 1989), and cross-cultural understanding (Tung, 1986).

A number of expatriate theoretical models have been developed in an attempt to explain and conceptualise expatriate adjustment; for examples see Parker & McEvoy (1991), Pires et al. (2006) and Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou (1991). However, as will be shown in Chapter 3, these models do not adequately describe, or provide an understanding of the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment. The majority of these existing theories are based on the widely cited model of Black et al. (1991). (See Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Selmer, Chi, & Shenkar, 2007; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Parker & McEvoy, 1993.) The premise of Black et al.'s model is that expatriates will learn through interaction with a local community which will aid adjustment. However, in the KSA the opportunities for this to happen are limited as expatriates usually live in Westernised compounds and so are isolated from the local community. Furthermore, a review of expatriate literature has revealed that other theories are also used to understand expatriate adjustment such as Social Network Theory (Zell & Skop, 2011; Wang & Nayir, 2006), Social Capital Theory (Lin, 1999; Liu & Shaffer, 2004; Wellman, Quan-Haase, Boase, Chen, Hampton, Diaz & Miyata, 2003) and the Theory of Sense of Community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sonn & Fisher, 1991). These theories will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Figure 2 below, illustrates the knowledge gap that exists between existing literature in IS cultural studies and expatriate research. The researcher's unique position, living in the KSA as an expatriate herself for the past eight years, afforded her a unique opportunity to conduct

this study. The researcher has first-hand experience of the processes and patterns of expatriate Internet use which will aid the researcher's theoretical sensitivity.
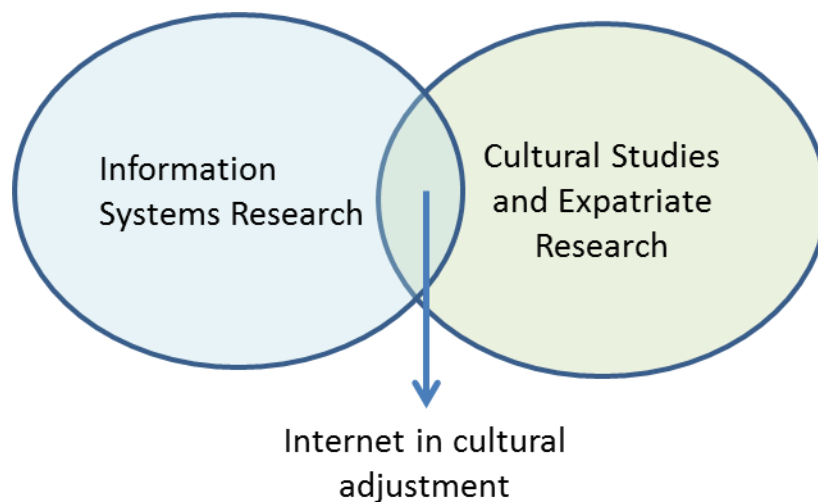
Figure 2: Knowledge gap identified in literature

This study can be justified from three perspectives.

Firstly the study can be justified from an Information Systems point of view that considers the role of the Internet in society. Due to the widespread access and adoption of the Internet in society, people who live away from home, such as expatriates (Blackman, 2004; Tarentaal, 2005; Richardson, 2005) and migrants (Zell & Skop, 2011; Chigona, 2009; Elisas & Lemish, 2009) have increased access to information and support sources. However, there is limited literature on the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment. Examples that the researcher could find examined the Internet as a tool for communication, as was the case in Tarentaal's (2005) study on cultural dimensions of expatriates. Richardson (2005) reported on the use of websites to assist expatriate families in political crises through the provision of inexpensive information, and Crowne & Goeke (2012) developed a model, based on Social Network Theory, in which online social networks provide the information and support for spouses and family members who need to adjust to international assignments.

Secondly, a large portion of the population in the KSA is made up of expatriates[1]. Very little information is available about expatriates' use of the Internet in the KSA and the role that it plays in adjustment. Articles or reports on Internet use in the KSA include: *ICT Indicators Q1 2012* (CITC, 2012), *Factors influencing the adoption and usage of online services in Saudi*

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[1] According to the 2007 census, a 5.6 million out of a population of 27 million is made up of expatriates.

Arabia (Al-Ghaith, Sanzongi, & Sandhu, 2010)*, Computer and Internet Usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – Individuals, Business, Government, Education and Health 2007-2009* (2009)*, The Factors Driving Continuance Online Shopping in Saudi Arabia: Regional and Behavioural Differences Among Women* (Al-Maghrabi & Dennis, 2010), *Freedom on the Net 2013: Saudi Arabia* (Freedom on the Net 2013: Saudi Arabia, 2013)*, How Saudi female faculty perceive Internet technology usage and potential* (Al-Kahtani, Ryan, & Jefferson, 2005/2006)*, IT in the Middle East: An Overview* (Joseph & Lunt, 2006)*.* However these studies or reports only examine the local population's use and adoption of the Internet, and do not include expatriates with the exception of Joseph and Lunt's (2006) study. Joseph and Lunt (2006) indicated that the IT labour market is primarily comprised of expatriates, with 72% of the workforce in the KSA being made up of expatriates. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the rules and customs of the KSA and how these affect expatriates. This study will therefore contribute to an understanding of the Internet use of a large portion of the expatriate population of the KSA, where research on the Internet is limited.

Finally, as previously stated, the researcher's experience of being an Information Systems student who resided as an expatriate in Saudi Arabia has given her a unique opportunity to understand the role of the Internet in the KSA. The KSA is a closed society and this study will highlight the impact of this on the expatriates' culture and customs.

1.2   Methodology and data

This study follows a qualitative research approach, based on an interpretive epistemology, which analyses facts and values extracted from expatriates living in the KSA. This will be described in detail in Chapter 2. In order to achieve its aims, the study made use of a research approach based on the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) developed by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). GTM is an established method in IS research and is largely an inductive exploratory process during which the researcher develops a substantive theory that identifies and explains structures underlying social occurrences (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Chapter 5 will illustrate the unique nature of the research setting. The KSA is an ultra-conservative society with conservative customs and strict rules. Women need to wear an "abaya" and there is even a dress code for men. Women are not allowed to drive and the use of alcohol is prohibited. There is a strong police presence at checkpoints and the locals live a nocturnal lifestyle. The researcher reviewed existing expatriate adjustment theories and could not identify an appropriate lens through which to view the research study. This will be

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discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Given this background, the researcher considered the Classic GTM (Glaser & Holton, 2004) as an appropriate research method to guide the researcher during analysis. Justification for this approach will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Grounded Theory (GT) seeks to develop a substantive theory that identifies and explains patterns underlying social phenomena through theoretical sampling and comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The ways in which expatriates use the Internet to address their main concern while residing in the KSA would be an example of such a social phenomenon. Classic grounded theory begins with a research situation (Dick, 2005) within a substantive area which allows the researcher to understand what the main concern of the primary participants is (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Within the Classic grounded theory approach, data collection starts right away: "*A good grounded theory analysis starts right off with regular daily data collecting, coding and analysis. The focus and flow is immediately into conceptualisation using the constant comparative method*" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 11). As soon as a substantive area has been identified (Dick, 2005; Glaser & Holton, 2004) within the research situation (Dick, 2005), data collection can begin. This allows the researcher to understand what the main concern of the expatriates is. Theoretical sampling guides the researcher as to what questions should be posed to whom (Glaser, 1992; Dick, 2005; Glaser & Holton, 2004). Grounded theory is specifically designed for theory building (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser & Holton, 2004). Therefore, exploring how the theory fits with other theories in the substantive arena ensures utility rather than confirming accurate representation of participant accounts, as it is not expected that a participant will recognise his/ her personal data in the substantive theory which represents conceptualisation across data indices (Glaser, 1992).

Figure 3 indicates the matured emerging theory that conceptualises the main concerns of the expatriates in the KSA who took part in this study. The development of this theory followed the principles of GTM as will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5. This involved entering the research situation with an initial set of semi-structured and open ended questions for the first five interviews, chosen by means of selective sampling, in order to establish a baseline framework for the theoretical sampling that followed. The interview questions were continually updated following the process of theoretical sampling. A number of categories and their properties were identified, which led to the building of a significant volume of theoretical memos. Through further analysis, these categories were collapsed, and this led to the building of a theoretical model that illustrates the relationship between categories.

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Following the development of a mature theoretical model, the lead researcher consulted existing literature to further inform theory development and to also determine the contribution that the new theory would make to the fields of expatriate research and research related to the Internet in society. Twenty-two interviews were conducted with expatriates from different nationalities between the ages of 20 and 60. The interviewees consisted of unaccompanied/ single, accompanied, working spouses and the nonworking spouses of expatriates. These expatriates have all been residing in the KSA from three months up to twenty-five years. One interview was conducted with an Internet Service Provider in a compound. It is acknowledged by the lead researcher that, as extant literature was consulted, more interviews might be conducted in the future to further aid the development of the proposed theoretical model.

1.3   Delimitations of scope

As with any PhD study there is a possibility of making it too expansive. Therefore the study had to be limited. The researcher was only interested in focusing on the sociocultural aspects of expatriates in the KSA, and not their work environment. A number of research studies have been dedicated to job performance and expatriate adjustment, Shaffer et al. (2006), and Takeuchi (2010) considered nonwork satisfaction, Shaffer et al. (2006) and Wang & Kanungo (2004) considered factors contributing to early return intentions/ withdrawal cognitions, and Caligiuri and Lazarova (2002), and Kraimer, Wayne, and Jaworski (2001) focused on social support influencing performance. This study did not consider expatriates within their work environment, but limited its scope to their social environment. This study wanted to understand how expatriates, in their home environment used the Internet.

As previously stated, the theory was developed by looking at expatriates living in Westernised compounds. A Westernised compound can be defined as an enclosed housing area in the KSA where Western rules and customs are followed. This means that expatriates have more freedom within the confines of the compound walls. Three interviewees not residing on compounds were interviewed in order to obtain the "anti-view". This is advocated by the GTM. However, the focus of the study was on expatriates residing in compounds.

This study did not consider the views of children, only adults. It is recognised that children's views might present an interesting dimension to the study, especially in light of other studies looking specifically at children's Internet usage. However, in order to limit the scope it was decided to only focus on adults.

The KSA is a very large country, with Riyadh being the capital. Of the major cities Riyadh is regarded as the most conservative following the two Holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Due to the location of the researcher, only expatriates in Riyadh were considered.

1.4   Emerging Theory

The emerging theory can be explained by using a theoretical model that presents a high level of generalisation of the interrelated substantive categories that will explain the substantive theory of Internet in the lives of expatriates in the KSA.

Two substantive categories were identified: (1) degree of isolation and (2) the degree of information flow. The degree of isolation was conceptualised as a multifaceted construct influenced by five concepts grounded in interview data: (1) Living space, (2) Expatriate Status, (3) Social Support, (4) Freedom of Movement and (5) Expatriate state of Mind. An extended discussion of this can be found in Chapter 8. The degree of information flow was conceptualised through the development of an Expatriate Information Flow Model (EIFM) grounded in interview data. The EIFM indicated that in order to derive the outcomes of information flow, a number of preconditions need to be met. These preconditions include the challenges expatriates experience with Internet use and their intention to use the Internet. The consequences of information flow were shown to be: (1) extended control over environment, (2) increased time distortion and social presence, and (3) increased exchange of information. An extended discussion of this can be found in Chapter 9.

The core category was conceptualised as "Internet a lifeline to the real world". The core category is expressed as a metaphor describing the expatriates' perception of the Internet. The participants' experience of the Internet could be expressed in terms of four metaphorical concepts: (1) Internet as a tool, (2) Internet as a Place, (3) Internet as a way of being, and (4) The Internet as a means of Salvation. The study proposes that these four classifications are interlinked and that the combined effect is that these describe the "Internet as a lifeline to the real world" that mediates expatriate adjustment.

The concept of adjustment manifested in the responses of participants in this study as: (1) an expression of expatriate well-being mediated by the Internet; (2) as a process mediated by the Internet and (3) as a state mediated by the Internet.

Figure 3 below depicts the interrelated relationships between the core category and the other substantive categories. The proposed theoretical model explains that adjustment in the KSA

is achieved by using the Internet as a lifeline to negotiate the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates, which is influenced by the degree of information flow between the expatriate and the "real" world.
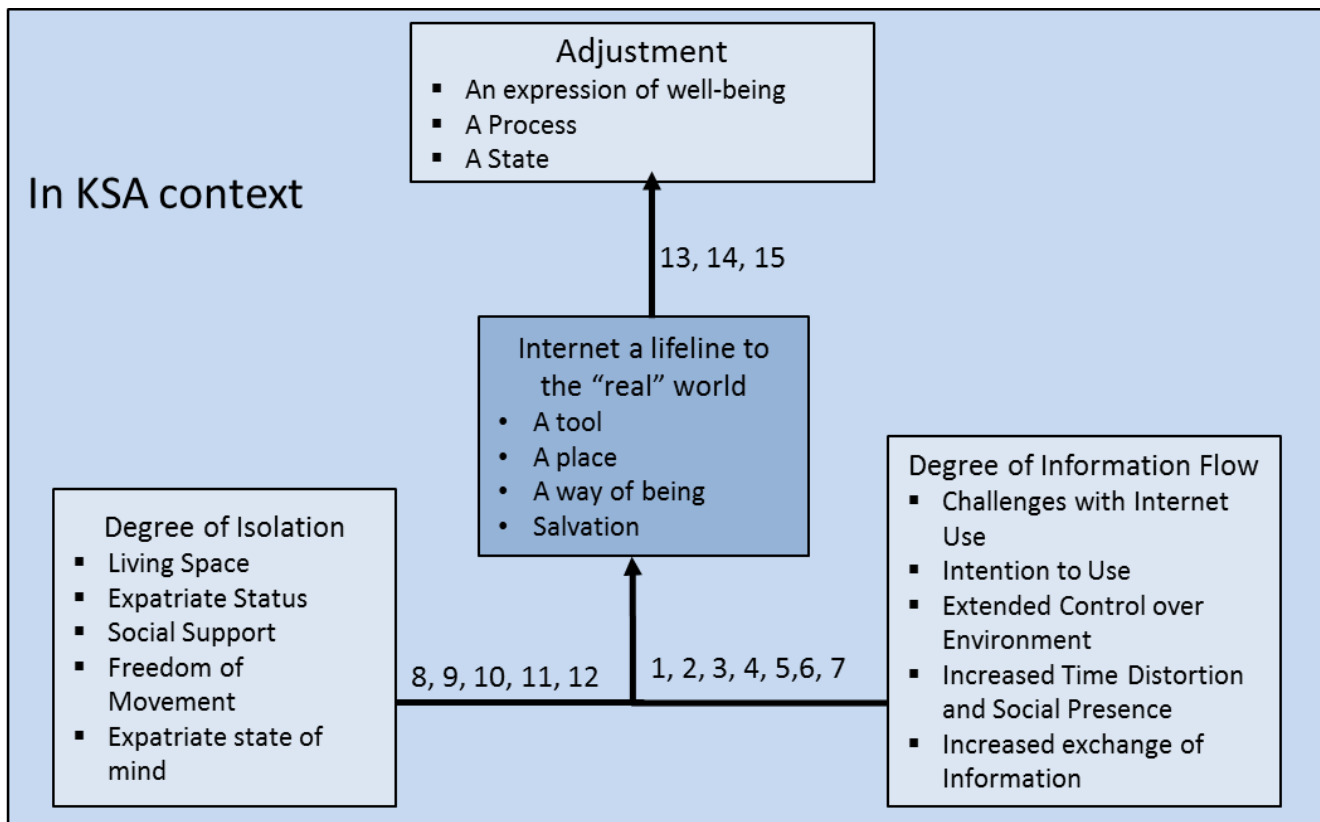
Figure 3: Interrelated concepts of the proposed theoretical model with substantive concepts and categories

The emerging theoretical model, as detailed in Figure 3 above, is explained in Chapter 11. Understanding of the theoretical model is facilitated through reading Chapters 7 to 10, which provide important contextual literature on the KSA that will assist with a more complete understanding of the theoretical model and of the fifteen propositions linking the theoretical model's categories. These propositions are listed, for the sake of completeness, in Table 1 below. A more detailed discussion of these propositions can be found in Chapter 11.

No	Proposition
1	*The challenges experienced by expatriates with regards to using the Internet have a negative influence on the degree of information flow experienced by expatriates in the KSA.*
2	*The expatriate's intention to use the Internet is dependent on his/ her need for informational or affective support. The mediating effect of the Internet on the support needs of expatriates has a positive correlation with viewing the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
3	*The expatriate's intention to use and consequential dependence on the Internet as "a lifeline to the real world" is influenced by his/ her personality.*
4	*The expatriate's intention to use the Internet is influenced by his/ her expatriate status (accompanied or unaccompanied/ single). Unaccompanied/ single expatriates have a higher dependence on the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
5	*Expatriates extend their control over their environment by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
6	*Expatriates experience an increased social presence in their benevolent communities by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
7	*Expatriates experience an increased exchange of information between themselves and their benevolent communities and entities outside of the KSA in general by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
8	*The greater the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates, the higher the expatriates' dependence on the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".*
9	*The Internet has expanded the sense of community that expatriates experienced whilst in the KSA.*
10	*The social support from benevolent and other expatriate communities mediated by the Internet, decreases the degree of isolation experienced.*
11	*The mediating role of the Internet on overcoming the restrictions placed on the freedom of movement in the KSA, decreases the degree of isolation experienced in the KSA and therefore positively influences the adjustment processes of expatriates.*

12	*The mediating role of the Internet on the expatriate state of mind positively influences their ability to reduce the degree of isolation experienced whilst in the KSA.*
13	*The Internet mediated tools provided expatriates with an increased sense of well-being which positively influences expatriate adjustment.*
14	*The Internet as a "lifeline to the real world" has a positive impact on the expatriate's process of adjustment.*
15	*The Internet as a "lifeline to the real world" has a positive impact on the expatriate's state of adjustment.*

Table 1: Emerging set of theoretical propositions

1.5 Thesis Outline

Figure 4 below, illustrates the outline of this dissertation. Each chapter is briefly discussed.

Thesis Outline

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Philosophical Underpinning, Research Approach and Research Methodology
- Chapter 3: Existing Theories on Expatriate Adjustment
- Chapter 4: Grounded Theory Methodology
- Chapter 5: Context Of Expatriates in the Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia
- Chapter 6: Data Collection and Analysis
- Chapter 7: The Internet as a "Lifeline to the Real World"
- Chapter 8: Degree of Isolation
- Chapter 9: Degree of Information Flow
- Chapter 10: Expatriate Adjustment Mediated by the Internet
- Chapter 11: The Theoretical Model and Conclusions

Figure 4: Outline of Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem, its purpose and focus, the initial question, research setting, delimitations and limitations, and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the justification for the adopted philosophical underpinning, the research approach, and research methodology of this study.

Chapter 3 examines existing theories of expatriate adjustment and provides justification as to why none of these were considered as the theoretical lens for this study. The chapter is divided into three parts which firstly discuss theories related to adjustment as a process, secondly, theories related to the Model of Adjustment developed by Black et al. (1991), and lastly social theories used in expatriate adjustment studies.

Chapter 4 extends the methodological discussion of the previous two chapters by providing details on the theory and practice of the Classic GTM, which is associated with the work of Glaser (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992 and 1998). This chapter will explain how GTM was used in this study. Understanding where the GTM "fits" in the realm of research is necessary in order to understand what constitutes a valid study.

Chapter 5 introduces the KSA as the research setting. It outlines the customs, laws, facilities and opportunities available to expatriates.

Chapter 6 describes the different data sources and data collection activities involved in this study. Adding to the methodological discussions of Chapter 2, this chapter also provides a brief discussion and provides examples demonstrating how the evidence was used to construct the proposed substantive theory.

Chapter 7 contextualises the culture of the KSA and expatriates' experiences in the host country. It was revealed, through this study, that the Internet has been used as a mediator between the "real world" and everyday life as experienced by the expatriates to negotiate adjustment to the KSA. This is described through the metaphor "lifeline to the real world". In order to contextualise the development of the core category associated with the proposed theoretical model, two contextual concepts will be discussed. Firstly, the concept and importance of culture is introduced and defined in terms of major cultural definitions in literature and in this study. Then, the concept of "everyday life" vs. "real world" is defined and explained. Following these contextual discussions, the core category is presented.

Chapter 8 introduces and explains the substantive concept of "degree of isolation". This is accomplished firstly by understanding how "degree of isolation" is defined in this study.

Chapter 9 explains the degree of information flow in the context of this study. It introduces the preconditions and consequences of information flow as derived from the data. This is

accomplished through the development of the EIFM which explains the impact that information flow, mediated through the Internet, has on the well-being of the expatriates.

Chapter 10 provides an explanation of how the concept of adjustment was manifested in this study. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part considers expatriate adjustment and well-being mediated by the Internet. The second part considers expatriate adjustment as a process mediated by the Internet, and the last part considers expatriate adjustment as a state mediated by the Internet.

Chapter 11 discusses the emerging theory, grounded in the data of this empirical study and enriched by relevant extant literature. The theoretical model, introduced in Figure 3, is presented within a narrative that explains the interrelated concepts of degree of isolation and degree of information flow. In doing so, it presents a substantive theory that unifies the mediating role of the Internet between the substantive categories and the concept of adjustment. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussions in the preceding chapters and summarises the research contributions. It provides a conclusion to the research approach chosen, recommends future research activities and offers some reflections on the research process.

1.6   Summary

This chapter introduced the study by providing background to the research and the research problem. This provided the context for the rest of the study, which is necessary, in order to understand the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment, which was presented as a Grounded Theoretical model.

Chapter 1 also provided the justification for the research from three perspectives: Firstly from an Informatics point of view, considering Internet as a ubiquitous tool. Secondly from an expatriate adjustment point of view, updating existing theories, and lastly from the researcher's point of view due to her location.

A short overview of the chosen research methodology was given to highlight the justification for the chosen methodology. This was followed by a summary of the research setting and how the research data was obtained and treated. Finally the scope of the research was defined.

A summary of the emerging theory was presented highlighting the propositions between the substantive categories and core category. Finally, an outline of the chapters contained in this thesis was provided, highlighting the aim and outcome of each chapter.

CHAPTER 2: PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNING, RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

All research is based on underlying assumptions about what constitutes "valid" research and which research methods are appropriate for the particular study (Myers, 1997). This chapter will provide justification for the philosophical paradigm that was selected, the research approach and the research methodology that underpins this study. The researcher first motivates interpretivism as the philosophical underpinning of this study, which was chosen after a review of common philosophical assumptions. This will be discussed and presented in section 2.2. The researcher further employed a qualitative approach to the research. Justification for following the qualitative approach is given in section 2.3. Finally, section 2.4 will detail the rationale behind the chosen research methodology - Grounded Theory.

Figure 5 below, illustrates the outline of the discussions in this chapter.

Figure 5: Outline of Chapter 2

2.2 Approach to Research

Researchers start a study with certain assumptions about how and what they will learn during their inquiry (Creswell, 2003). Crotty (1998) established a framework based on four questions that should be used when designing a research project: (1) what epistemology informs the research? This includes the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective (e.g. objectivism, subjectivism etc.); (2) what theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question? This is the philosophical stance of the research (e.g. positivism, interpretivism, critical theory etc.); (3) what methodology governs the researcher's choice and use of methods? This is the strategy or plan of action that links the methods to the outcomes (e.g. experimental research, survey research, ethnography, grounded theory etc.); (4) what methods does the research propose to use (e.g. questionnaire, interview, focus group etc.)? These four questions demonstrate that the decisions that need to be taken by the researcher are interrelated. In answering these four questions, the researcher illustrates and justifies the decisions taken regarding research design. Creswell (2003) conceptualised Crotty's model to address three questions: (1) what knowledge claims are being made by the researcher (including theoretical perspective)? (2) What strategies of inquiry will inform the procedure? (3) What methods of data collection will be used? Figure 6 below illustrates these elements of inquiry.
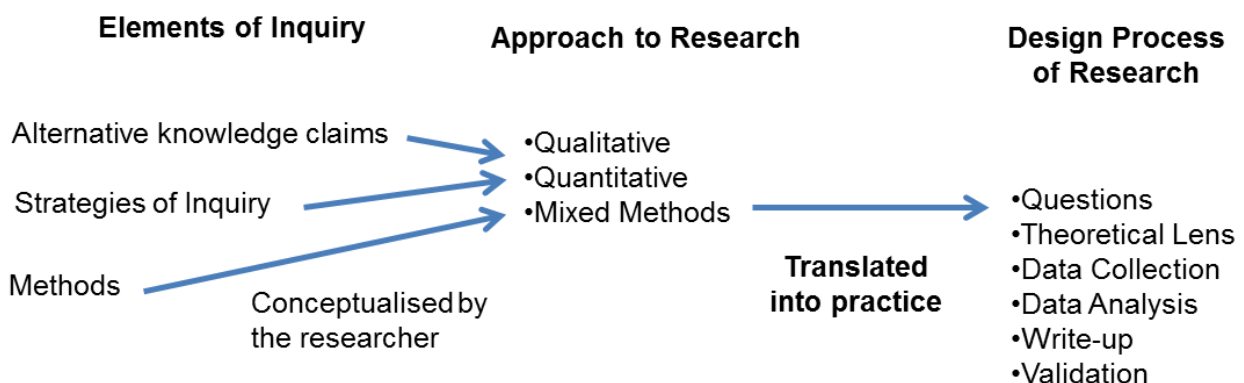
Figure 6: Elements of Inquiry (Creswell, 2003)

The researcher used the above framework, illustrated in Figure 6, to justify the philosophical assumptions – knowledge claims, strategy of inquiry and research method - used in this research study.

2.2.1 Philosophical Underpinning of the research

Researchers make claims about the nature of knowledge – the ontology, and how we have access to it – the epistemology (Creswell, 2003). These claims are called paradigms (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. iii) or philosophical assumptions (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 1999). Terreblanche & Durrheim (1999) describe a research paradigm as an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that defines the nature of enquiry along the following dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology (the research methodology will be discussed in section 2.4). The ontological and epistemological aspects of a study are concerned with what is generally referred to as the researcher's view of the world, which has a significant influence on the perceived importance of the aspects of reality: the philosophical assumption. Although philosophical ideas remain largely "hidden" in research they influence the practice of research and so need to be identified (Creswell, 2003).

In terms of a chosen paradigm, this study is of an interpretive nature. The researcher entered the research situation with no "universal truth" (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998, p. 160) and aimed to understand and interpret the social phenomena that occurred through her own frame of reference. Ontologically, the researcher is a relativist and believes that multiple realities exist since expatriates subjectively construct their own realities. On the epistemological level, the research was conducted from a subjectivist viewpoint. In a subjectivist research situation there is very little distinction between the researcher and the research situation (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). The researcher's personal experiences, since she was also an expatriate in the KSA, meant that there was little distinction between her and other expatriates. Fitzgerald & Howcroft (1998) further explain that the subjectivist stance means that, as will be shown in the forthcoming chapters, research findings emerge from the interaction between the researcher and the research situation, and that the values and beliefs of the researcher are central mediators. The researcher acknowledges that her background, qualifications and assumptions influenced the research, but also enabled her to interpret and analyse the data obtained.

2.3   Justification for a Qualitative Study

The research method is a strategy of enquiry, which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection (Myers, 1997). Myers (1997) explains that although there are other distinctions in the research modes, the most common classifications of research methods are qualitative or quantitative. However, Creswell (2003, p. 4) clarifies other modes of research including critical perspectives, advocacy/ participatory perspectives, and pragmatic ideas. The methodological discourses at present are less focused on a strict division between quantitative versus qualitative approaches and more on how research practices lie somewhere on a continuum between the two. The best that can be said is that studies tend to be more quantitative or qualitative in nature. Qualitative and quantitative refers to distinctions about the nature of knowledge; how one understands the world and the ultimate purpose of the research. On another level of discourse, the terms refer to research methods, that is, the way in which data is collected and analysed, and the type of generalisations and representations derived from the data. The specific research methodology, data collection and analysis will be discussed in more detail in the forthcoming chapters.

Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena. Quantitative methods include survey methods, laboratory experiments, formal methods such as econometrics and numerical methods such as mathematical modelling (Myers, 1997) Saglam & Milanova (2013) explain that a common misconception in quantitative research is that quantitative data requires data that is naturally available in quantitative form. They explain that non-quantitative data (such as beliefs and/ or attitudes) can be transformed into quantitative form by using measurement instruments such as Likert scales. Qualitative research methods, according to Myers (1997) were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to understand people within the social and cultural setting in which they reside. Both quantitative and qualitative research studies are conducted in expatriate adjustment research.

The research presented in this study follows a qualitative approach due to the applicability of qualitative research with assisting researchers in understanding people and the social and cultural context within which they live (Myers, 1997). According to Domegan and Fleming (2007) the purpose of qualitative research is to explore and to discover issues concerning an existing problem at hand when little is known about the problem. As indicated in section 1.1

very little is known about expatriates' use of the Internet in the KSA and the role that it plays in expatriate adjustment. A qualitative research approach will therefore be an appropriate method used to fill the identified gap in the literature.

Maxwell (2008, p. 221) offers five intellectual goals for which qualitative studies are particularly useful: (1) Understanding the *meaning,* for participants in the study, of the events, situations, and actions they are involved in, and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences. This focus on meaning is a subjective concept which is fundamental to the "interpretive" approach in social science, as discussed in the previous section. This study aims to understand what the role of the Internet is for expatriates in the KSA. The outcome of this study – the development of a substantive theoretical model, which is explained in detail in Chapters 7-11 – concerns itself with what the Internet means to expatriates, the influence it has on their well-being and under which conditions they use it. (2) Understanding the particular context within which the participants act and the influence that this context has on their actions. Section 1.1 introduced the reader to the culture, customs and laws of the KSA. This discussion will be extended in Chapter 5. However, the impact of the context in which expatriates use the Internet is central in understanding what the Internet means to them. This will also be evident in discussions in the forthcoming chapters. (3) Identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new "grounded" theories about the latter. The researcher has developed a substantive grounded theory which aims to explain the underlying patterns of behavior of expatriates when using the Internet in the KSA. The following section will justify this research methodology. (4) Understanding the processes by which events and actions take place. The key processes expatriates use to "make sense" of life in the KSA are identified and explained through the developed substantive theory. (5) Developing causal explanations. The researcher proposes a number of propositions explained through the data abstracted in the theoretical model in Chapter 11.

The focus of this study was on the perceptions of expatriates, the meanings of events, and processes when using the Internet. Due to the typical processes used, qualitative approaches can better account for the complexity of group behaviours and reveal interrelationships among multifaceted dimensions of expatriate adjustment.

2.4   Justification of research method: Classic Grounded Theory

The researcher acknowledges that the choice of following a GTM as a research method was not predetermined or instinctive. The researcher made her choice after failing to identify an

appropriate theory to use as a lens for her study. During the researcher's review of expatriate literature, a number of expatriate adjustment theories were discovered. The review indicated that in the majority of these theories the literature review on expatriate adaptation, for example Black & Mendenhall (1991), Haslberger (2005a, 2005b), Parker & McEvoy (1993), Takeuchi (2010), indicated that most research on expatriate adaptation uses approaches from the positivistic paradigm using hypothesis testing as methodology. These studies will be discussed in detail in sections 3.2 and 3.3. This however, was not the approach that the researcher wanted to follow in this study. She wanted to explore and understand the role of the Internet in the lives of expatriates in the KSA. This, as was explained in section 2.2.1 above, was done through an interpretive study. Section 3.4 will elaborate on the social theories, identified by the researcher, that have previously been used as a lens through which to conduct expatriate research. However, section 3.4.4. will explain why these social theories were discounted by the researcher as being the primary theoretical lens for this study.

Walsham (2006, p. 320) says that a researcher's theories regarding reality are "*ways of making sense of the world and shared meanings are a form of inter-subjectivity rather than objectivity*". Grounded theory is a method that allows the researcher to "*derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study*" (Creswell, 2003, p. 14). Although GTM is now an acceptable choice for research methodology in IS research - to be further discussed in section 4.3 - the researcher had considered alternative expatriate and social theories before embarking on the grounded theory study. This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.4.

The discussions in Chapter 3 on expatriate adjustment literature will indicate that knowledge gaps exist in the role of the Internet and its influence on expatriate adjustment in the host country. This study sought to address these gaps by investigating concerns or challenges associated with being an expatriate residing in the KSA. Grounded theory is an applicable research method when there is little known about the research situation, or when looking to provide a fresh slant on existing knowledge (Goulding, 1998).

Haslberger's (2005, p. 172) study on "*The complexity of expatriate adaptation*" confirmed that the norm for most research on expatriate adaptation was to use "*traditional approach[es] that strictly separate the researcher as the uninvolved collector of data from the research subjects as the ones who provide the data*". His study focused on the use of chaos and complexity theory to justify the complexity and dynamic nature of the expatriate adaptation process. He

proposed a number of methodological strategies to be considered in order to improve expatriate adaptation research:

- **Do Action Research** – This type of research will integrate the researcher and the research subject. The researcher will take a subjective view of the research situation and will be part of the data that is collected. Action research is similar to grounded theory as it takes the researcher *"straight into the field"* (Urquhart, 2001, p. 4).

- **Create "sensing" tools** – These tools, such as short pre-questionnaires, will act as "sensors" that will allow quick assessment of adaptation states.

- **Advance "thick" description** – This is a characteristic of qualitative research, delivering a fuller understanding of the intricacies of expatriate adaptation.

- **Develop simulation models** – Simulation models will aid the researcher in understanding complex systems and their dynamics.

- **Apply a mixture of hard and soft complexity-based research** – This strategy involves using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The strategy is first to apply qualitative approaches to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the research subject, followed by quantitative methods which provide a more complete test of pre-constructed theories. This approach is now also being considered in IS research (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013) and as illustrated in section 2.2 above, in expatriate research.

The above recommendations are aimed at positioning the researcher in a subjective role, therefore moving towards the interpretive paradigm when viewing the world. This justifies the researcher's choice of an interpretive approach for the current research project.

Due to the researcher's inability to find a theory that "fits" the intended outcomes of the research, GTM was particularly useful. Grounded theory was specifically designed for the purpose of theory building (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992). The insight that the researcher obtained from her grounded theory findings indicated that some aspects of the findings could be explained by the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) which might have been an appropriate theory for this research project. CHAT was initially developed by Russian psychologist Vygotsky and then further developed by Engeström (Holt & Morris, 1993). CHAT centres on mediation and the concept that the way humans undertake an

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activity is influenced by the environment around them, and their ability to develop an understanding is based on previous experiences which inform logical decisions. CHAT is based on the extended principles that subjects do not live in isolation and are influenced by community, rules and responsibilities. However, in the early stages of the study the researcher did not have any preconceived ideas of what role the Internet might play in the lives of expatriates or what might influence expatriates' use of the Internet. Therefore, in hindsight, although CHAT might be deemed an appropriate theory it does not make the choice of grounded theory less valid. Instead, it strengthens the propositions proposed by the developed theoretical model in that it confirms that: (1) Internet is taking the role of a mediating artefact, (2) the use of the Internet cannot be considered in isolation and it needs to account for the influence of the rules and responsibilities of the user (the expatriate) and the influence of the rules of the environment and community. In retrospect this strengthens the justification of the choice of the researcher's method of research.

The theoretical model introduced in section 1.4 illustrates the conceptual relationships between the categories identified from the data.

With its origins in sociology, grounded theory emphasises the importance of developing an understanding of human behaviour through a process of discovery and induction rather than through the more traditional quantitative research process of hypothesis testing and deduction (Elliot, 2005). Glaser & Holton (2004, p. 11) state that one of the strengths of grounded theory is "*that it explains what is actually happening in practical life, rather than describing what should be going on*". This therefore supports the researcher's justification for utilising a qualitative research approach. GT, also called "*general method of comparative analysis*" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1), is a form of naturalistic inquiry discovered by sociologists Glaser & Strauss (1967). A naturalistic inquiry entails that there is no direct manipulation of the research setting other than the natural interference that is caused by the presence of the researcher (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985 cited in Glaser, 2004). Therefore, expatriates in their new natural setting, the KSA, are the subjects of the study.

Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 4) argue that grounded theory can, as a rule, not be disproved by more data or replaced by another theory because it is too intimately linked to the data. Glaser & Holton (2004, p. 11) added that grounded theory "*… cannot fail as the social psychological world of structure, culture, social interaction etc. goes on irrespective*". They further state that "*[t]he goal of grounded theory is to generate a conceptual theory that accounts for a pattern*

of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved. The goal is not voluminous description, nor clever verification" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 14).

Grounded theory is useful in understanding a research situation (Glaser & Holton, 2004) because it meets the basic four criteria of an emergent theory (Glaser, 1992). (1) The theory will *fit* - this means that if a grounded theory is carefully induced from the substantive area its categories and their properties will fit the realities under study in the perceptions of subjects, practitioners and researchers in the area. (2) The theory will *work* - this means that if a grounded theory *works* it will explain the major variations of behaviour in the area, with respect to the processing of the main concerns of the subjects. (3) The theory is *relevant* - if the grounded theory fits and works, it has achieved its *relevance.* (4) The theory is *modifiable* – this means that the theory should be readily *modifiable* when new data present variations in emergent properties and categories.

Therefore, exploring how the theory fits with those in the substantive area ensures utility rather than confirming accurate representation of participant accounts, as it is not expected that a participant will recognise his/ her personal data in the substantive theory, which represents conceptualisation across data indices (Glaser, 1998).

2.5   Summary

Researchers base their work on certain philosophical perspectives, whether it be a single paradigm or more than one paradigm. The above discussion illustrated that expatriate research has followed both approaches. Each of the major paradigms were introduced and discussed. Based on these discussions the researcher has justified her choice of philosophical assumptions underlying this study, choosing to make use of an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive approaches give the research greater scope in attempting to understand what is taking place rather than verifying what is happening in the research area.

Viewing the research through an interpretive lens complemented the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is most appropriate when the researcher wants to become more familiar with the phenomenon of interest, in order to achieve a deep understanding of how people think about a topic and to describe in great detail the perspectives of the research participants in the natural setting. The location of the researcher as an expatriate in the KSA afforded her the unique opportunity to be privy to the experiences of expatriates when using the Internet.

The chapter further provided justification of the selected research method – the GTM. The research methodology was selected by the researcher following the review of existing theories on expatriate adjustment (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3) and found that none of the available theories would "fit" the substantive area. The researcher acknowledged later on in her study that CHAT might have been an appropriate theory to aid the understanding of the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment, but this comes only after concepts were identified through the grounded theory approach.

The discussion in this chapter will be extended in the following two chapters. Chapter 3 will detail the review of existing expatriate adjustment theories and report on the implication of each of the theories considered for the current study. This will be followed by the discussion in Chapter 4 which examines how the GTM was applied in this study.

CHAPTER 3: EXISTING THEORIES ON EXPATRIATE ADJUSTMENT

3.1   Introduction

Expatriate adjustment refers to the degree of fit or psychological comfort and familiarity that individuals feel with different aspects of foreign culture (Black & Stephens, 1989), (Harrison, Chadwick, and Scales, 1996). Due to the high cost associated with expatriate deployment and the emotional upheaval experienced by the expatriate family, expatriate success is imperative. A number of research studies have been dedicated to job performance and expatriate adjustment: Shaffer et al. (2006), and Takeuchi (2010) consider nonwork satisfaction, Shaffer et al. (2006) as well as Wang and Kanungo (2004) considered factors contributing to early return intentions/ withdrawal cognitions, and Caligiuri & Lazarova (2002) and Kraimer et al. (2001) focused on social support influencing performance. These studies reference existing expatriate adjustment and social theories. This chapter will briefly consider the most notable theories and explain why these existing theories, or work that references these theories, are inadequate for this study. Figure 7 below outlines the discussions of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Existing Theories on Expatriate Adjustment

- Introduction
- U-curve of Adjustment
  - Implications for this study
- Black et al.'s model of Cross-Cultural Adjustment
  - Implications for this study
- Other theories associated with expatriate adjustment
  - Social Network Theory
  - Social Capital Theory
  - Theory of Sense of Community
  - Implications for this study
- Summary

Figure 7: Outline of Chapter 3

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3.2   U-curve of adjustment – Adjustment as a process

Adjustment is conceptualised as a process in terms of the Integrated U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment (Pires et al., 2006). Lysgaard (1995 cited in Pires et al., 2006) developed the U-curve framework that aims to describe the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriates. This is illustrated in Figure 8 below. The different stages of the curve theories propose a change in the expatriate's understanding and acceptance of the culture of the host country. The four adjustment phases are: (1) Honeymoon phase, when expatriates are fascinated by the new culture and are excited by the new surroundings. (2) Culture shock phase, when expatriates become disillusioned and frustrated with the new culture as the initial infatuation wears off and they realise that they have to settle into a new routine. Culture shock starts to emerge from zero to three months after arrival (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998). (3) Adjustment phase, when expatriates gradually adjust to the new culture and customs of the host country. (4) Mastering is the final phase where small incremental increases in the expatriate's ability to function effectively in the new culture become visible.
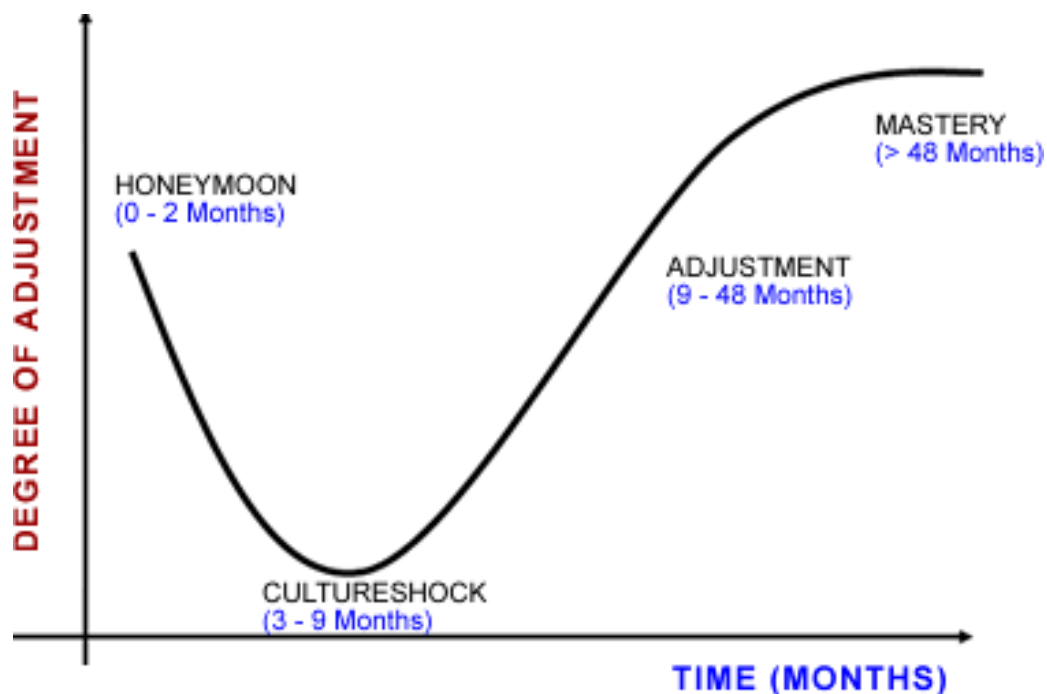
Figure 8: U-curve of adjustment Lysgaard (1995 cited in Pires et al., 2006)

An alternative method, presenting the same conceptual ideas of describing adjustment, can be seen in the Seven Point Relocation Transition Curve (Pires et al., 2006): (1) Unreality – the feeling that the relocation is a dream, (2) Fantasia – the feeling of enchantment and

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excitement in the new environment, (3) Interest – a deeper exploration of the environment and a realisation that it is fundamentally different from home, (4) Acceptance of reality – "letting go" of past comfortable attitudes and realising that you are a stranger in a strange land, (5) Experimentation and testing of new approaches – practise phase, trying to do things differently and feedback of results, successes and failures, (6) Search for meaning – understanding reasons for success and failure where new models and personal theories are created, and (7) Integration – of new skills and behaviour and acceptance of the new environment.

Figure 9 below illustrates the integrated version of the U-curve of Adjustment and the Seven Point Relocation Transition Curve.
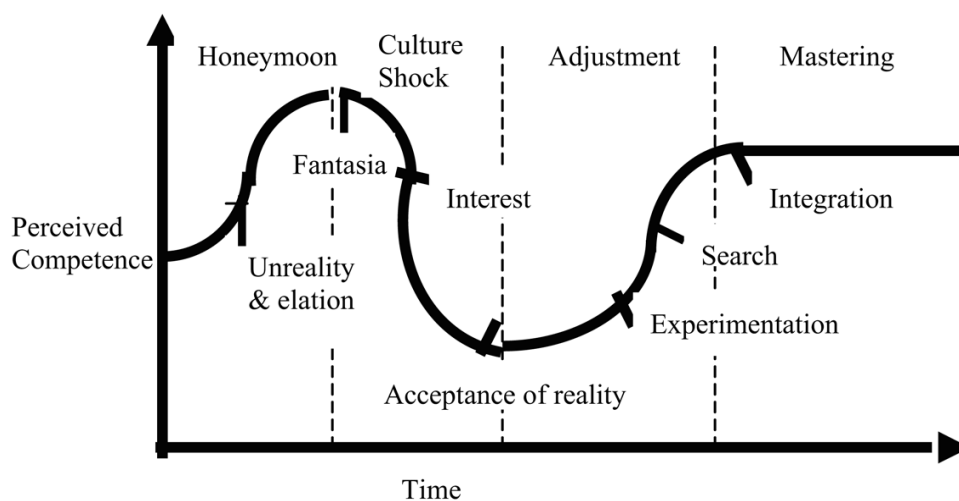
Figure 9: Integrated U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment (Pires et al., 2006)

Figure 9 indicates that once the expatriate growth period has matured, the matured expatriate reaches (or is supposed to reach) a state of adjustment. This model of cross-cultural adjustment indicates the feelings of a person adjusting to a new culture at different points in time. In other words, it shows the level of adjustment of an individual in a new culture and how it varies across time.

3.2.1 Implications for this research

The "curve theories" do not explain how individuals transition through the different phases (Ward et al., 1998). The researcher did not want to verify the use of the curve theory, but rather wanted to understand the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment. However, as the substantive grounded theory matured it was evident that these "curve theories" do

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contribute to the current study in that expatriates' Internet usage differed depending on which "phase" they were in. This however, is just an observation from the researcher based on the data; it is not a verification of the legitimacy of the hypotheses proposed by the curve theories. Chapter 10 will describe how the process of adjustment was mediated by the Internet.

3.3 Black et al.'s (1991) model of cross-cultural adjustment – Adjustment as a state

Black, Medenhall & Oddou (1991) define adjustment in terms of three constructs: (1) General adjustment, (2) Interaction adjustment, and (3) Work adjustment. Their research was based on the belief that cross-cultural adjustment – that which an expatriate experiences – is a multidimensional concept. They proposed a model (see Figure 10 below) that describes the adjustment process of an expatriate as having two dimensions. These are anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Their framework is based on both the domestic adjustment literature (for instance, adjusting to a new organisation) and international adjustment literature (adjusting to a new location outside of one's home country). Parker & McEvoy (1993) also found support for the three dimensions of expatriate adjustment with their development of the Model of Intercultural Adjustment consisting of three dimensions - contextual, individual and organisational - which influence adjustment and ultimately influence expatriate performance.
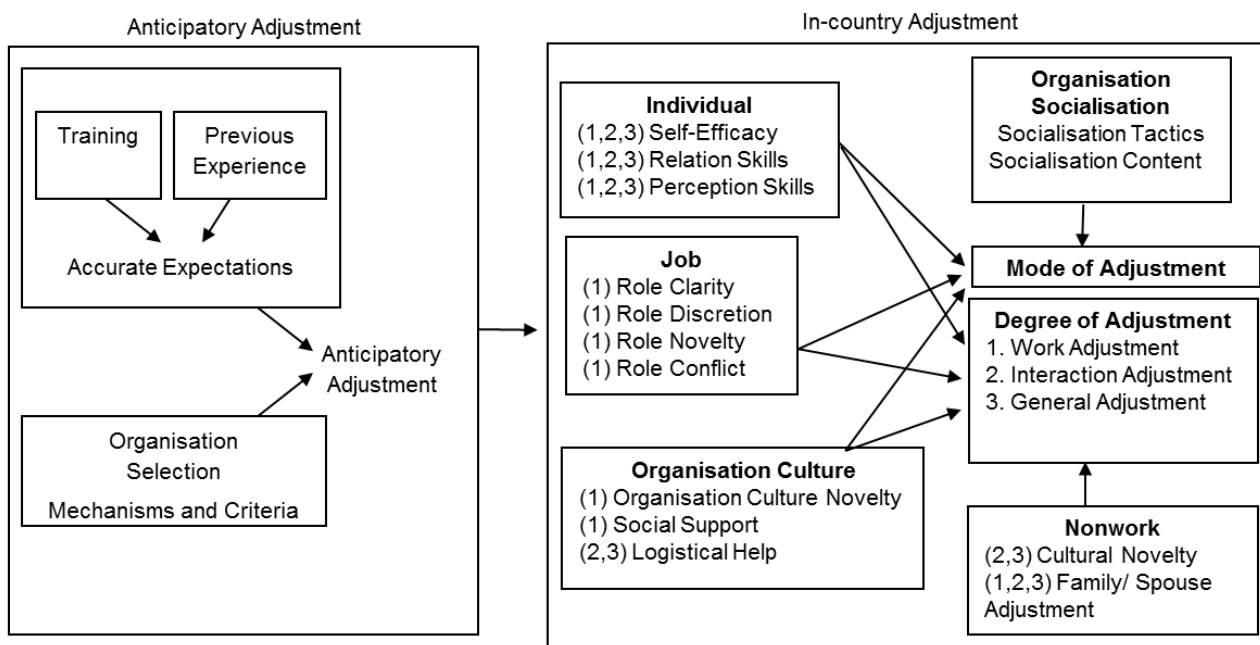
Figure 10: Black et al.'s (1991) model of cross-cultural adjustment

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Anticipatory adjustment is concerned with adjustment during the period before departure and related factors, such as pre-departure training, previous expatriate experience on the individual level, and selection mechanisms and criteria on an organisational level.

In-country adjustment according to Black et al.'s (1991) framework, consists of three distinct modes: (1) adjustment to work, (2) adjustment to interacting with host nationals and (3) adjustment to the nonwork environment. It is influenced by a number of variables relating to the individual, the job, the organisational culture, culture novelty and family-spouse adjustment. The individual variables of in-country adjustment are self-maintenance skills, relational skills, and perception skills. These are expected to relate to all three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. Job factors that are of importance regarding cross-cultural adjustment are role clarity and role discretion that may reduce uncertainty associated with work adjustment. Role conflict and role novelty, on the other hand, may potentially increase uncertainty and thereby inhibit adjustment. Furthermore, the greater the distance between the culture of the home organisation and the host organisation, the more challenging adjusting to the new surroundings may be (Black et al., 1991). However, the model goes on to suggest that organisational culture that includes social support from co-workers in the host organisation reduces the expatriate's uncertainty, and may therefore facilitate adjustment. Stress management scholars have highlighted the role of social support in helping individuals reduce uncertainty when in novel situations. The role of social support in the successful acculturation of immigrants and sojourners has also been recognised (Kraimer et al., 2001). Black et al. (1991) further suggested that general culture novelty of the host country influences interaction and general adjustment, linking it to job novelty. Building on the work of Bhagat (1983 cited in Black et al., 1991), Black et al. (1991) proposed that the uncertainty of a poorly adjusted family or spouse may inhibit the expatriate's own adjustment due to a spillover effect.

A number of empirical studies have been conducted on elements of Black et al.'s (1991) proposed framework regarding anticipatory adjustment. For example cross-cultural training studies include cultural training/ understanding (Tung, 1986; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). These studies showed that pre-departure cross-cultural training is positively related to cross-cultural adjustment as it improves expectations of the host country on behalf of the expatriate. Osmani-Gani & Rockstuhl (2008) found that the relationship between cross-cultural training effectiveness and adjustment was mediated by an increase in self-efficacy. Contributing to increased self-efficacy is the ability to speak the local language. Selmer (2006) found that expatriates' language ability had a positive

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association with their sociocultural adjustment. Not surprisingly, this positive relationship was strongest for interaction adjustment and weakest for work adjustment. Huang, Chi & Lawler (2005) found that extroversion and agreeableness are both positively related to interaction adjustment (i.e. relationships with local people).

A number of empirical studies have also been conducted on elements of Black et al.'s (1991) proposed framework regarding in-country adjustment. Harrison et al.'s (1996) study found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and all three modes of in-country adjustment: work adjustment, interaction adjustment and general adjustment. Shaffer et al.'s (2006) study focused on individual differences and found support for the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and job related factors such as role clarity, role discretion, and role novelty. Research has also shown that there is a strong relationship between the adjustment of the expatriate spouse and family in general and the interaction adjustment of the expatriate (Tung, 1987; Black & Stevens, 1989; Fish & Wood, 1997).

Although Black et al.'s (1991) model has helped generate a sufficiently large amount of empirical research, Takeuchi (2010) argues that it may, unintentionally, have restricted the focus of subsequent studies to (a) looking more exclusively at expatriate employees themselves and variables associated with them, (b) treating adjustment as an end to itself, not as a means to an end, (c) examining only those variables included in the model, and (d) investigating simple, direct, or linear relationships among antecedents and adjustment. Black et al.'s (1991) model has also received criticism from Haslberger (2005b) who described it as a one-directional causal model, where independent and mediating variables influenced the outcome variables.

Haslberger (2005b) considered expatriate adjustment literature in terms of the Chaos and Complexity Theory and offered a number of concepts that improve expatriate adjustment theories:

- **Irreversibility** - Expatriate adaptation that has gone awry cannot be reset and done over again. Chaos Theory excludes replays as a matter of principle. Therefore, it brings the analysis of and thinking about the adaptation process one step closer to reality (Haslberger, 2005b).

- **Bifurcation** - Adaptation skills of individuals have to match the challenge posed to expatriates to ensure success. Haslberger (2005b) found that personal skills and

characteristics as well as some social contacts and interactions combine to match the environmental challenges. The concept of bifurcation indicates two things: firstly, with additional challenges adaptation becomes exponentially more difficult, and, secondly, it is difficult to predict when the transition to a new state occurs and whether it will result in chaos.

- **Sensitivity to initial conditions and the butterfly effect** - Most expatriate literature concentrates on anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Haslberger (2005a, p. 10) stated that the underlying assumption of most of these studies is that *"expatriates are seen as self-contained systems that, once set up, function on their own"*.

- **Strange attractor** – The existing expatriate literature does not address the existence or the shape of a strange attractor. Haslberger (2005b, p. 170) explains that the *"concept is appealing because of its power to uncover order in chaos"*. He says that in order to realise a strange attractor the researcher needs to apply intuitive insight, this may be acquired through "*qualitative studies or personal experience, or on sets of quantitative data that capture the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation*".

- **Order through fluctuations** – Haslberger (2005a) has indicated that this concept has many potential applications for adjustment research. Expatriates acquire new "*knowledge and skills"* (Haslberger, 2005, p. 12) by interpreting and managing changes in the host environment. However, the unfamiliar environment might present a number of challenges to the expatriate and thus compel the expatriate to create the need for additional stability elsewhere in the expatriate's life. Stability zones provide the mechanism for an expatriate to process the changes.

Haslberger (2005a) concluded by stating that the adjustment process differs from expatriate to expatriate and is therefore not predictable. This may be due to ad hoc exchanges that can change an expatriate's adjustment path at any time. The growing consequence of adverse exchanges may lead to fundamental transformations. The next section shows how this research might reflect a different theoretical outlook.

3.3.1 Implications for this research

Despite the empirical support for Black et al.'s model of cross-cultural adjustment the researcher did not use it as the theoretical lens for this study for the following reasons: the firstly, concerns the subjects of the study. The framework of the model was developed on the premise of the social learning theory, which requires interaction between the expatriates and the local community. Studies based on the social learning theory have typically either examined the effects of frequency of contact with the local community or studied the effects of the proportion of locals within the expatriate's social network (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008). Because expatriates in this study are living in a compound consisting of a mainly Western population, they are isolated from the local community. Interaction with the local community is therefore limited. This will be discussed in more detail in section 9.2.3. Secondly, due to the boundaries of the study, mainly imposed by the gender of the researcher and the consequent cultural limitations, the researcher was only interested in focusing on the sociocultural aspects of expatriates in the KSA and not the job situation. Black et al.'s theory considered both sociocultural aspects and job situation. Thirdly, in terms of the choice of research approach, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach to the research study, which was chosen and justified in the previous chapter, as she wanted to understand the role of the Internet, without being prejudiced by predetermined constructs. Some of the factors of Black et al.'s (1991) work did emerge from data, such as the nonwork aspects and individual aspects. This will be discussed in detail in the chapters to follow. Fourthly, empirical research based on Black et al.'s (1991) model did not consider the role of the Internet. For example Kraimer et al.'s (2001) study focused on social support being rendered by three sources (organisation, spouse and supervisor) and did not consider or reference the role of the Internet.

3.4 Other theories associated with expatriate adjustment

This section will discuss some of the theories, other than those mentioned in the previous section, that have been used to conceptualise or understand expatriate adjustment. Although by no means a complete list of theories used, this section serves to illustrate that the researcher is aware of and had considered other theories within expatriate adjustment literature before embarking on a Grounded Theory study. Three theories will be discussed: Social Network Theory, Social Capital Theory and the Theory of Sense of Community. The discussions to follow will show that all three theories can be extended by examining the role

of the Internet. For example, social networks can be enabled by the Internet, social capital can be increased by the Internet and sense of community can be extended to create a virtual sense of community.

3.4.1 Social network theory

Social network theory is well established in expatriate research. For example, although Wang and Kanungo (2004) do not specifically reference SNT, their study is based on the concept of social networks. Their study contributed to the expatriate adjustment literature by empirically testing the relationship between expatriate personal networks and psychological well-being. Their study also investigated the hypothesis that expatriates from different cultural backgrounds will establish different social networks and adjust differently. They not only considered the social network perspective in expatriate adjustment literature, but also empirically confirmed the important impact of social network characteristics on the psychological well-being of expatriates. Upon arrival in the foreign environment, the expatriate's previous social network is interrupted and his/ her psychological well-being is threatened. The establishment of a personal network in the local environment will signal the settlement and will facilitate the maintenance of psychological well-being. The results confirmed most of the hypotheses that expatriate social network characteristics, such as network size, network cultural diversity, network closeness and contact frequency - both as a set and separately - significantly influence expatriate psychological well-being. Johnson et al. (2003) argue that previous researchers have reflected on the importance of social support for expatriate adjustment while little is known about what leads expatriates to form relationships or networks with others in their host country. Results of the study have shown that expatriates who develop friendships with host nationals naturally adjust to a foreign environment more easily than those who do not. Their study does not however describe the type of relationships developed or whether they involve weak or strong ties.

Crowne & Goeke's (2012) study is based on the work of Lu (1999, cited in Crowne & Goeke, 2012) who argued that one method of improving spousal and family member adjustment is through the use of social networks, which can lower the anxiety and depression caused by dealing with the new environment. They recognised the innovative use of technology, in the form of online social networks (e.g. Facebook), to aid spouses and family members with adjusting to the host countries. The idea was that through online social networks spouses and family members can sustain social networks, both at home and in their new environment. Crowne & Goeke (2012) developed a model, based on the social network theory in which

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online social networks provide information and support spouses and family members needing to adjust to international assignments. (See Figure 11 below.) This model, they argued, represents a workable, timely, and cost-effective proposal for improving the adjustment process of spouses and family members, which ultimately will result in improved expatriate adjustment and job performance.
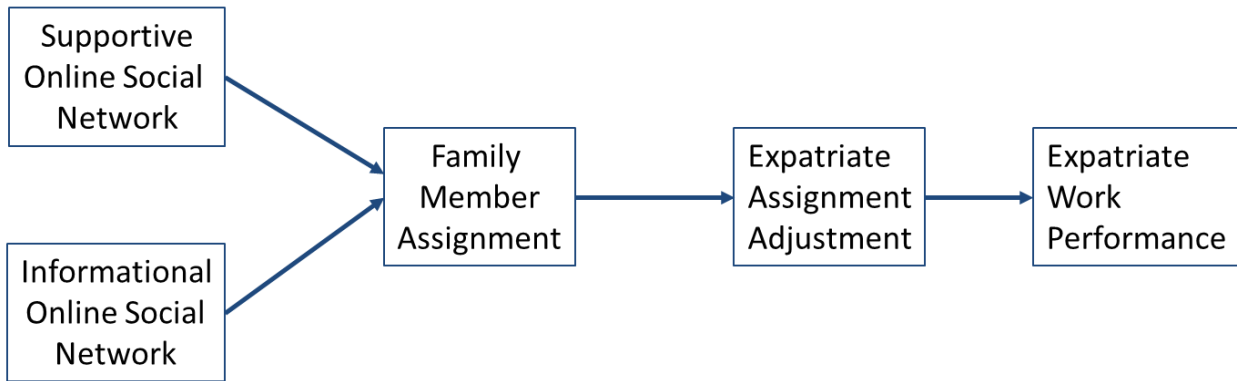
Figure 11: Online social support (Crowne & Goeke, 2012)

3.4.2   Social Capital Theory

The premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns (Lin, 1999). Internet use offers important opportunities for Internet users to build and sustain social capital. (Liu & Shaffer, 2004). Social capital is derived from among other things, high levels of sense of community (SOC) due to the fact that it cannot be generated by individuals acting in isolation, but instead depends on a propensity for sociability and a capacity to form new associations and networks (Simpson, 2005). The theory of SOC will be discussed in section 3.4.5. Simpson (2005) further states that high levels of social capital are usually indicated by community members who feel a strong sense of belonging, a willingness to participate in community activities, and a commitment to actively work towards the future well-being of their community. Social capital will bring expatriates social benefits, such as social support, which will assist with achieving better personal outcomes (Wang & Nayir, 2006).

Technological advances, such as the Internet, have provided new pathways for social interaction and support (Sarason & Sarason, 2009). Internet use supplements network capital by extending existing levels of face-to-face and telephonic contact (Wellman et al., 2003). This emerged in response to discourse on whether the Internet increases or decreases social capital. Hiller & Franz (2004) also reported that there is evidence that computer mediated

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communication can support the development of social capital or social connectedness in physical communities. Wellman et al.'s (2003) research indicated that heavy Internet users do not use e-mail as a substitute for face-to-face visits and telephone calls, nor do they visit or phone more often. Their research also showed that most Internet contact is with people who live within an hour's drive. Furthermore, people who live further apart have less overall contact; however, these long-distance ties use the Internet for a higher proportion of their overall contact.

Wellman et al.'s (2003) research further indicated that Internet is particularly used to maintain ties with friends. This builds on the SNT discussed in the previous section. Friends usually interact as either two people or two couples, whereas family and neighbours are likely to be in densely knit social networks. Their research showed that the Internet is particularly useful for maintaining contact among friends who are socially and geographically dispersed – such as in the case of expatriates. However, there is less communication with friends who live further away than with friends who are nearby (Wellman et al., 2003).

People engage in social and asocial activities when online (Wellman et al., 2003). On one hand, the Internet is used as a tool for solitary activities that keep people from engaging with their family and in their communities. On the other hand, Wellman et al. (2003) discovered that not all online activities compete with offline interactions. People might read newspapers or search for information regardless of whether they do this online or offline. The time people save because they shop online may be spent in offline socialising with family and friends. Internet use increases participatory capital - the more people are on the Internet and the more they are involved in online organisational and political activity, the more they are involved in offline communities (Wellman et al., 2003). Hiller & Franz's (2004) research shows that online participation is an important means to increase social capital as computer mediated communication strengthens the capacity of individuals, such as expatriates, to command resources because of their participation in networks, which is brought about by the Internet. This creates virtual social capital with offline advantages. They further state that rather than distinguishing between online and offline spheres, people will use whatever means are appropriate and available to participate in community activities. People already participating offline will use the Internet to augment and extend their participation and become more involved.

3.4.3 Theory of Sense of Community

McMillan & Chavis (1986) defined Sense of Community (SOC) as a concept that firstly focuses on structure, which is the formation and setting of a community. Secondly, it refers to the "experience" of community, which includes the individual's perception, understanding, attitudes and feelings about the community and his or her relationship to it and to others' participation (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In work situations, it has been found that SOC can increase job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour such as loyalty, civic virtue, altruism and courtesy (Burroughs & Eby, 1998 cited in Blanchard & Markus, 2004), and in physical communities and face-to-face communities of interest SOC leads to satisfaction and commitment, and is associated with involvement in community activities and problem-focused coping behaviour (Blanchard & Markus, 2004). Zaff & Devlin (1998 cited in Blanchard, 2008) found that the amount of interaction between community members and components of the physical environment led to SOC.

McMillan & Chavis's (1986, p. 3) defined SOC as "*a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together*". They proposed that SOC is comprised of four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection. *Membership* is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness, which has five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging and identification, personal investment and a common symbol system. *Influence* is a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members. *Integration and fulfilment of needs* is the feeling that the resources received through their membership in the group will meet members' needs. Finally, *shared emotional connection* is the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together and similar experiences. Figure 12 below illustrates the hypothesised relationships between the elements in the SOC theory.

I. Membership

Boundaries → Common Symbol System

Sense of Belonging and Identification

Emotional Safety ———→ Personal Investment

II. Influence

   A. Member openness to influence by community members ←→ power of member to influence the community.

   B. Member need for consensual validation × community's need for conformity = community's power to influence members (community norms).

III. Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

   A. To the degree that communities successfully facilitate person–environment fit (meeting of needs) among members, members will be able to develop sense of community.

IV. Shared Emotional Connection

   A. Formula 1: Shared emotional connection = contact + high-quality interaction.

   B. Formula 2: High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure − ambiguity) × (event valence × sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members − amount of humiliation.

Figure 12: Elements of a Sense of Community and their hypothesised relationships (McMillan & Chavis, 1986)

McMillan & Chavis (1986) have provided a number of areas within their model that can facilitate ways of understanding how and where identity can be formed and how the separation from non-community members can be maintained. In particular, they refer to the importance of the common symbol system as a means of communicating between members - often to the exclusion of non-members - and the shared history of events that help to consolidate the sense of belongingness that members feel because of the mutual experience of events. Blanchard & Markus (2004) noted that often, physically-based virtual communities are built on existing community structures (such as workplaces, local town hall message boards, city halls, schools, etc.).

3.4.4 Implications for this study

The researcher admits that the grounded work undertaken could be related to some of the work that was previously done, but this only emerged during the course of the research as potential explanations of some of the phenomena were encountered as part of the development of the framework. However, each of the theories are based on preconceived assumptions or boundaries, which the researcher did not want to commit to as she did not know what the influence would be on her aim of understanding the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment. Crowne & Goeke's (2012) theory was developed after the researcher embarked on her grounded theory journey.

However, as will be shown in the chapters to come, the researcher refers to some of the theories in her research. She let the data guide her. For example, the theory of SOC helped the researcher explain certain concepts of the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates. Furthermore, social capital and social networking were shown to be very important for expatriate well-being.

3.5   Summary

The main objective of this critical review of the expatriate adjustment literature was to summarise the existing studies that take into account the existing theories regarding expatriate adjustment and performance. The aim of this review was to highlight the reasons why the existing theories related to expatriate adjustment did not meet the needs of the researcher in finding a theoretical lens for the research project. Three types of theories were discussed. Firstly, the "curve-theories" describing the emotions of expatriates throughout different phases of adjustment. These theories were rejected because of the lack of empirical evidence in practice and because these do not indicate how expatriates transition from one phase to the next. However, the researcher did indicate that the study does report on the mediating effect of the Internet on the process of adjustment. Secondly, Black et al.'s (1991) Model of Cross-cultural Adjustment was explained and empirical evidence regarding some of the constructs was given. The researcher rejected this model as her theoretical lens for four reasons: the subjects of the study, the boundaries of the study, the chosen research approach and finally the lack of empirical research based on this model considering the role of the Internet. Finally, the researcher presented three social theories being applied in the field of expatriate adjustment: Social Network Theory, Social Capital Theory and the Theory of Sense of Community. The researcher acknowledges that these are by no means the only social theories in literature related to expatriate adjustment, but the preceding discussion served as an illustration of the researcher's awareness of the use of social theories in the field of expatriate adjustment. The researcher contends that any of these three theories might have been appropriate as a theoretical lens supporting her qualitative research approach. However, she was hesitant about the assumptions associated with these theories and the boundaries that these assumptions would impose on her study.

CHAPTER 4: GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

This chapter extends the methodological discussion of the previous two chapters by providing details on the theory and practice of the Classic GTM, which is associated with the work of Glaser (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992 and 1998). This chapter will explain how GTM was used in this study. Understanding where the GTM "fits" in the realm of research is necessary in order to comprehend what constitutes a valid study. Figure 13 below outlines the discussions of Chapter 4.
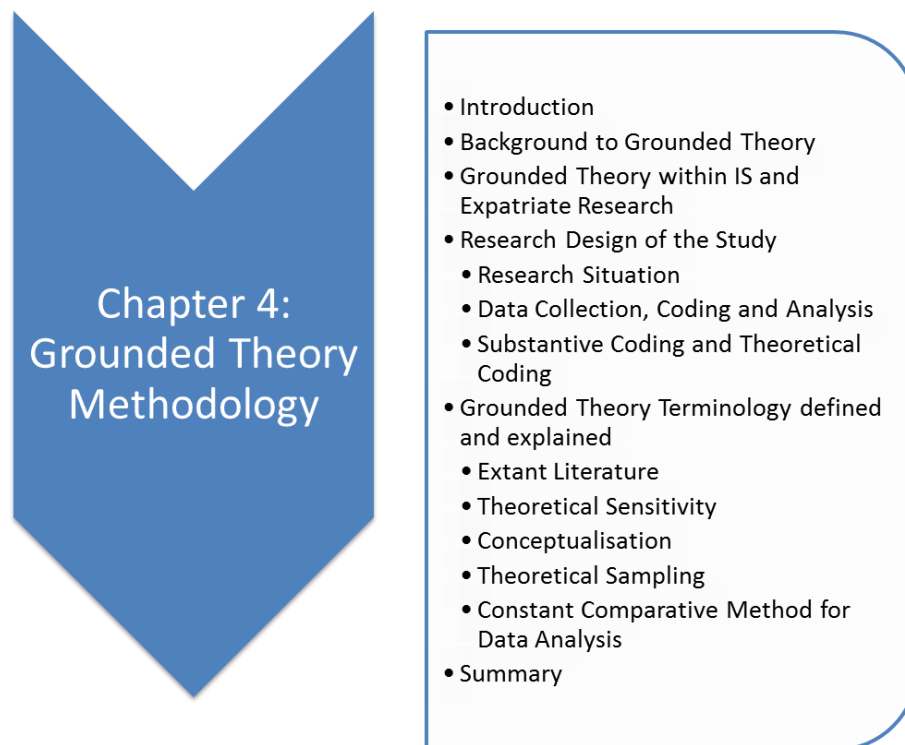
Figure 13: Outline of Chapter 4

The chapter will start by providing a brief background to GTM, highlighting the two main branches of GTM and explaining how and why it was developed. This will be followed by examining how GTM has been used within the arena of IS research and will serve as further justification for the chosen research methodology. The researcher will then highlight some challenges and critiques associated with GTM so as to position the researcher in terms of her justification and motivation for using this research methodology. This is followed by

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explaining terminology associated with GTM. Finally, the researcher will explain how GTM was used in the research design of the study.

4.2   Background to Grounded Theory

While studying dying patients, Glaser and Strauss discovered the core categories of dying awareness as well as the trajectory of dying. The research method was labelled the "*Grounded Theory Methodology*" and a book called *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Straus, 1967), which examined the development of this theory, was published. Barney Glaser was influenced by Merton's middle range theory and Lazarsfeld's quantitative methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. vii), whereas Anselm Strauss was influenced by the University of Chicago's "*down to earth qualitative research*" which had an "*unintegrated presentation of theory*" view. The convergence of the diverse backgrounds of Glaser and Strauss produced Grounded Theory. The aim of Grounded Theory is to generate theory from data systematically obtained from social research. This is seen as a strategy for handling data in research, providing modes of conceptualisation for describing and explaining it (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 2-3).

Grounded Theory emerged to challenge the status quo of sociological research, which at the time was primarily concerned with verification of grand theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 9-10). According to Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. vii) these grand theories lacked the means to "*close the embarrassing gap between theory and empirical research*".

After the publication of their initial book (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the two authors diverged in their views on the development and nature of Grounded Theory. This brought about the Glaserian and Straussian approaches, respectively. Although, Glaser personally prefers the term "Classic Grounded Theory" to the Glaserian approach (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

The researcher chose to use the Classic GTM as the research method for this study. The researcher felt that Strauss's version was too "deterministic", clinical and prescriptive. After having read literature on both methodologies, her impression was that the Classic GTM would allow for answers to the (very broad) research questions to emerge and provide an insightful understanding of the role of the Internet in the KSA.

4.3 Grounded Theory within IS and Expatriate Research

Glaser & Strauss's (1967) book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* was directed towards improving the ability of social scientists in generating theory. However, Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. viii) stated that while the book is aimed "*primarily at sociologists, it will be useful to anyone interested in studying social phenomena – political, educational, economic industrial – especially if their studies are based on qualitative data* ".

Within the IS arena, the use of GTM as a research method is on the increase. Orlikowski's (1993) study was one of the first to use GTM within IS research. Her study focused on the adoption and use of CASE tools and confirmed that GTM should be recognised as an interpretive method. Urquhart (2001), stated that IS researchers tend to undertake GTM research from an interpretive perspective, which would be considered valid because the philosophical foundation of GTM is not explicitly expressed.

Hughes and Jones (2004) highlighted the consistency of some GTM elements to interpretive research: The Constant comparative method and theoretical sampling are some of the elements that will be discussed in section 4.5.4 below. They further discussed the successful use of GTM in a number of IS studies. They concluded that GTM "*can assist conceptually in the understanding of a problem situation, can discover local empirical theory and can also assist with the articulation of lessons learned*" (Hughes & Jones, 2004, p. 67).

GTM has also been successfully used within expatriate research. For example Gupta, Banerjee & Gaur's (2012) study attempted to strengthen the existing knowledge about factors affecting the adjustment process of the trailing expatriate spouse and the subsequent impact of any maladjustment or expatriate failure. Their investigation revealed the recurrence of several factors studied earlier in previous models such as cultural novelty, family and peer support, the organisation's support and the spouse's personality. Additionally, they found that the Indian spouses' adjustment to expatriate assignments was influenced greatly by their perceived gender-role ideology and their marital obligations to their partners. Gupta et al.'s motivation for using the GTM was a result of a gap in literature on the trailing spouse. Kollinger-Santer and Fischlmayr's (2013) study aimed to discover factors that influence the work-life balance (WLB) of international business travelers, and explore potential differences between male and female travelers. The results clearly show a big difference in the perception of factors influencing WLB depending on the family situation. Their study highlights the need for HR departments to offer individually tailored support for the different

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groups of international business travelers. Osland and Osland's (2005) study articulates and describes nine paradoxes inherent in the expatriate experience based on data from a sample of 35 repatriated businesspeople. Their study indicated that expatriates who are more involved in the local culture seem more likely to experience paradox. Content analysis describes how expatriates handle and resolve paradox. Their rationale for using a GTM was that their findings uncovered and articulated phenomena that had meaning for subjects.

The above discussions support the researcher's choice of GTM as a valid and recognised methodology within the IS research arena. The methodology will support the interpretive approach to research by conceptualising the problem within the problem area.

4.4 Challenges associated with the Grounded Theory Method

Seldén (2006) reports that GTM is novel in the sense that it shifts some of the focus in social research from generalisations and verifications of the "grand theories" mentioned by Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 6) to the discovery of new and unexpected knowledge. He further adds that: "*Theoretical sampling has the potential to uncover, in detail, similarities and differences in groups under investigation – it has all the promise of a useful tool".* However, in addition to the promising statements above, divergent views on the use of GTM as a research methodology have been expressed.

Seldén (2006, p. 126) argued that a fundamental flaw in GTM is related to theoretical sensitivity: *"Conceptualisations do not emerge from data. Their source is within the researcher and is dependent on the extent to which he/ she is widely read in scholarly matters. If the opposite were true, inexperienced researchers would be the most effective investigators".* The researcher found that by being an expatriate within the research setting, she was theoretically sensitive to concepts uncovered through the research. This however, brought with it the question of researcher bias.   No one, especially on PhD level enters the research situation with a "clean slate" and the researcher attempted to overcome researcher bias by treating her own thoughts as data, and including it in memos as advocated by Glaser (1998, p. 182). This will be explained in more detail in section 6.3.

Seldén (2006, p. 127) proposed that if a researcher is to use the GTM methodology, special attention should be paid to the following deficiencies: (1) Finicky coding. This is also a criticism from Glaser on the Strauss and Corbin version of GTM (Glaser, 1992), (2) the break from context in the coding procedure which might cause the researcher to lose focus, (3) lack

of insight regarding the matter of pre-understanding, which examines the role of extant literature as will be discussed in section 4.5.1 below, and (4) the production of everyday knowledge on the participant level preventing attachment to high level theories.

Taking the above into consideration, the researcher decided to follow Glaser & Holton's (2004, p. 10) *"Just do it"* approach. The researcher had no previous experience in GTM, and therefore let herself be led by the data. Being led by the data is the crux of theoretical sampling, discussed in section 4.5.4 below. The researcher did not find coding to be "finicky" as professed by Seldén (2006), as she chose to engage with the material quickly and efficiently as he had advised in *"On Grounded Theory - with some malice"*. Appendix B lists all of the codes identified from interview data. The researcher did find it time-consuming as indicated by Hughes and Jones (2004) and Allan (2003). However, in her opinion it was not the coding that was the most time-consuming, because she experimented to find the most efficient method (which will be discussed in Chapter 6), but the consultation of literature and the writing up of the research.

4.5   Grounded Theory Terminology defined and explained

This section is dedicated to the explanation of terminology associated with the GTM. References to data collected in the study will be made where appropriate.

4.5.1 Extant Literature

Glaser and Strauss (1967) have received some criticism for their statement that no formal literature within the substantive area should be consulted before the study. Allan (2003, p. 8) stated that this is a common misconception - what was actually meant by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is that "*preconceived bias, dogma and mental baggage,… which may be taken to be preconceived ideas about working practices [become] embedded in the researcher's mind"*. The Classic methodology's philosophy concerning the use of literature is summarised in the following excerpt:

> *"It is critical in GTM to avoid unduly influencing the pre-conceptualisation of the research through extensive reading in the substantive area and the forcing of extant theoretical overlays on the collection and analysis of data. To undertake an extensive review of literature before the emergence of a core category violates the basic premises of GTM – that being, the theory emerges from the data not*

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from extant theory. It also runs the risks of clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that has not figured prominently in the research to date thereby thwarting the theoretical sensitivity" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 12).

Glaser and Holton (2004) further explain that as soon as the core categories, their properties and other related categories emerge, literature can be integrated just like another source of data by means of the constant comparative method. However, Glaser (1992) advocates the reading of unrelated literature which increases the researcher's theoretical sensitivity (this concept will be discussed in section 4.6.4 below). This in turn will aid the researcher in conceptualising the data and theoretical codes.

In order to find a suitable research topic, reading prior literature was unavoidable – this literature was later used to find a research situation (Dick, 2005). Due to the unique position the researcher found herself in, living as an expatriate in the KSA, she decided to contribute to the KSA body of knowledge by considering a research topic in this area. The researcher started reading expatriate literature and it was evident that a number of challenges exist for successful deployment of expatriates. These challenges include early departure due to factors such as spousal influence (Tung, 1987; Black & Stevens, 1989; Fish & Wood, 1997), lack of cross- cultural training/ understanding (Tung, 1986; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005), fluency in the host language (Tung, 1986; Selmer, 2006), and expatriate personality or emotional immaturity (Tung, 1987; Johnson et al., 2003; Shaffer et al., 2006). Due to the increase in deployment and use of expatriates by organisations (Global Relocation Trends Survey 2010, n.d.), the high costs associated with expatriates (Shaffer et al., 2006), and the emotional upheaval for expatriate families (Tung, 1987), the success of the expatriate is imperative. A number of studies have been dedicated to the subject of expatriate adjustment, for example Black and Stevens (1989), Shaffer et al. (2006), Selmer et al. (2007), Pires et al. (2006). All of these studies focused on a deeper understanding of the facets related to the expatriate adjustment process in order to improve the successful deployment of the expatriate in foreign countries. Examples of facets investigated include how deployment success is influenced by training (Harvey, 1983), the presence of spouse (Black & Stevens, 1989), and cross-cultural understanding (Tung, 1986). It was apparent that there was a gap in the literature on the role of the Internet in these studies. Given the researcher's background and prior qualifications in ICT, she decided to investigate the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment.

4.5.2 Theoretical sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity can be defined as: "*The ability to generate concepts from data and to relate it according to normal models of theory in general and theory development in sociology in particular*" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 11). The concept of "Theoretical sensitivity" was initially discussed in the *Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), but was updated in Glaser's (1978) book titled *Theoretical Sensitivity – Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Originally Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 46) stated that: "*The sociologist should be sufficiently theoretically sensitive so that he can conceptualise and formulate a theory as it emerges from the data*". Theoretical sensitivity has two characteristics: (1) the personal and temperamental bent of the researcher, (2) the sociologist's ability to have theoretical insight into his/ her area of research, combined with the ability to make something of his/ her insights.

In 1978, Glaser published a book titled *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser B. , 1978) which further elaborated on the subject. In this book, Glaser (1978) proposed 18 different coding families. These codes are not preconceived or assumed when doing GTM, but their relevance must emerge (Glaser & Holton, 2004). The coding families are summarised in Table 2 below.

Families	Examples
The six C's	Causes, Contents, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances and Conditions.
Process	Stages, staging, phases, phasings, progressions, passages, gradations, transitions, steps, ranks, careers, orderings, trajectories, chains, sequencings, temporaling, shaping and cycling.
Degree	Limit, range, intensity, extent amount polarity, extreme, boundary, rank, grades, continuum, probability, possibility, level, cutting points, critical juncture, statistical average, deviation, standard deviation, exemplar, modicum, full, partial, almost, half etc.
Dimension	Dimensions, elements, division, piece of, properties of, facet, slice, sector, portion, segment, part, aspect, section.
Type	Type, form, kinds, styles, classes, genre.
Strategy	Strategies, tactics, mechanisms, managed, way, manipulation, maneuverings, dealing with, handling, techniques, ploys, means, goals, arrangements, dominating, positioning.
Interactive	Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependency, interdependence, interaction of effects, covariance.
Identity-Self	Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, self-evaluation, identity, social worth, self-realisation, transformations of self, conversions of identity.
Cutting Point	Boundary, critical juncture, cutting point, turning point, breaking point, benchmark, division, cleavage, scales, in-out, intra-extra, tolerance levels, dichotomy, trichotomy, polychotomy, deviance and point of no return.
Means-Goal	End, purpose, goal, anticipated consequence, products.
Culture	Social norms, social values, social beliefs, and social sentiments.
Consensus	Clusters, agreements, contracts, definitions of the situation, uniformities, opinions, conflicts, dissensus, differential perception, cooperation, homogeneity - heterogeneity, conformity, non-conformity, and mutual expectation.
Mainline	Social control, recruitment, socialisation, stratification, status passage, social organisation, and social order, social institutions, social interaction, social worlds, social mobility etc.

Theoretical	Parsimony, scope, integration, density, conceptual level, relationship to data, relationship to other theory, clarity, fit ,relevance, modifiability, utility, condensability, inductive-deductive balance and interfeeding, degree of, multivariate structure, use of theoretical codes, interpretive, explanatory and predictive power etc.
Ordering or Elaboration	Structural, temporal and generality ordering.
Unit	Collective, group, nation, organisation, aggregate, situation, context, arena, social world, behavioral pattern, territorial units, society, family etc. and positional units: status, role, role relationship, status-set, role-set, person-set, role partners.
Reading	Concepts, problems and hypotheses
Models	Linear or property space

Table 2: Coding Families (Glaser, 1978: 74-82)

Glaser (1978, p. 73) explains that these coding families are not mutually exclusive and (can) overlap considerably. One family can also create or "spawn" another family. These families, or those created by the researcher, together with theoretical sensitivity will aid the researcher in creating his/ her theory (Glaser, 1992, p. 82).

From the proposed coding families the researcher used the "degree" and "model" families. The researcher did not set out to use these families, instead during the research process the researcher identified codes that related to concepts which in turn informed categories. For example, initially the researcher identified the concept of "isolation". It transpired that on an individual level expatriates experience isolation differently and that this depends on a number of factors which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Therefore, to account for the subjective nature of the expatriate experience the researcher renamed the substantive category "degree of isolation". The coding family therefore emerged from the data. The "degree" coding family was used to explain the extent to which expatriates experienced isolation and the flow of information. This will be discussed in detail in Chapters 9 and 10 respectively. An abstraction of the generated concepts associated with the substantive categories and core category were presented in the form of the proposed substantive theoretical model, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

The researcher found that being an expatriate in the KSA herself, combined with her background and ability to think and translate theories, allowed her to be theoretically sensitive to the emerging concepts. Her interpretive approach to the research – aiming to make sense of the situation combined with her sensitivity to what was happening within the research area - provided her with a unique opportunity to obtain rich data from the participants.

4.5.3 Conceptualisation

Conceptualisations allow GTM to rise above qualitative methods that are of a descriptive nature and which are focused on accuracy (Glaser, 2002). Conceptualisation can be described as the categorising of emergent social patterns grounded in research data (Glaser, 2002). The result is grounded concepts that are: (1) Abstract of time, place, and people. GTM is abstract from any one meaningful field, routine perceptions or perceptions of others, since there is always a perception of a perception, and an abstraction from any type of data whether qualitative or quantitative. Hence, GTM is a general method. (2) Have an enduring grab – concepts will at a glance tell the story of the data. Glaser (2002) explains that grounded concepts can immediately "sensitise" the researcher into seeing a pattern. As an example,

Table 3 below illustrates the concepts derived for the substantive category Degree of Isolation discussed in Chapter 8.

	Perspective	Concept
Degree of Isolation	Living Space	Compound Life: Safe Haven or jail?
		Oppressive or alien state
	Expatriate status	Single/ Unaccompanied vs. Accompanied
	Social Support	Integration with the local community
		Expatriate community
		Benevolent community
	Freedom of Movement	Accessibility of the KSA
		Mobility in the KSA
	Expatriate state of Mind	Adjusting or surviving

Table 3: Concepts derived for Degree of Isolation

Conceptualisation allows the researcher to use his/ her own concepts generated from data instead of using the preconceived concepts of other researchers (Glaser, 2002).

4.5.4 Theoretical Sampling

At the heart of content analysis is theoretical sampling. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 47) advise that: "*Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory*". This is in contrast to traditional research designs using other sampling methods such as statistical sampling, stratified sampling and random sampling. They further added that: "*The emerging theory points to the next steps – the sociologist does not know them until he is guided by emerging gaps in his theory and by research questions suggested by previous answers*".

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 47) indicate that the basic question in theoretical sampling is: "*what groups or subgroups does one turn to next in data collection? And for what theoretical purpose?*" Theoretical sampling should be done based on theoretical purpose and relevance, not on structural circumstances. "*The criteria of theoretical sampling are designed to be applied in ongoing joint collection and analysis of data associated with the generation of theory*" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 8). The sample groups will therefore be tailored to fit the data needed to ensure the greatest relevance to the emerging theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 65) further elaborate that theoretical sampling recognises a variety of data types and data collection methods. The different kinds of data will give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties. They labelled these different views *"slices of data"* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 65).

After the first initial baseline round of interviews, the researcher started the theoretical sampling process based on data identified from the initial interviews. An example of "slice of data" identified earlier on is the experience of living in a compound. This led the researcher to explore the concept further and it was later conceptualised as "Compound Living: Safe haven or jail?" This describes the degree to which individual opinion of compound life differs. In one extreme, expatriates perceived it as a safe haven, giving *"fantastic facilities"* [Interviewee 7] and freedom, whereas on the other hand it was described as "*living in a fishbowl"* [Interviewee 12].

4.5.5 Constant Comparative method for Data Analysis

The constant comparative method is key to the GTM. From the definition given above, it is evident that GTM has been defined as *"a method of comparative analysis"* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.1). Comparative analysis is often used in sociology and anthropology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 21). It is a general method, which is used by Glaser and Strauss as a strategic method for generating theory.

The purposes of comparative analysis techniques are:

(1) To determine the accuracy of evidence – conceptual categories or their properties are generated from evidence. The evidence from which the category emerges is used to illustrate the concept. The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt, but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area under study. Furthermore, the concept itself will not change, while even the most accurate facts change (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23). Glaser and Holton (2004) further emphasised this point 37 years later when they stated that the: "*The product of GTM is not a factual description but a set of carefully grounded concepts organized around a core category and integrated into hypotheses"*.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 will introduce the concepts generated from interview data. Chapter 11 will report on the hypotheses that have been identified between the concepts, mediated by the Internet. It will be evident from the discussions that the concepts are grounded in the data and the researcher will illustrate this by providing direct quotes from the Interviewees. This establishes the concept as valid and relevant.

(2) To establish the generality of a fact – The theme of not being concerned with accuracy of data is also applicable in this instance. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 24) say that: "*Accuracy is not at stake so much as establishing the structural boundaries of a fact*". Generalisations, by means of comparative analysis, delimit the emergent theory's boundaries of applicability but will also broaden the theory so that it is more generally applicable and has greater explanatory and predictive power. The comparative analysis method is used to compare situations where facts are similar or different, thereby allowing properties of categories to be generated that will allow the increase in the categories' generality and explanatory power.

The researcher identified a concept from a single interview and then tested this concept in interviews to follow. The outcome of this determined which questions to pose to the next

interviewees in line with the theoretical sampling strategy (as discussed previously). For example, Interviewee 1 was the first participant to state that the Internet is a *"lifeline to normal life"*. This statement firstly implied that the Internet is seen as a "lifeline", and secondly life in the KSA is not considered "normal", as normal life in this context was understood as being life in the expatriate's home country. The abnormality of life in the KSA was also supported by Interviewees 2 and 3.

(3) To verify theory – the constant comparative method can be used as a means of looking for other cases that can confirm the existence of categories and propositions of the emergent theory.

After the development of a mature theoretical model, the researcher consulted extant literature, as discussed in section 4.5.1 above. Concepts generated from the interview data were then measured against existing theories. The researcher acknowledged that some aspects that were identified from the data can be addressed through other social theories such as the theory of SOC (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This theory was cited so as to explain how the sense of community derived by expatriates from the various communities that they were members of, assisted with decreasing the degree of isolation experienced. Furthermore, it also allowed the researcher to explain the concept of the role of the Internet within the community. Section 6.4.3 elaborates on the extant literature reviewed by the researcher as part of the constant comparative method.

(4) To generate theory – this is the principal use of the constant comparative method within the classic GTM methodology. The constant comparative method can generate two types of theory: substantive and formal (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32). Substantive Theory implies that "*the theory was developed for a substantive or empirical area of sociological inquiry such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency or research organisation*". *Formal Theory* is developed for a "*formal, or conceptual area of sociological inquiry such as stigma, deviant behavior, formal organisation, socialisation, authority and power*" etc.

The product of this research project is the presentation of a substantive theoretical model as previously presented in section 1.4 in Figure 3. This theoretical model explains how expatriates use the Internet as a mediator to manage the degree of isolation and information flow experienced in order to adjust to the KSA. This substantive theoretical model provides a high level of abstraction between the categories. Chapter 11 discusses the hypotheses between these categories with their related concepts.

4.6 Research Design of the Study

Research design can be thought of as the logic or master plan of the research that determines how the study will be conducted. According to Mouton and Marais (1996, p. 32) the research design serves to "*plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised*".
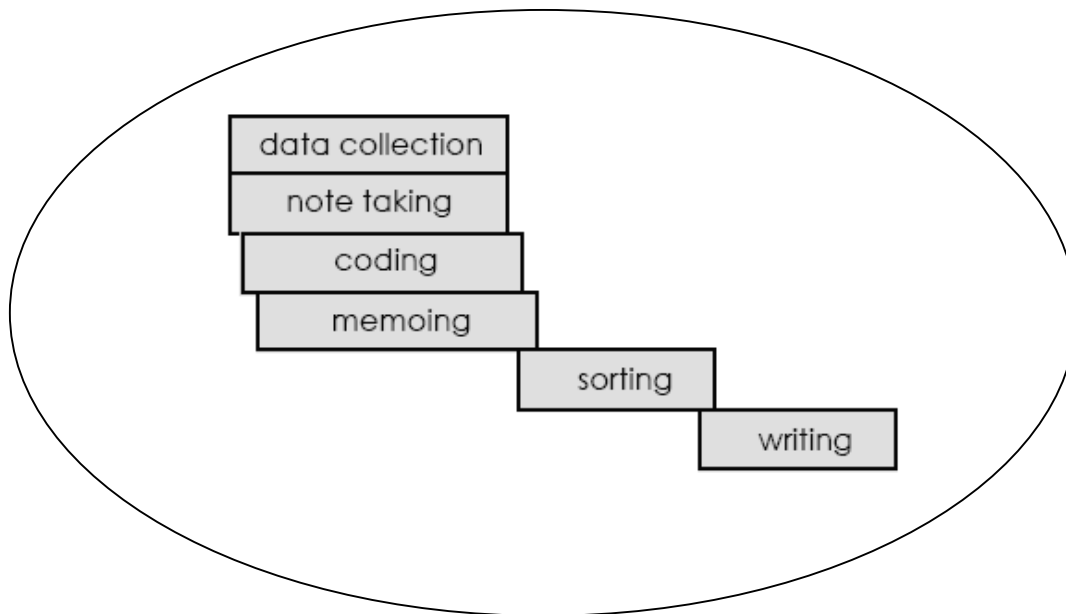
Figure 14: Grounded Theory Process (adapted from Dick, 2005)

Figure 14 above is a simplified illustration of the Classic GTM which will be used as a framework in order to give a high level overview of the approach. The researcher approached the chosen methodology from the "just do it" (Glaser & Holton, 2004) principle as advocated by Dick (2005).

4.6.1 Research Situation

Glaser (2002) states that GTM is the generation of emergent conceptualisations into integrated patterns, which are denoted by categories and their properties. This is accomplished through the many rigorous steps of GTM woven together by the constant comparison process, which is designed to generate concepts from all data. Traditionally research starts off with a problem statement and review of current literature. However, Glaser and Holton (2004) explain that the start of GTM research is not blocked by a preconceived problem, a methods chapter or a literature review. Classic GTM begins with a research situation (Dick, 2005) within a substantive area that allows the researcher to understand what

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the main concern is of the primary participants (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Due to the researcher's presence in the KSA, residing as an expatriate in a compound, this setting became the research's substantive area of enquiry. The researcher entered the substantive area with broad research questions, which did not include a priori constructs or theories to be verified.

The researcher was greatly influenced by her experiences of being an expat in the KSA, which in turn influenced her research situation and research topic. The researcher commenced reading literature related to expatriates and discovered challenges associated with expatriate adjustment. She had no preconceived ideas as to what the role of the Internet might be in addressing these challenges (on a theoretical level) and she remained as open as (humanly) possible when entering the research area to the extent that she struggled to choose a theoretical lens for her research project.

4.6.2 Data Collection, Coding and Analysis

Within the Classic GTM approach, data collection starts right away. Glaser and Holton (2004) state that: "*A good GTM analysis starts right off with regular daily data collecting, coding and analysis. The focus and flow is immediately into conceptualisation using the constant comparative method*". Figure 14 above illustrated that the data collection, coding and analysis happens almost simultaneously. Glaser and Holton (2004, p. 11) stated that the "*researcher's mandate is to remain open to what is actually happening and not to start filtering data through preconceived hypotheses and biases, to listen and observe and thereby discover the main concern of the participants in the field and how they resolve this concern*".

Data use in GTM has a special slant when compared to traditional qualitative research methodology. Glaser and Holton (2004, p. 12) explain that because GTM is a "*conceptual theory generating methodology*" any type of data can be used with the most common being qualitative data.

Interviews are frequently used as a means to collect data but – "*all is data*" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 12). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 161) dedicated a whole chapter to discussing different sources of qualitative data and in order to reaffirm the generality of the GTM, Glaser (2008) published a book titled *Doing Quantitative Grounded Theory.* Section 6.3 will explain how data was collected and managed in this study.

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Due to the boundaries of the study, expatriates living in compounds were selected. The researcher approached initial interviewees to ascertain their interest in taking part in the study. From that point on theoretical sampling took place.

4.6.3 Substantive Coding and Theoretical Coding

Glaser and Holton (2004, p. 12) stated that: "*Conceptualisation of data through coding is the foundation of GTM development*". The conceptual code depicts the relationship between the data and theory. A conceptual code is a condensed, abstract view that can explain the scope of the data. Glaser and Holton (2004, p. 12) distinguish between substantive coding and theoretical coding: the former relates to the *"empirical substance of the area of research"*, whilst theoretical codes conceptualise *"how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory"*.

Substantive codes are generated by means of a process called open coding. Open coding entails the line-by-line analysis of the data, which would keep the analyst theoretically sensitive (this concept will be discussed in more detail in section 4.6.2) and rise above preconceived notions when analysing, collecting and coding data. This is accomplished by asking the following questions:

- What is this data a study of?

- What category does this incident indicate?

- What is actually happening in the data?

- What is the main concern being faced by the participants?

- What accounts for the continual resolution of this concern?

Open coding will aid the researcher in his/ her theoretical sampling. It will focus the researcher on patterns among incidents that yield codes and rise conceptually above detailed descriptions of incidents. The researcher "*codes for as many categories as fit successive, different incidents, while coding into as many categories as possible. New categories emerge and new incidents fit into existing categories*" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 13).

The theoretical model changed as new codes were added, categories identified or collapsed until the abstract representation of the grounded data "fitted" the perceptions of the participants of the study.

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4.7   Summary

It was decided to adopt the GTM for this study because it has been developed within sociology where concerns about expatriate communities also reside, and because it has been successfully used in IS research (Hughes and Jones, 2004). This methodology provides a means of shifting the focus in social research from generalisations and verifications of predefined theories to an exploration of new views on unexpected knowledge. The GTM would allow a researcher to do this by not only moving away from using predefined hypotheses, but also gain an understanding in situ.

The Classic GTM in particular was applied because of its consistent focus on emergent theory as opposed to forcing concepts. Although some literature reviews have taken place as was seen in Chapter 3 and will be covered again in Chapter 5, no literature relating to the substantive area that would lead to predefined hypotheses was consulted. Chapter 6 will detail how data was collected in this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONTEXT OF EXPATRIATES IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

5.1   Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), formed by King Abdul Aziz Al Saud in 1932 had, according to the 2007 census, a population of some 27 million people of whom 5.6 million are expatriates (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 68). The KSA was a relatively uncomplicated society until the 1940s when the discovery of oil, a few years earlier, facilitated the increase in revenue which in turn helped the Kingdom to move very quickly towards modernisation, which includes a world of computers and telecommunications (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, pp. 65-68). To meet these fast paced development requirements, the KSA was dependent on the skills and expertise of foreign workers, due to an absence of an adequate local labour force (Abdel-Rahman, 2006). According to Shoult (2006, p. 309) the Saudi population are well aware of the longer-term benefits of modernisation, and are willing to accept these on condition that they take place within an Islamic context, but individual Saudi reactions to modernisation have not always been positive. He further states that there are old-fashioned as well as contemporary elements in any society and cognisance should be taken of the fact that rapid modernisation can cause problems of adjustment for the local population as well as expatriates.

In the context of this study, this chapter will serve as a brief introduction to the KSA paying particular attention to the challenges expatriates might experience whilst residing there.
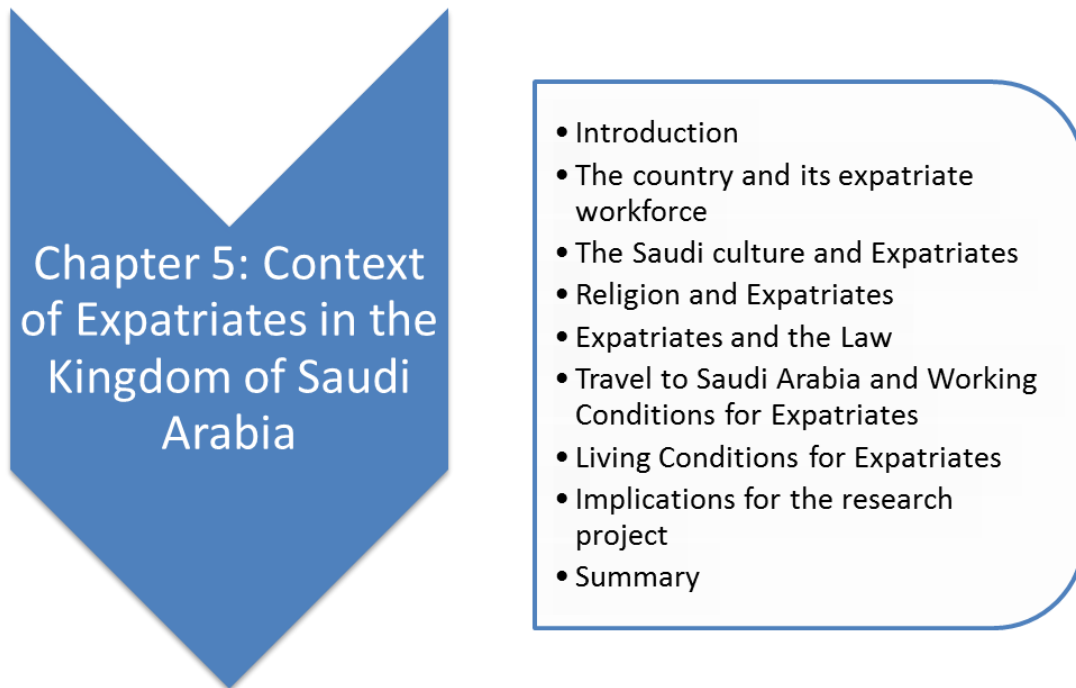
Figure 15: Outline of Chapter 5

Figure 15 above provides an outline of the structure of this chapter. The first section will provide a brief summary of the history of the KSA and the role of the expatriate workforce. This will be followed by an overview of the issues that greatly effect expatriates, which are: the impact of religion, the law and the culture, and living conditions including the state of the Internet in the KSA. The chapter footnotes indicate personal observations made by the researcher, who resided as an expatriate in Riyadh from 2006, related to the expatriate experiences in the KSA.

5.2   The Country and its Expatriate Workforce

The KSA is part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The GCC was formed in 1981, when Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman and Kuwait regionally united. The GCC countries are part of the Arab world and share a common cultural, religious and historical background (Kirk & Napier, 2008 cited in Naithani & Jha, 2010). The KSA is currently ruled by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, who is also the protector of the two holiest mosques of Islam as denoted by the title, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The Basic Law adopted in 1992 proclaimed that the KSA is a monarchy that will be ruled by the sons and grandsons of the first king, King Abd Al Aziz Al-Saud. The Kingdom does not have any political parties or national elections (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 65).

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Over the past 60 years, the economy of GCC countries, has relied heavily on expatriate workers (Naithani & Jha, 2010) in order to meet the fast pace of development (Abdel-Rahman, 2006). With unemployment rising among Saudis, resentment towards the large migrant worker community, particularly those expatriates occupying better-remunerated positions, has increased (Prokop, 2003). The governments in GCC countries, including the KSA, have therefore of late started to nationalise their respective workforces but with limited success (Naithani & Jha, 2010). In the KSA, this concept is called Saudisation (Prokop, 2003) which is a policy designed to increase the contribution of the local Saudi labour market and at the same time reduce the dependence on the expatriate workers. However, expatriates in GCC countries in general are preferred by private sector companies for the following economic reasons (Naithani & Jha, 2010):

- Expatriates are a major source of technically and professionally qualified and experienced workforce members.
- Training and induction time is reduced as expatriates learn and adapt quickly to the new environment.
- Expatriates are willing to work longer hours and have lower rates of absenteeism when compared to the local workforce.
- In comparison to the local workforce, the productivity of the expatriate workforce is higher.
- The majority of Asian expatriates working in GCC countries are available at lower salaries compared to that of the local workforce and expatriates from the advanced Western world.

As a consequence of this preference for expatriate workers, the dependence on the expatriate workforce will continue in the KSA and other GCC countries until professionally and technically qualified local workers are capable of supporting the local economy (Naithani & Jha, 2010).

5.3   The Saudi culture and Expatriates

The Saudi Arabian culture is rich and has been moulded by Islam. Their customs, which are greatly influenced by their Bedouin lifestyle in the past, are present in everyday life in Saudi even though the KSA has made great strides towards modernisation through development

over the past few decades. The Saudi culture is evident in the way that they dress, and the regulations for women.

The normal dress for Saudi men is a white "thobe" (long robe) topped by a white, or red and white, cotton headdress called the "ghutra". It is suggested that men either refrain from wearing, or cover up, gold chains and other jewellery in public (Shoult, 2006, p. 324).

Women, including expatriate women, wear an abaya, which can be described as a loose ankle-length cotton dress with sleeves and a high neckband. However, it is not actually against the law for non-Saudi women not to wear an abaya (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011), (Lothar, 2010, p. 324). Tight fitting clothes such as pants or leggings are not recommended. All Saudi women and the majority of Muslim women cover their hair (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 87). Some expatriate women cover their hair in order to not draw attention to themselves and to avoid being confronted by the Mutawwa (the Religious Police) who are often seen patrolling the shopping centres and who frequently challenge women on this point (Lothar, 2010, p. 324). Most Saudi women cover their faces in public. Figure 16 illustrates how some Saudi woman dress when appearing in public.

Figure 16: An example of how some Saudi women might dress when appearing in public (Goodman, 2014)

Work and social life are divided strictly by gender. Outside the family circle the genders are segregated. Opportunities for women (of all nationalities) to work are rare. (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011). Arab News (Arab News Riyadh, 2013) reported that the Ministry of Labour has allowed expatriate women to work in seven job categories: health, education, dressmaking, childcare, in wedding halls and as cleaners. Employment for

expatriate women is based on a number of conditions such as whether the work is fulltime, their qualifications and their experience. According to the article, the reason why expatriate women are allowed to be employed in these categories is because not enough local women are available for these posts.

Women, including expatriate women, are not allowed to be accompanied by a man who is not immediate family. Accompanying a woman by, for example, driving her to a destination, can lead to serious trouble with the authorities even if you are an expatriate. Men and women who are not immediately related, are also not allowed to publicly socialise. For example enjoying a cup of coffee in public. Figure 17 below illustrates gender segregation at a popular fast food restaurant, McDonalds.

Figure 17: Example of segregation of genders in Saudi (Jensen, 2011)

5.4   Religion and Expatriates

The KSA is an entirely Islamic (Muslim) Kingdom and Islam is embedded in nearly every aspect of life. "Islam" means submission to the will of God (Allah). The essence of Islam is that Muslims believe that Allah is the only God that exists, and Mohammed is the last and greatest prophet. According to Islam, God's will is written in the Qur'an, and was revealed to Mohammed at Mecca by God in the 7th Century AD. Mohammed was buried in Medina and

these two cities are regarded as the two most important Holy cities of Islam. Non-Muslims are not allowed to enter Mecca. Muslims throughout the world face Mecca five times[2] a day in prayer (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p.83). Islam is the only religion that is allowed to be publicly practised in the KSA. It is therefore prohibited to publicly practise any other religion, and if a person is caught observing another religion it can lead to the deportation or imprisonment of the perpetrator. Furthermore, it is also a felony to attempt to convert Muslims to any other religion. Non-Muslims are however free to practise their own religion in the privacy of their own homes. However, non-Muslim religious services are illegal. The public display of non-Islamic articles, such as crosses and crucifixes or religious books such as Bibles, is not permitted and the articles will be confiscated (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 89).

Christmas and Easter, and any other non-Muslim religious holidays are not recognised in Saudi Arabia and most expatriates are expected to work on these days (Shoult, 2006, p. 142).

The ninth month of the Muslim year is the month of fasting known as Ramadhan. During Ramadhan a Muslim is not allowed to eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. The prohibition includes food, drink and cigarettes (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p 84). Expatriates must be careful not to offend Muslims (Shoult, 2006, p. 314). No one, including expatriates, is allowed to eat, drink or smoke in public during the fasting hours and strict penalties including deportation can be incurred if one is caught (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 84).

5.5   Expatriates and the Law

Whilst expatriates are in the KSA they are subject to the laws and moral standards of the authorities and people of the country (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 89). These laws and customs are considerably stricter than those in other GCC, Western or Asian countries. In the KSA a dress code is enforced, for men and women. There have been various reports of human rights violations and abuses in the KSA that include, but are not limited to, a lack of legal status and equality for women, wide-spread and specific discrimination against religious minorities and non-Muslim groups, lack of due process in the judicial system, detainment and imprisonment without trial, arbitrary rulings, torture, unfair labour practices

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[2] Even while travelling on aircraft, some Muslims may pray (usually at the emergency exists on those aircraft that do not have a prayer room) in the direction of Mecca.

and the total absence of any political rights, freedom of expression or association (Almugaiteeb, 2010). Furthermore, the use and importation of alcohol is prohibited and strict rules governing moral behaviour are enforced. Breaking of these rules or regulations are not crimes in any of the aforementioned countries, but are treated as punishable crimes in the KSA (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, pp. 89-90).

Shari'a law, derived from the Qur'an is practised in the KSA (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 89). The punishment prescribed by Shari'a law can be considered ruthless when compared to normal Western standards. Murder and acts that are considered to be sexually immoral by Shari'a law such as adultery or homosexual acts as well as renunciation of the Muslim faith carry the death penalty in the KSA. The death penalty is carried out in public, usually by decapitation (Shoult, 2006, p. 316). According to the English newspaper *The Telegraph* (AFP, 2012), a total of 65 beheadings were carried out in 2012. After a theft or causing an accidental injury or death the person responsible is required to first make restitution or pay compensation. A driver who may be in no way to blame for the death or injury of another driver or pedestrian in a road accident will nevertheless have to pay "blood money" on a varying scale to the injured party or relatives of the deceased person (Shoult, 2006, pp. 316-318). Section 5.7.3 describes and discusses the erratic driving that can be observed in the KSA. The consumption of alcohol, eating of pork products and use of narcotics are forbidden in the KSA (Shoult, 2006, p. 318).

5.6   Travel to Saudi Arabia and Working Conditions for Expatriates

Working conditions will vary depending on the expatriate's employment contract and the company that the expatriate is going to work for. Similarly whether the expatriate's family can accompany him/ her, will depend on his/ her job and whether the expatriate holds suitable academic or professional qualifications. The expatriate's employer is also his/ her sponsor. The sponsor is responsible for obtaining the expatriate's work and residence permits and is legally responsible for the expatriate. If an expatriate wishes to change employment, sponsorship must be transferred to another employer with the agreement of the first sponsor in the form of a release letter (Naithan & Jha, 2010).

During the expatriate's stay in the KSA his/ her sponsor will retain his/ her passport. In return he will provide the expatriate with an identity document called an "Iqama" which should be

carried at all times. Only the sponsor can obtain the necessary exit and re-entry visa, which will be put in an expatriate's passport and returned to the expatriate before he/ she leaves. Only close family visits are allowed and only the sponsor can apply for these visit visas (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 72).

5.7   Living Conditions for Expatriates

The living conditions in the host country might be a determining factor for a potential expatriate when deciding to take up an international assignment. Tung (1986) reported that the small offices and accommodations seem unappealing to Westerners. She further reported that even simple every-day tasks in the local country, like making a photocopy, can become a task that takes days to complete "*[it] can turn out to be a four or five-day ordeal*" (Tung, 1986, p. 22). Therefore, knowing what to expect in terms of everyday necessities might be just as important as knowing about the foreign culture. The living conditions for expatriates are discussed below in order to provide an understanding of life for an expatriate living in the KSA.

5.7.1   Accommodation

Whether an expatriate finds his/ her own accommodation upon arrival depends on the terms of their contract (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2000, p. 9). Saudis own all accommodation, and availability and cost fluctuate with the laws of supply and demand (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 90). The trend for expatriates, particularly Western expatriates, is to live in a compound where villas and apartments are available. "*The compounds of western expatriates in Saudi Arabia were established in order to enable people with profoundly differing cultural backgrounds to live side by side*" (Glaze, 2006, p. 83). Residents of these communities enjoy a Western-style open environment, which allows them to escape from the strict cultural restrictions outside the gates. Importantly, within the boundaries of these compounds women are not obliged to comply with the traditional dress code which is enforced outside. Glaze (2006, p. 87) reported that a Lebanese Christian woman described her life in a compound in Saudi Arabia in the following way: "... *for a family which does not live in a compound it is very hard ... because with the Saudi people they are very nice, but it is different, it is another culture".* A residential compound caters for the basic accommodation needs of an expatriate including water, power, telephone connection and furniture. Compounds provide an opportunity for new expatriates to meet other expatriates in similar situations, introducing them to the expatriate life style, which can include coffee

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mornings, toddlers' groups and shopping opportunities (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, pp. 110-130). Figure 18 below illustrates the layout of a typical Western compound in Riyadh, the KSA.
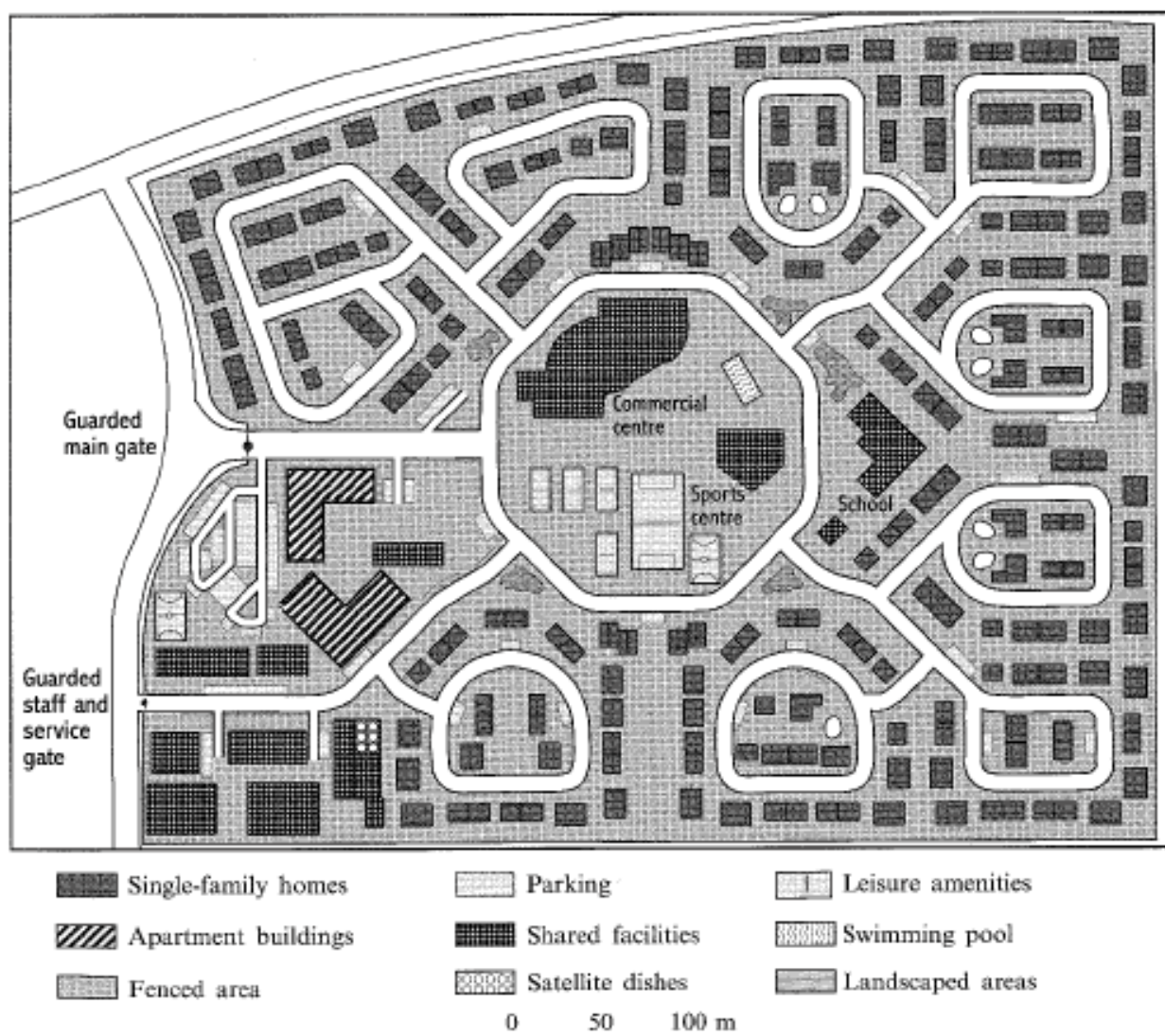
Figure 18: Example of a layout of a compound in the KSA (Glasze, 2006)

The compounds provide enclaves for Western lifestyles; a space where, compared to the outside environment, completely different social norms apply. Berger (2011) reported that women in his study described having two lives, one in compound and one off compound. Outside the compound women are exposed to numerous restrictive norms whereas within the compound they can enjoy more liberal ways of life - such as not having to adhere to a dress code - but are confined to a very small place, with intrusive interpersonal relationships. Outside of the compound women have to live by Muslim rules such as wearing an abaya. A constant source of frustration appeared to be the need to strategically and carefully plan their daily activities such as grocery shopping and running errands according to prayer times.

For Western professionals, who often live as expatriates in Saudi Arabia for several years, the compounds offer the material and social bases to realise their lifestyle, which is largely independent of their social surroundings and is therefore "transportable" (Glasze, 2006). Compounds are guarded by the National Guard, following attacks[3] in 2003, and do not always look physically appealing from the outside because of the security gates and barbed wire walls. However, the inside of a compound can be described as an oasis. Glasze (2006) gives a good overview on the development of compound living in the KSA. The earlier compounds were little more than single company dormitory camps usually with a swimming pool and tennis court. As the demand for lifestyle increased so did the quality of the compounds. It is not unusual for a compound to have facilities that include a sauna, jacuzzi, multi-gym, function hall, supermarket, a la carte restaurant and sometimes even a school and playschool (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, pp. 110-130).

5.7.2 Recreation

Apart from restaurants, of which there is a good selection in the main centres and which have segregated family sections, there are virtually none of the facilities for entertainment normally found in Western cities. There are no cinemas, no theatres, and no clubs as such. It follows that expatriates will have to provide their own entertainment. Embassies[4] tend to offer a number of options in terms of entertainment. Invitation to these events would generally be distributed via an e-mailing list.

There are hotels of good international standard in the major cities, however these are very expensive. The facilities available to expatriates will depend on where they will reside in the KSA. Diving and snorkelling are particularly popular pastimes because of the spectacular coral reefs and marine life in the region. However, if women[5] would like to partake this should be done from a private beach belonging to a hotel due to the dress code restrictions.

Expatriates do not often have the opportunity to socialise extensively with the local community and therefore tend to form close relationships with other expatriates of "*similar social status, common regional background, language, religion or profession*" (MoEA, 2001, cited in Naithani & Jha, 2010, p. 101). A number of expatriate clubs are active throughout

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[3] For example see: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3022473.stm
[4] For example the South African embassy would show the main rugby matches. The British embassy has a monthly social event.
[5] Saudi women swim in a special abaya – Westerners call it a Burkini - which is worn with the specific purpose of doing water-sports including swimming. It is a shorter version, but just as good as an abaya in protecting the woman from exposing herself immorally in public.

Riyadh (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 233) which afford expatriates an opportunity to connect socially. Despite the seemingly limited social activities available in the KSA, the following experiences are offered:

- A number of parks are available – but only families are allowed to visit these (no single men) and permission should be obtained before photos can be taken.
- Historical sites and museums including an Aviation Museum.
- Janadriyah festival – an annual occurrence that is a culturally rich event. However, for the first few days no expatriates are allowed to visit and families are not always allowed to attend together. There are a number of men only days and three women only days. Children are allowed to go with either parent.
- Desert expeditions[6] are among the attractions available to expatriates living in Riyadh. It is not difficult to find an attractive oasis, to hunt for fossils or venture into the Nefud Desert also called the Empty Quarter. See Figure 19 below.
- Riyadh Zoo – but only fathers and children or mothers and children are allowed.
- Riyadh also has four green golf courses and a number of brown courses; golf can even be played during the evening due to courses having floodlights.

Figure 19: Example of recreation in Saudi - Camping in the dessert

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[6] It is on occasions such as these that many expatriate women have the opportunity to leave the abaya in the car and walk around with "normal" clothes. Also, many expatriate women use this as an opportunity to take the wheel and do a bit of desert driving privately, since it is illegal for women to drive in public.

Expatriates in this study reported that they did take part in some of the activities listed above. The majority of these activities were available in the compound where the expatriate was residing.

Due to the limited number of recreational activities available in the KSA, in comparison to the activities available in an average Western country, expatriates have to rely on themselves to negotiate the potential problem of social isolation (MoEA, 2001, cited in Naithani & Jha, 2010). Recreational activities are an important factor in terms of adjustment as these are a means of providing social support (see for example Black & Stevens (1989)). Furthermore, recreational activities are an important way for expatriates to keep busy, especially in terms of the spouse. Fish and Wood (1997, p. 448) state that once the spouse becomes settled in the host country, in terms of coming to terms with the culture and way of life, the *"environment becomes neutral, and hence is no longer a source of frustration per se".* Their study recommended that expatriates pay special attention to their spouses during this initial time of adjustment.

5.7.3 Local Transport

According to the *General Department of Traffic* (2014) Saudi Arabia has 9 million traffic violations annually. This translates into 18 deaths per day with one death every one and a half hours, and injury or being rendered disabled every quarter of an hour. The number of traffic accidents last year reached 485 931. The World Health Organisation reported that deaths from road accidents make up the country's main cause of death in adult males aged 16 to 36 (World Health Organisation, 2013). According to Joffe-Walt (2010) the driving problems lie with young people as there are not a lot of social outlets. An example of this is given in Figure 20 below, illustrating two passengers changing the wheels of the car while the car is balancing on two wheels.

Figure 20: Example of dangerous driving trends in KSA
(Saudi Arabians in 'sidewalk skiing' craze – video, 2013)

Due to the fact that it is illegal for women to drive in the KSA (Shoult, 2006, p. 299), they are heavily reliant on third party transport, especially if their spouses are at work. According to the *Saudi Gazette* (Nihal, 2013) a new law has been passed that prohibits women from "hailing a taxi" forcing them to book one in advance. Taxis and limousines are the only mode of public transport available to women within the city. Since women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, public transport is the most relied on mode of travel used by women who cannot afford a private driver and car. The new no-hailing a cab law is a cause of concern for women completely dependent on public transport.

On 26 October 2013, some Saudi women protested the ban. CNN (Jamjoom & Smith-Spark, 2013) reported that authorities stopped the women and that they were kept in their vehicles until their male guardians arrived, at which point the women were released after signing pledges not to drive again. In the bigger compounds there will usually be a scheduled bus available for women and children which will take them to different shops every day of the week (Glasze, 2006).

5.7.4   The Internet

The number of Internet users worldwide is growing at a rapid rate. In March 2011, 30.2% of the world population had access to the Internet. Table 4 below illustrates this, and other Internet usage statistics worldwide (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012a).

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS March 31, 2011						
World Regions	Population (2011 Est.)	Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000	Internet Users Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	Growth 2000-2011	Users % of Table
Africa	1,037,524,058	4,514,400	118,609,620	11.4 %	2,527.4 %	5.7 %
Asia	3,879,740,877	114,304,000	922,329,554	23.8 %	706.9 %	44.0 %
Europe	816,426,346	105,096,093	476,213,935	58.3 %	353.1 %	22.7 %
Middle East	216,258,843	3,284,800	68,553,666	31.7 %	1,987.0 %	3.3 %
North America	347,394,870	108,096,800	272,066,000	78.3 %	151.7 %	13.0 %
Latin America / Caribbean.	597,283,165	18,068,919	215,939,400	36.2 %	1,037.4 %	10.3 %
Oceania / Australia	35,426,995	7,620,480	21,293,830	60.1 %	179.4 %	1.0 %
WORLD TOTAL	6,930,055,154	360,985,492	2,095,006,005	30.2 %	480.4 %	100.0

Table 4: World Internet Usage and Population Statistics (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012a)

The Middle East contributes to 3.3% of Internet population with the KSA having a 15.4% stake in Middle Eastern usage. In the KSA, 49% of the population has access to the Internet, which includes expatriates who make up almost a third of the Saudi population. Due to the rapid diffusion of the Internet, governments usually introduce Internet filtering to uphold community standards or morals and to ensure national security.

The Internet was introduced into the KSA in 1994 for state academic, medical and research institutions. The Internet was officially made available Kingdom wide in 1997 and was accessible to the public by 1999 (Internet.sa, 2014). The Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) was established to regulate the technology and communications services in the KSA (Computer and Internet usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Individuals, Business, Government, Education and Health 2007-2009, 2009). According to the CITC website (About CITC, 2014) the Communications Sector was the first sector to be privatised in the KSA, happening over four phases. The first phase involved the transference of the state-run telecommunications agency to the Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC), which is a state-owned commercial company, established in 1998. The second phase addressed the policy and regulatory reform that established the

Telecommunications Act in 2001, its bylaws in 2002 and the establishment of the CITC to act as an independent regulator. The third phase was the partial privatisation of STC which was completed in early 2003, by divesting a 30% stake in the company to the public. The fourth phase started with issuing licenses for VSAT service provisioning in 2003 and data services provisioning in 2005. Two additional licenses were issued (2004 and 2008) for second-generation mobile services (GSM) provisioning, in addition to the third-generation mobile services (3G). The third mobile licensee (Zain) launched its commercial services in the Third Quarter of 2008. In addition, CITC has issued the second fixed-line telephone license for Atheeb that launched its commercial services in the second quarter of 2009.

According to the *Miniwatts Marketing Group* (2012b), the pattern of Internet usage is indicated in

Table 5 below:

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pop.
2000	200,000	21,624,422	0.9 %
2003	1,500,000	21,771,609	6.9 %
2005	2,540,000	23,595,634	10.8 %
2007	4,700,000	24,069,943	19.5 %
2009	7,761,800	28,686,633	27.1 %
2010	9,800,000	25,731,776	38.1 %
2012	13,000,000	26,534,504	49.0%

Table 5: Internet Usage in KSA (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012b)

The Internet usage growth outlined in Table 5 is expected to continue increasing in the future. Reasons for the rapid growth include: (1) a competitive Internet pricing structure and (2) that 60% of the Saudi population consisting of adolescents and young adults are embracing the new technologies faster than expected.

In 2009 the CITC (2009) released a report based on over 9000 face-to-face interviews regarding the use of Internet in the KSA, where it was reported that there was a significant increase in the computer activities of Saudi individuals since 2007 as illustrated by Figure 21 below.
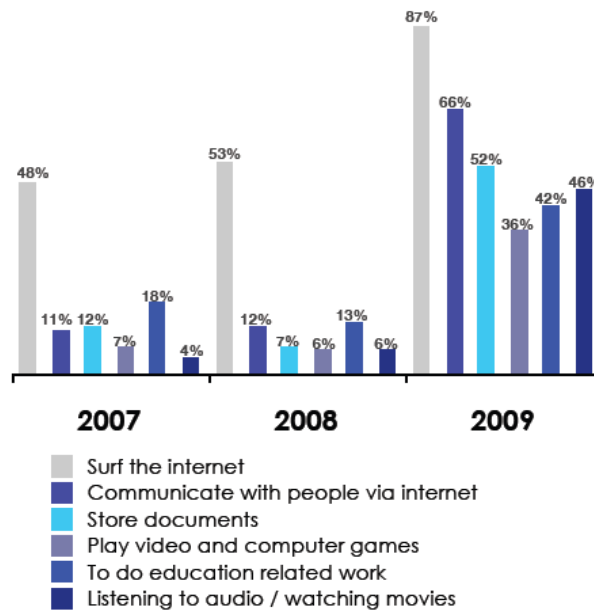
Figure 21: Internet activities by Saudi Individuals (Computer and Internet usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Individuals, Business, Government, Education and Health 2007-2009, 2009)

The CITC report further indicated that the strongest limiting factor to Internet usage by residents in Saudi Arabia is the knowledge of how to use it, with more than half of the respondents (53%) citing this as the primary reason. Other prominent factors that limit usage as cited by residents were affordability and family not allowing an Internet connection at home. Reasons related to lack of time and a desire not to use it were the least cited. The business entities in the KSA are not inclined towards doing business using e-commerce as only 12% of the businesses included in the study, used e-commerce infrastructure in 2009 to do business as compared to 9% in 2007. The slow uptake of e-commerce in the KSA is attributed to the lack of trust and understanding when doing e-commerce business. The few companies that do offer e-commerce services primarily use them for online selling of products. 36% of the companies with an e-commerce element offer the option of payment upon product delivery. (Computer and Internet usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Individuals, Business, Government, Education and Health 2007-2009, 2009).

There are currently over 20 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the KSA and the number is expected to rise. Available services include: (1) Dial-up for light use, (2) DSL, (3) leased lines for business use, (4) wireless technologies- WiFi and WiMax, and (5) Internet and mobile/ satellite phones (Internet.sa, 2014).

5.7.4.1   Internet Content Filtering

Cantoni and Tardini (2006, p. 40) state that every nation, be it a company or family circle, interprets the Internet content filtering in different ways according to different political, religious (in the case of KSA) and cultural points of view in the absence of shared international standards. Saudi Arabia is not the only country that filters Internet content:

 "Internet filtering by government is widespread. Almost every state – including countries with ostensibly strong commitments to democratic principles and civil liberties – filters or censors access to Internet content in some way. However, the quantity, and manner of the filtering may vary greatly […] China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Singapore, Burma and a series of countries in the CIS and Asia – where civil liberties are typically more restricted – filter more extensively. Such filtering may disallow access to certain Web sites, block or re-route email traffic, or return search results different from those requested by the user (Opennet Initiative, 2004, p. 4, cited in Cantoni and Tardini: 2006, p. 40)*

The Communications and Internet Technology Commission (CITC) has supervised the Internet since 2006. The aim of the content filtering service is to protect "*the Saudi Society from the harmful Internet content, and to ensure providing a good Internet content to the end users*" (Content Filtering Service, 2014, n.p.).   The CITC Internet Services General Department website (Internet Filtering, n.d.) explains that filtering is conducted through the maintenance of two lists, one commercial and one local. The commercial list includes more than 90 different classifications/ categories. Examples of prohibited web pages that will be blocked, include pages containing pornographic, illegal, or otherwise objectionable content. This includes pages containing information related to drugs, alcohol, gambling, terrorism and bomb-making, account theft, copyright infringement, as well as limited numbers of websites containing extreme cases of slander or abuse directed towards the Islamic religion or Saudi laws and regulations. Instead of displaying the offensive page, a block page will be displayed. Figure 22 below illustrates the page that will be displayed to Internet users when trying to access an "inappropriate" page in the KSA.

Dear User,   عزيزي المستخدم،

Sorry, the requested page is unavailable.

عفواً، الموقع المطلوب غير متاح.

If you believe the requested page should not be blocked please click here.

إن كنت ترى أن هذه الصفحة ينبغي أن لا تُحجب تفضل بالضغط هنا.

For more information about internet service in Saudi Arabia, please click here: www.internet.gov.sa

لمزيد من المعلومات عن خدمة الإنترنت في المملكة العربية السعودية، يمكنك زيارة الموقع التالي: www.internet.gov.sa

Figure 22: Internet censorship page

The list is updated on a daily basis. The local list is prepared by CITC through the addition of sites that are recommended by public users, after reviewing and ensuring that such sites contain illegal material. Pornographic sites represent more than 90% of the local list.

The filtering list is continuously updated and Internet users can complete a web-based form to report web pages that they feel should be filtered out. Several hundreds of requests are received every day from concerned citizens for the blocking of new objectionable sites. It is also possible to request a certain website to be unblocked, if the user feels that it should not be blocked. A team of full-time employees study these requests and implement them only if justified. The users can send their requests through by visiting the CITC website (Content Filtering Service, 2014) and completing either a "block request" or "unblock request" form. Figure 23 below illustrates a block request form.

عربي   CONTACT US

Search

التـرنـت.الـسـعـوديـة
Internet.sa

HOME   NEWS   SERVICES   KNOWLEDGEBASE   RULES AND REGULATIONS   STUDY AND STATISTICS

Block Request

E-mail

URLs (URL per line)*

0 of 100

Reason *

Additional comments   I have additional comments.

Are you a human? * (?)

04690

Write numbers above

(Cannot read this?)

* Mandatory fields

Submit   Reset

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هيئـة الإتصـالات وتقـنية المعلومات
Communications and Information Technology Commission

Figure 23: Block request form[7]

The forthcoming chapters examine how the expatriate participants in this study made use of the Internet. This includes the types of Internet services available to them and how these were utilised within the structure of everyday life in the KSA. Furthermore, the relationship that the expatriates in this study had with the Internet will be described in detail in Chapters 7 to 11.

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[7] http://web1.Internet.sa/en/block

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5.7.5 Education

In the KSA, Western expatriate children are not sent to local schools for the following reasons: (1) All education is segregated by gender, (2) all lessons are in Arabic, (3) non-Muslim students cannot enrol due to a large portion of the education only focusing on the teaching of the Qur'an. These factors resulted in the need for a broader spectrum of educational institutions, which led to the formation of the International School's Group. This development ensured that education for expatriate children is well established in the KSA. A number of international schools are available offering, for example, British, American and Australian/ New Zealand style education for children, but these schools usually have waiting lists. School fees in the KSA are high. Some of the schools like the British International School offer schooling to English speaking children from the ages 3 to 18 years (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 108 and pp. 224-225).

Expatriates further benefit from services rendered by the compounds that they reside in where schooling is provided as in the case of the British International School Riyadh, which has a satellite campus in a Western compound. The satellite campus opened in September 2007 on Salwa Garden Village compound offering primary education to the families of BAE Systems and UK MOD personnel (British International School Riyadh, 2009) . Furthermore, compounds can provide buses to and from the main International schools (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011, p. 111), which assists the spouses who are not allowed to drive in the KSA. Expatriates usually receive an educational allowance for some of their children. (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011, p. 225).

5.7.6 Language

Fluency in the host language was identified as one of the variables of cross-cultural training. Selmer (2006, p. 347) stated that *"Communication is important for management. But in order to communicate, a common language is needed. This is usually the problem experienced with expatriates relocating to a foreign country for an assignment. Although English is spoken as a second or third language in most countries, learning the host country's language can also be insightful into the culture of the host country"*. Learning the host language has been recognised as an important variable to expatriate adjustment, and has also been supported by empirical studies (see Suutari and Burch, 2001). Expatriates sometimes participate in language training courses (Selmer, 2006) as part of anticipatory adjustment (Black et al.,

1991). It was also documented that expatriate families participated in host language training (Tung, 1987).

Being fluent in a language will invariably give the expatriate the ability to understand more of the culture and customs of the country (Haslberger, 2005a) thereby reducing the Cultural Distance (CD) (Selmer et al., 2007). CD refers to the difference between two cultures and measures the extent to which national cultures are different from or similar to the culture of the host (Shenkar, 2001).

Being fluent in the host language will also aid in sensitivity awareness, especially in countries such as China, Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Spain - which have high-context cultures (Rodrigues, 1997) - where culture plays an important role. The contextual issue of culture will be discussed in more detail in section 7.4. Learning the language will also reduce the effect of culture shock (Black and Medenhall, 1991) experienced by expatriates during the adjustment process.

In the KSA, the local language spoken is Arabic, which is written from right to left and the numerals are written from left to right. It is a difficult looking script, but expatriates can pick up the most important phrases of the spoken language with a little effort (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011, p. 256). However, spouses of the expatriates living in a compound do not have many opportunities to interact with locals and would therefore struggle with learning the local language.

However, Arabic language courses are available, locally and online[8]. The locals are impressed when they come across an expatriate who has made the effort to learn a little of their language and, in a country where personal relationships are important, the effort will be rewarded. Although English is widely understood, many shopkeepers, taxi drivers and some officials do not understand a word of it (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, pp. 110-130).

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[8]For example see: www.babelarabic.com

5.8   Implications for the research project

The KSA is an ultra-conservative society. Its laws, culture and customs are different to those laws, cultures and customs of the host countries of most Western expatriates. This creates a society with a large cultural distance when compared to the home countries of expatriates. This chapter confirms that expatriates will potentially be exposed to a vastly different way of life from that which they are accustomed to in their own countries. This includes negotiating the new environment where they live, what they may and may not do for entertainment, integrating with the local community and the extent to which they understand the local language and cultural restrictions placed on them. Women are subject to specific restrictions which have an impact on what they are allowed to do and how they should do it. For example, the enforcement of a dress code and the prohibition on driving a car can be a huge culture shock for any woman. This forms the context and conditions under which expatriates use the Internet, which is at the core of this study.

5.9   Summary

The above chapter gave a brief illustration of the cultural norms and beliefs of the KSA that may have an impact on an expatriate's life. The aim of this chapter was to contextualise the study in terms of life in the KSA. This chapter has shown that up to a third of the population of the KSA is made up of an expatriate workforce. Whilst in-country all expatriates need to abide by the rules and customs of the KSA. This includes being aware of the dress code that applies to women in particular, prayer times that occur five times a day and the presence of "religious police" which might be foreign to Western expatriates.

The chapter further reported that religion plays a central part in law in the KSA and that all laws are based on the Qur'an. The only religion recognised is Islam and no other religion might be practised in public. Working conditions for expatriates will differ depending on their contract and the "sponsor" – the company employing the expatriate - will keep his/ her passport and the expatriate will be issued with a residency permit – an Iqama.

Western expatriates usually live in Westernised compounds – enclosed housing areas occupied mainly by Westerners (depending on the compound) which afford expatriates more freedom. The Chapter further reported that recreational activities are limited and that there is no public entertainment such as cinemas, which are considered anti-Islam. The available

education options, the local language and local transport arrangements were explained and it was reported that the driving can be erratic and dangerous.

The Internet content is filtered and censored in the KSA. If an Internet user is visiting an "inappropriate" webpage he/ she will receive a notice. There are online facilities available to report webpages that need to be blocked, if the content is deemed inappropriate.

CHAPTER 6: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline how the Classic GTM was used in this study. This will include the approach to data collection and management, and building of the theory. Figure 24 below illustrates the outline of this chapter.

- Introduction
- Participant profiles
- Data Collection and Management
- Building the Theory
  - The emerging pattern
  - The emerging categories
  - Extant Literature
- Summary
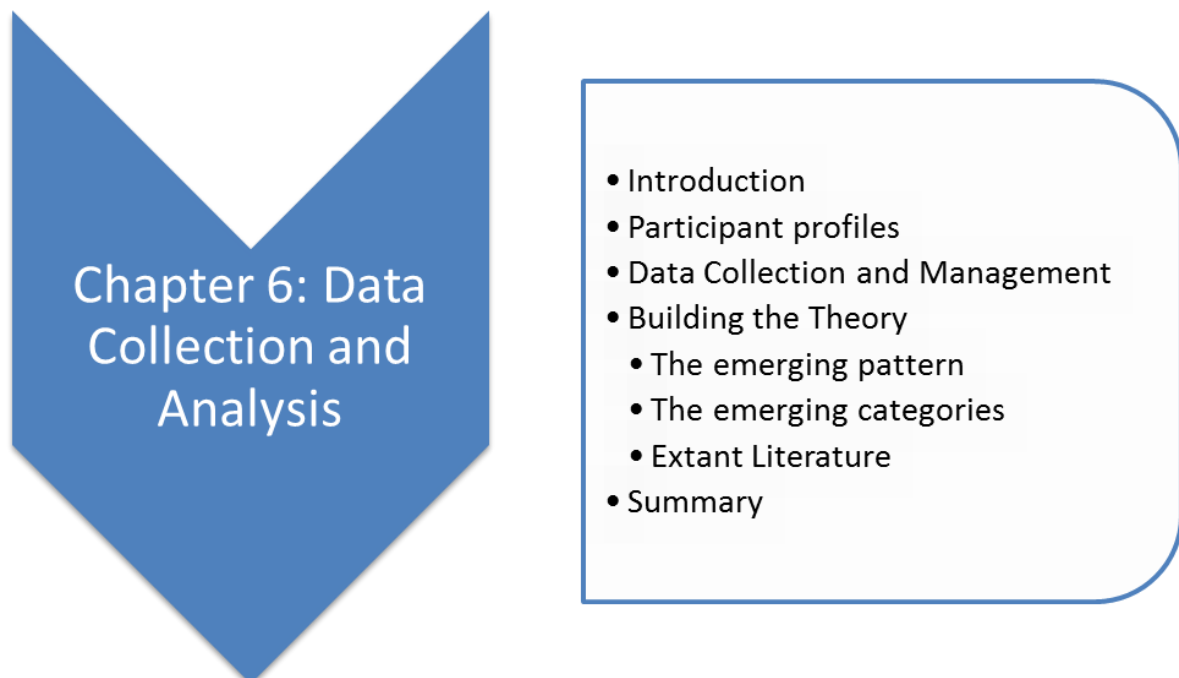
Figure 24: Outline of Chapter 6

6.2 Participant profiles

Data collection and analysis followed the Classic Grounded Theory approach described in Chapter 4. This study was conducted over a five year period. This included the development of a research proposal and obtaining approval from the ethics committee. It is anticipated that this study will add to the field of expatriate research by enhancing the theoretical understanding of the role that the Internet plays in the lives of expatriates in the KSA.

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The participants came from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds and encountered unique personal and life events that had an impact on their life in the KSA. The study involved interviewing 22 expatriates between the ages of 20+ to 50+ from different nationalities including: 3 South Africans, 1 Australian, 1 New Zealander, 2 Canadians, 1 Indian, 11 British, 1 American, 1 Lebanese and 1 Jordanian. The twenty-third interviewee, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) employee, is excluded from the Interviewee profiles as he was only interviewed to obtain an understanding of the Internet provisions on the compound.

Participants were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Expatriate

- Adult

- Having access to the Internet

- Willing and able to participate in the study

- Agreeable to research protocols and processes

- Able to speak and understand the English Language

The initial five interviews were chosen at random adhering to the above criteria, two women, one working and one nonworking, and three men. The interviews explored the participants' perspectives and concerns about life in the KSA and their understanding of the role that the Internet in the KSA could play in addressing these concerns. The substantive theory that emerged relates specifically to how these expatriates used the Internet to negotiate adjustment to the KSA. The theoretical sampling was conducted in accordance with the guidelines outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 157).

Participants were recruited from three main areas in Riyadh, the capital of the KSA: Two Western compounds and one more conservative compound housing multiple cultures. The first and second compounds had approximately 1500 and 300 residents respectively, from various nationalities. The third compound was more conservative and had a mosque on site. It is unknown to the researcher as to how many residents it had. Three interviewees did not reside in a compound, the researcher made this

decision in order to establish the "anti-view" on opinions about the KSA culture and living in compounds. These three expatriates came from India, Lebanon and Jordan respectively.

Participants were approached and were verbally informed of the study in order to gauge their interest in participating. Because the researcher was a resident of one of the compounds she was very familiar with the overall environment. Given the restrictions on movement in the KSA, this made gaining access to participants easier. Each of the participants signed a consent form to formalise their permission to participate.

All of the interviewees for the study met the inclusion criteria. Some broad aspects of the participant profiles are discussed below by way of introducing the participants, while some of the issues raised in terms of participant profile are later discussed in more depth. Whilst this is a small sample some comparisons are drawn between the participant profile in the study and existing expatriate research.

Interviewees came from a variety of cultures including Western, Asian and Arab (Non-Saudi Arabian) and the length of their expatriate episode in the KSA ranged from three months to 25 years. Some of the participants had previous expatriate experience, which provided a rich contribution to the study in terms of their depth of understanding of expatriate life in the KSA and ability to compare it to previous experiences. The expatriates came from similar socioeconomic backgrounds in terms of being professionals acting as knowledge workers or experts in their field in the KSA.

Appendix A provides an overview of participant profiles. In short, all of the participants had at least basic computer skills which allowed them to access the Internet. The age of participants ranged from 20+ - 50+ years. Two participants were in their 20s, eight participants were in their 30s, ten participants were in their 40s and two in their 50s.

In brief, twelve interviewees, eleven male and one female expatriate came to the KSA on their own Iqama. As Chapter 5 indicated, women are allowed to work in the KSA only if they are sponsored by a Saudi national or company. In such cases they will receive their own Iqama. Of the eleven males, six were accompanied, four (initially) were unaccompanied and one was single. The female's husband is in the KSA under

his own Iqama, her sons have returned to their country of origin as it is very difficult for them to find decent work in the KSA as non-KSA nationals.

Of the eleven males, seven had previous expatriate experience and were well travelled. They all had professional occupations with accompanying qualifications. Two of the eleven males, one accompanied and one unaccompanied, had indicated that they were not happy in their jobs (they had similar occupations), and they were literally counting down the days until they would leave the KSA. Of the eleven males, three were Muslim – the inclusion of Muslim interviewees was important to this study as it broadened understanding of the strict interpretation of Islam in the KSA.

The spouses of the expatriates were divided into working and nonworking, as the literature had indicated that one of the strategies for successful spousal adjustment is *"finding something for yourself"* (Fish & Wood, 1997, p. 449) to do. The sampling of these spouses was not only based on the distinction of working or not working, which was only one factor, but was selected based on the richness of their contribution in areas identified through theoretical and selective sampling. Seven of the eleven spouses were working at the time of the study and four were not working. Of the four who were not working, two had previously worked and could therefore contribute to the understanding of how expatriate spouses viewed the Internet "before and after" working.

6.3   Data Collection and Management

Data was obtained through electronic interviews, supplemented with casual conversation, casual observation and personal experience. As indicated in section 4.5.2 interviews are frequently used as a means to collect data but – *"all is data"* (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 12). Therefore, casual observations and conversations, and experiences were included as part of the memos. A critique against the GTM is researcher bias. The disclosing of personal experience being included in data is an important aspect of a grounded theory study, as researchers are continually asked how they ensured that their own biases did not affect the outcome of the study, and so should be able to provide evidence that demonstrates how they did this this.

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However, the primary method of collecting data was through electronic interviews. Selwyn and Robson (1998) reported that there has been a move towards using e-mail as a research tool, primarily in the form of quantitative instruments such as electronic questionnaires and, to a lesser extent, qualitative methods such as electronic interviews and electronic 'focus' groups. They reported on the advantages and disadvantages of using e-mail as a medium to conduct research and concluded that even though the use of e-mail is rapidly increasing, its use as a research tool will marginalise those individuals who are not privileged enough to have access to e-mail, such as had previously been the case with telephone surveys (Babbie, 1992 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

The advantages of electronic interviewing:

• Electronic interviewing is not controlled by the space between different geographical locations and time zones as the interviewer and interviewee meet "virtually" and do not have to meet face-to-face (Foster, 1995 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

• Electronic interviewing data requires no further transcription - the text from e-mail interviews can be manipulated by any word processing package or computer-based qualitative analysis package with a minimum of alteration. This will save the researcher time and money and reduces the chance of transcription errors as the data is exactly what the interviewee wrote (Foster, 1995 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

• The researcher has the capacity to go back and ask another question during the analysis stage (McMellon, Schiffman, Sherman, 1997 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

• Electronic interviewing lessens the difficulty associated with "interviewer effect", which can be caused by the mere presence of the interviewer which can be brought on if there is a status difference between interviewee and interviewer (Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

• Electronic interviewing can lessen problems associated with dominant and shy interviewees, this is particularly useful in electronic focus groups (Roberts et al., 1997 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998).

There are, however, disadvantages associated with electronic interviewing as well.

The most common point argued is that electronic interviewing means that the human factor is absent (Boshier, 1990 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998). Previously, it was stated that the lack of presence of the interviewer can make the interviewee more at ease. However, not having the interviewer present can lead to a great deal of tacit information being lost (King, 1996 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998). For example, the researcher would normally observe how an interviewee reacts to a question. King (1996 cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998, n.p) further states that attempts to convey emotion and feeling through e-mail – which he calls *"netiquette"* – are a poor attempt to replace the observation of these emotions. Therefore, Schmidt (1997b cited in Selwyn & Robson, 1998) proposes that electronic interviews can only be considered an appropriate and valid approach, which serves as an alternative to the traditional face-to-face approaches, if respondents have access to the Internet and e-mail.

The advantages of electronic interviews were especially important in terms of this study as time was limited – people in the KSA are very protective of their time as everything needs to be organised around prayer times, and the logistics of travelling in the KSA is complicated – especially since women are not allowed to drive. Despite this, there was no concern of this nature in this study as part of the inclusion criteria was that participants had to have access to the Internet.

Electronic interviews were conducted by e-mailing the questions together with the consent form to the participant. These were not standard questionnaires where the respondents had to tick the appropriate answer, but more like virtual interviews where respondents were asked to share personal experiences. The participant's suitability and willingness to participate had been established verbally beforehand. The e-mail indicated a response date and as soon as the participant responded, the interview was analysed and follow up questions (if any) were e-mailed until the interview was concluded.

The researcher used Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software application. This was found to be beneficial with the first five interviews, as it allowed the researcher to keep track of the codes, quotes and memos, which made data analysis simpler. However, in the later stages of analysis, as the theory matured, the researcher started drafting

theoretical memos by hand. Although, more laborious and time-consuming, the researcher found this method preferable. The manual method gave her the flexibility and opportunity to do the analysis anywhere, as she travelled frequently. The theoretical memos already drafted in Atlas.ti were exported and printed, which helped the researcher when re-reading and updating the memos.

Participant data was, in certain cases, anonymised so as to ensure that it did not contain any identifying information about individuals or organisations, thereby safeguarding the confidentiality of the data and the identity of participants and services.

While information about data management was made available to participants, only one participant sought specific reassurances regarding personal anonymity and data confidentiality following the interview. It was important, therefore, to allow adequate time to discuss participants' concerns at all points of contact.

6.4   Building the Theory

The research was conducted by following the guidelines for the Classic GTM as described in section 4.5. The data was gathered by means of selective and theoretical sampling. The data for the first five interviews was collected using selective sampling in order to establish a baseline framework for further theoretical sampling that followed. The selective sampling process allowed engagement with expatriates and spouses who have resided in the KSA for a minimum of three months up to 25 years. As a result of their experience of living in the KSA, they provided rich data which the researcher drew on through theoretical sampling. The interview questions were semi-structured with an open ended question at the end that allowed the participants to share challenges/ concerns that seemed important to them in relation to living in the KSA, which gave rise to the core concern. Figure 25 below illustrates the initial concepts derived after the analysis of the first five interviews.

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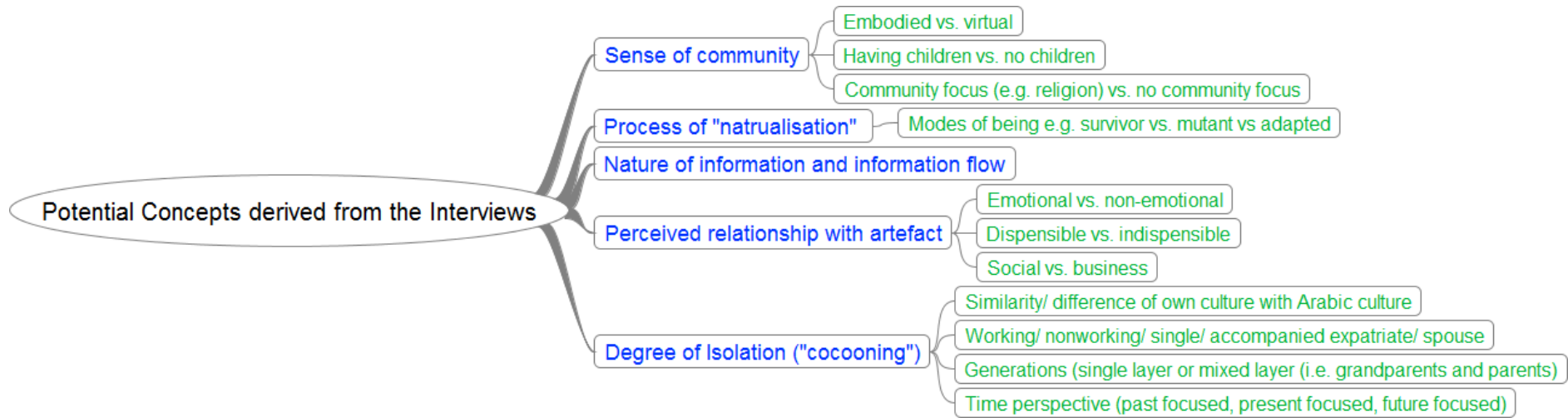
Figure 25: Initial concepts derived following the first five interviews

Theoretical sampling involved further interviews with expatriates within the substantive group. Selective sampling identified the core concern of the interviewees in the substantive area and the methods that they used to resolve this, while theoretical sampling gradually investigated in more detail such methods, giving rise to the core variables.

Building the theory involved, as described in section 4.5, a number of procedures, including: data gathering, reviewing interview data, coding, comparing and grouping data, and developing a tentative hypothesis or conceptual explanations about connections between and across emergent categories. A number of categories and their properties were identified, which led to the building of a significant volume of theoretical memos. Through further analysis, these categories were collapsed, leading to the building of a model that illustrates the relationship between categories, which were captured in the core concern, core variable and substantive theory.

Data gathering and analysis in grounded theory is a repetitive procedure. The research process started by gathering data at a high level in the initial interviews in order to obtain the core concern of expatriates which was conceptualised as negotiating adjustment in the KSA. The interviews that followed focused on the processes implemented by the expatriates to resolve these concerns.

Figure 26 below illustrates the interview iterations conducted throughout this study. It illustrates that the initial interviews were baseline interviews and each successive round of interviews focused on an emergent concept. Therefore, the core concern provided a conceptual framework for theory development and a focus for further interviews. The research then progressed with the continuing of each "round of interviews" as illustrated in Figure 26 below, which involved the analysis of those interviews, each time revisiting the earlier interviews for unseen concepts that related specifically to this process. Analysis was further aided by re-reading field notes, re-reading the interviews and adding to memos for theory building on the basis of new insights (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These actions enhanced the theoretical robustness.

Figure 26: Interview topics of this study

GTM seeks to develop a substantive theory that identifies and explains patterns underlying social phenomena (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), such as the processes in which expatriates use the Internet to address their main concern while residing in the KSA. Grounded theory combines different *"slices of data"* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 65), obtained from interviewees through theoretical sampling. Interviewees' quotations will highlight patterns and convey meaning rather than giving in-depth individual points of view. Therefore, quotes used in this text are not connected to individual interviewees nor are they intended to fully capture a particular concept.

Therefore, the researcher discussed the theory retrospectively with participants and other expatriates, which served to assess theory robustness rather than verify the theory.

6.4.1 The Emerging Pattern

The core pattern for this research emerged after conducting the first five interviews, open coding and analysis sessions. The emergent pattern was evident when the researcher revisited the memos produced by the researcher during the analysis phase. Memos are an important element of the GTM. These allowed the researcher to record her opinions which assisted with directing further action. Memos were captured by making use of notepad and paper, on iPhone or during analysis on Atlas.ti (initially). Memos were raw, unpolished thoughts, and included short descriptions, as illustrated below, longer more detailed and complete thoughts that later served as an introduction to a paragraph or quick schematics such as a mind map. The researcher produced approximately 50 memos. It is difficult to give an exact number since some of these memos were revisited and expanded several times during the different research phases as concepts needed more work and additional comments or refinement. The first evidence of the emotional relationship that expatriates had with the Internet, hence labelling it as a "lifeline", can be found in a brief memo related to the feeling of isolation and homesickness evoked in the event of the Internet being unavailable.

> **<u>Cultural Distance– describes the expatriate episode</u>**
>
> Major concern for expatriates in KSA – mostly due to the great cultural distance that exists. Isolation does not only refer to physical but also emotional isolation.
>
> **What does literature say about emotional/ mental isolation? Impact on expat?**
>
> Lines are blurred – cultural distance mentioned but is also determined by the relationship with the artefact which can allow decreasing the degree experienced. Also degree of information flow which determines how isolated expat can be.
>
> Also other aspects of isolation not just related to cultural distance but the physical location – in the middle of the desert – isolated from having access to day-to-day things like newspaper.

Table 6: Memo on degree of isolation

The memo in Table 6 above presents, in early form, concepts that were later expanded through constant comparison. At this stage of the research process, the researcher detected the recurring theme of isolation, which was influenced by the status of expatriates. Table 7 below illustrates the further exploration of the influence of expatriate status on isolation.

> **<u>Degree of Isolation</u>**
>
> This was first voiced by Interviewee 5 who indicated that Internet is very important especially for single expat. Isolation has been a recurring them. Interviewees 1, 3, 6 and 9 indicated the specific term. Upon further exploration 9 indicated that unaccompanied parents <u>do</u> feel isolated from their families.
>
>
>
> Interviewee 6, an unacc parent confirmed this. However, social interaction with others <u>reduces</u> the feeling of isolation. However it is dependent on personality as Interviewee 6 has indicated that he feels like an <u>outsider</u> when interacting with fellow expats, Interviewee 9 indicated he purposefully interacted with other = having an open mind. He further states that he has to **accept** things are <u>different.</u>
>
> *Acceptance of the "differentness" of host country part of the adjustment process - <u>U-curve</u>
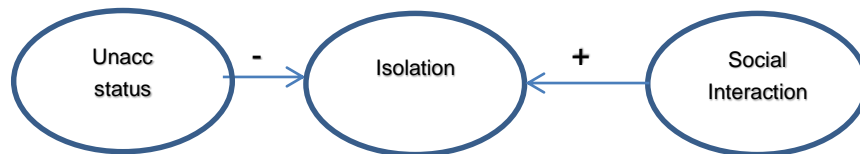
Table 7: Memo on expatriate status and social interaction on isolation

6.4.2 The emerging categories

The first category significant to the discovery of the core pattern was the substantive category of isolation. It was important to understand and contextualise the circumstances, heavily influenced by the environment, under which expatriates use the Internet. The second substantive category was the degree of information flow and the impact that it had on expatriate well-being. After the open coding stage was complete, theoretical sampling followed. This section uses examples from information flow related incidents to demonstrate how data was treated.

Many incidents from the interviews related to experiences of information flow. Throughout the analysis, the researcher created a mind map of information flow which

outlined the basic components of the concepts related to information flow. This is illustrated in Figure 27 below.
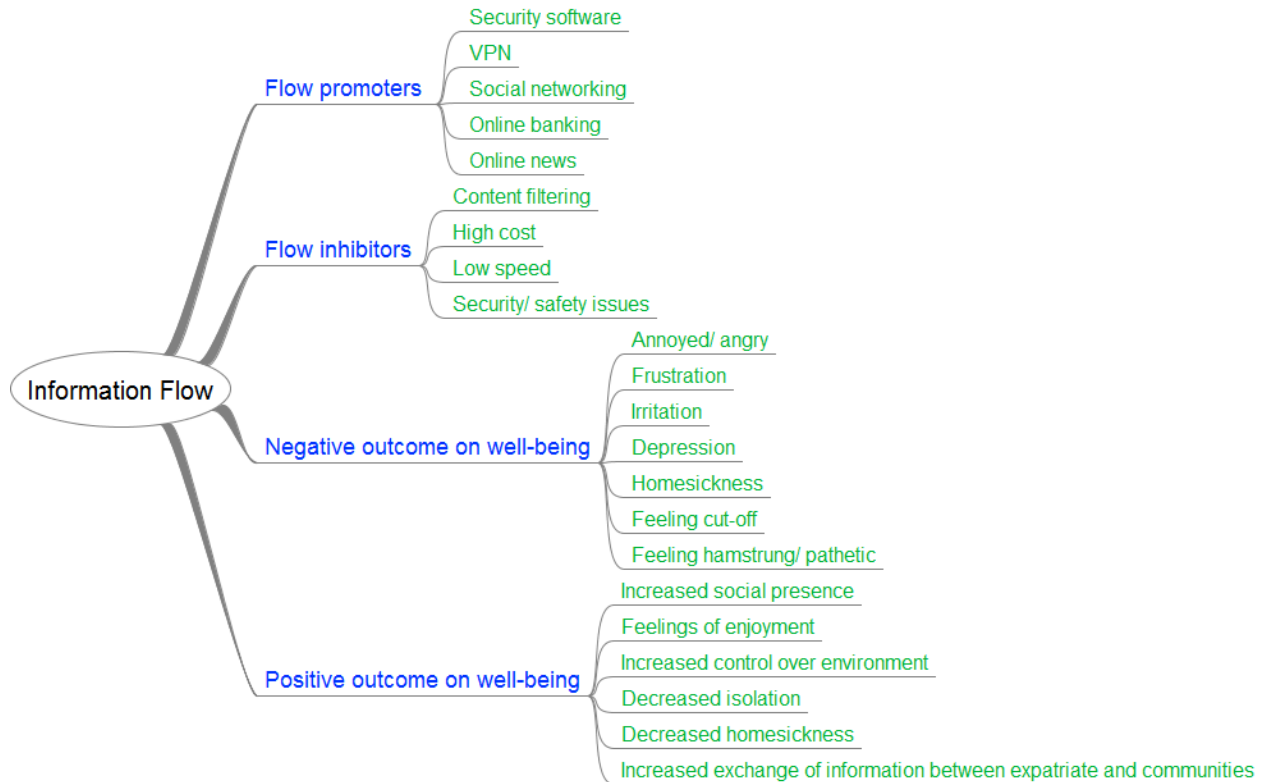
Figure 27: Information Flow Mind Map

It was evident that information flow experienced did not only refer to the expatriates' ability to use the information to create/ obtain a flow of information.

Figure 28 below illustrates the initial interrelation of the concept of information flow with other grounded concepts derived from interview data. Among others, the concepts include isolation, well-being (describing how the lack of information flow affects expatriates), communication, Internet as a modern tool, emotional tool, personal needs, expatriate status (information flow needs of unaccompanied/ single expatriates versus accompanied expatriates), personality, environment (in the KSA context), social presence and challenges.
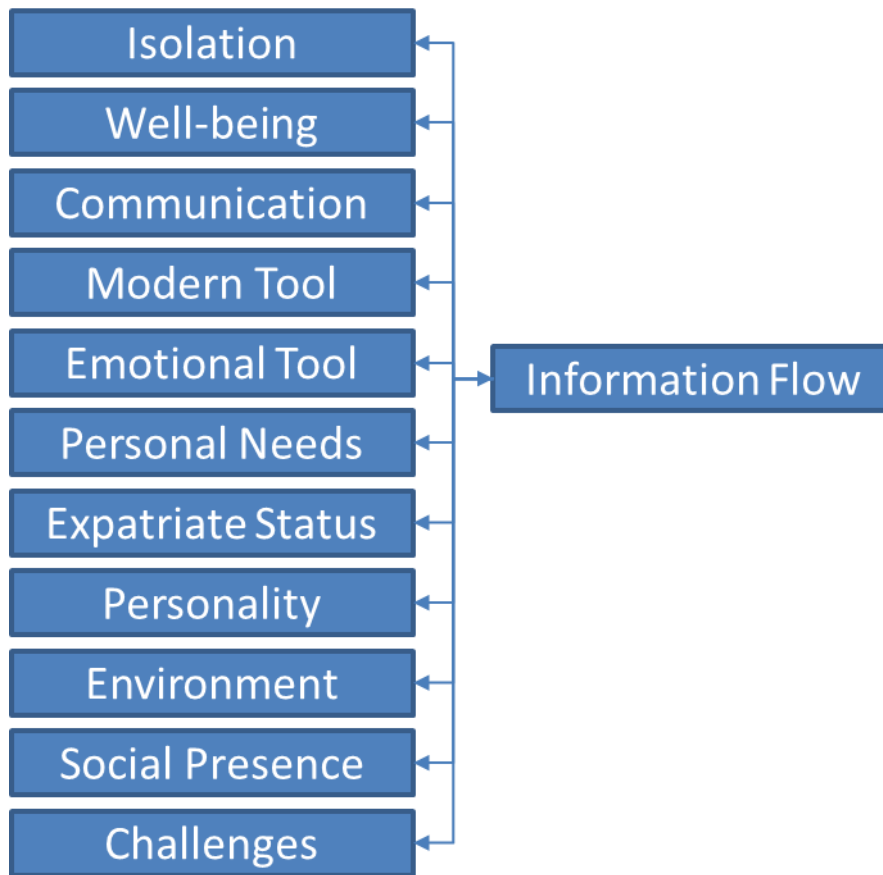
Figure 28: Interrelation of information flow and grounded concepts

6.4.3 Extant literature

In keeping with the classic GTM, the researcher refrained from accessing the body of knowledge that related specifically to the emergent theory until the theory was well developed. As the core concepts started to emerge, the relevant literature was incorporated into the accounts. This is in accordance with the GTM where the relevant literature becomes part of the research data in accordance with observations grounded in the field of research, as described in section 4.6.1.

Extant literature was used differently throughout the development of the theoretical model. In the chapters to follow it aided the understanding of the contextual concepts of culture and the trade-off between "everyday life" and "real world". It provided useful dimensions through which to compare different cultures in order to understand the KSA culture as grounded in the data. Furthermore, it illustrated that the trade-off between "everyday life" and "real world" does exist in literature, but in different

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contexts, which highlights an important contribution of this study.

This approach, of using extant literature to make sense of the grounded concepts derived from interview data, was used in the following chapters where the theoretical findings are presented. GTM provides for the use of existing literature to serve as a lens for the categories developed through the grounded process. Other researchers, such as Fernandez (2003) and Dunne (2011) have used the same principle to explain the categories derived through their grounded theory research.

In Chapter 9, for example, extant literature is used to provide an understanding of the extent and effect of the degree of isolation that expatriates experience in the KSA. The analysis of incidents from data highlighted the multifaceted nature of isolation experienced by expatriates. Figure 29 below shows concepts related to the degree of isolation.
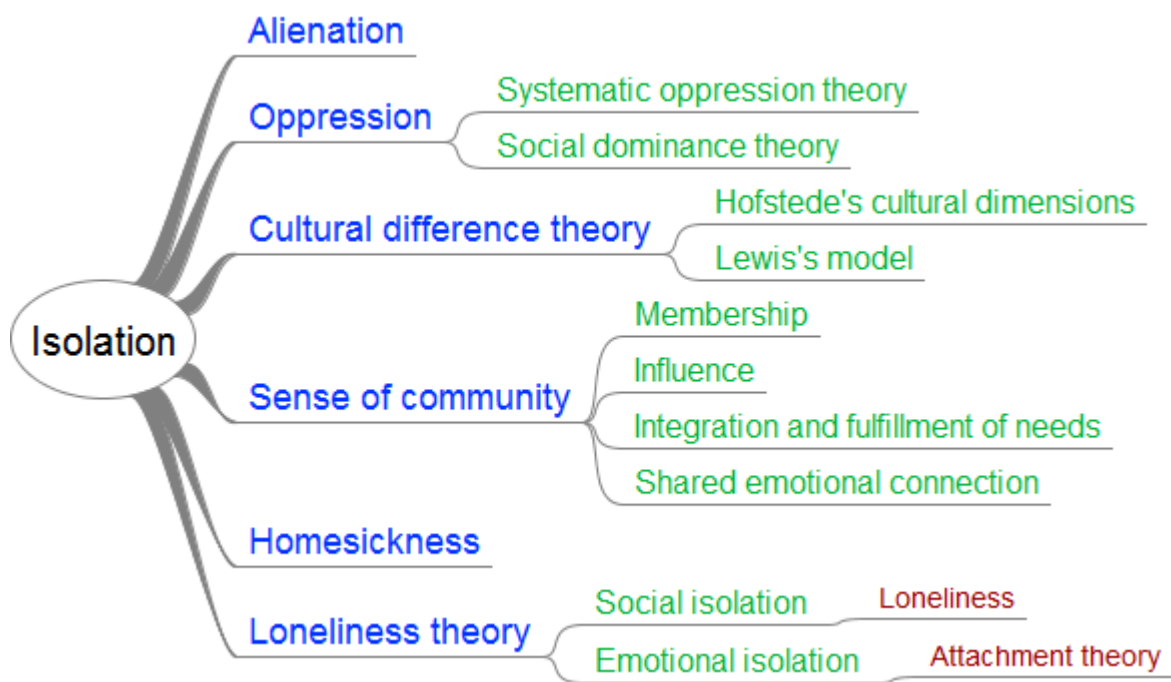
Figure 29: Extant literature consulted on Isolation

All of these concepts were considered to be an appropriate lens through which isolation could be viewed and understood. However, the researcher provided an understanding of the degree of isolation through the lens of community, by applying the theory of Sense of Community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This application

accounted for all facets of isolation experienced by expatriates by relating it to an important concept in literature on isolation, which is community.

Extant literature on the grounded understanding of information flow led to the development of a sub-model, the EIFM. The understanding obtained from data indicated that the implication of information flow is central in understanding how expatriates view and use the Internet. Existing expatriate research that considered "information flow" examined the flow of information between the expatriates and the local community. For examples please see Wang, Feng, Fan, and Zhu (2014) and Shimoda (2013). This study has indicated that the interaction between expatriates and the local community in the KSA is limited, therefore the aforementioned studies could not contribute to the current study. Extant literature reflecting concepts associated with information flow was consulted, as illustrated in Figure 30 below.
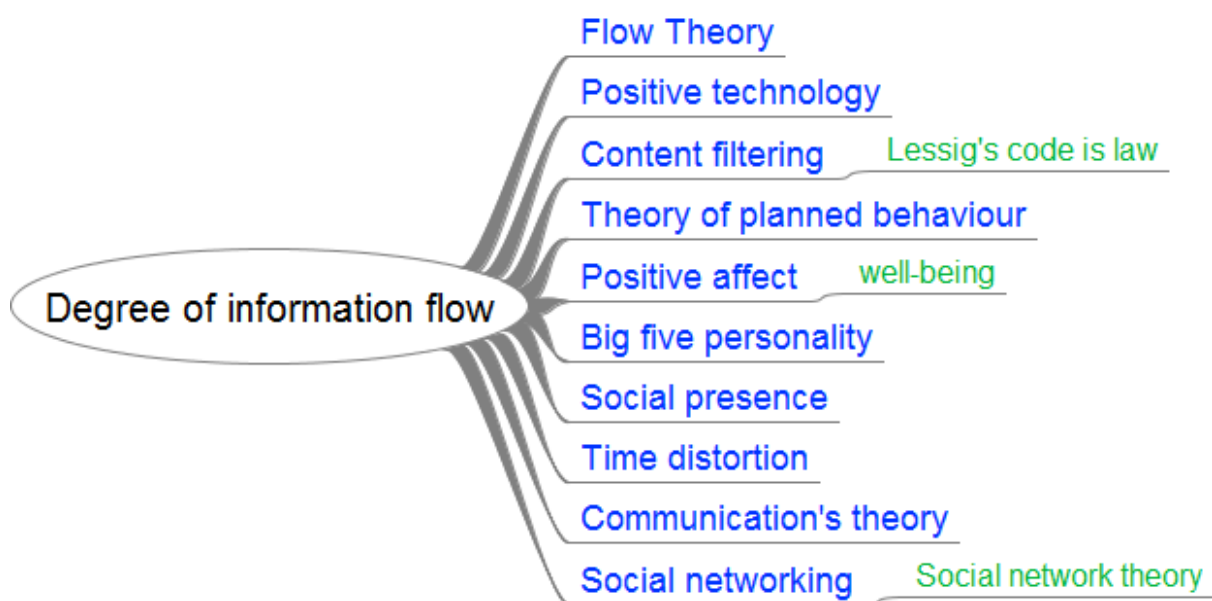
Figure 30: Extant Literature reviewed on Degree of Information Flow

Literature indicated that the effect of the information flow experienced by expatriates consists of preconditions resulting in positive consequences. This classification was found to be similar to that of Flow Theory (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001). However, with valuable comments received on a conference paper on the subject, the researcher has taken care to distinguish between "information flow" and "flow" as in the Flow Theory as these two concepts are distinctly different.

The reader will notice that the substantive data is merged with the extant literature.

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This was done in order to maintain methodological coherence rather than presenting the literature separately from the data. Therefore, when applicable to the substantive field, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 include and make explicit reference to the relevant literature. This is in accordance with the GTM as the extant literature forms part of the substantive theory even though it was not derived from it explicitly.

6.5 Summary

This grounded theory study was conducted over a five year period and involved interviewing 22 expatriates or spouses from different cultural backgrounds. The interviewees had been expatriates for periods ranging from three months up to 25 years at the time when the interviews were conducted. This range of expatriate episodes was important as the literature indicated that there was a relationship between the degree of adjustment and time.

Having provided the methodological and philosophical context for this study the following three chapters describe the emergent theory, 'negotiating adjustment in the KSA: Internet a lifeline to the real world', in detail. Throughout this discussion links will be made to the literature as outlined in the literature review in order to further explain the emergent concepts.

CHAPTER 7 THE INTERNET AS A "LIFELINE TO THE REAL WORLD"

"The reality itself is in the mind of the beholder" (Hawking & Mlodinow, 2010)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the core category **"Internet as a lifeline to the real world"**. It is the first of four chapters presenting the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the interview data. In order to understand the context from which the core category was derived, two contextualisation sections will initiate the discussion of the core category. The first section will explain how expatriates perceive Saudi/ home culture within this study. The second section will define what expatriates mean when they talk about the "real world" vs. "everyday life". These two sections are very important because they contextualise the discussions to follow, which centre on the core category.

The core category is a metaphor that describes the role that the Internet plays for expatriates in this study. A metaphor provides the view in which those using it perceive their world. It will be shown that the Internet is seen as a tool, a place, a way of being and as salvation. Figure 31 below outlines the structure of this chapter.

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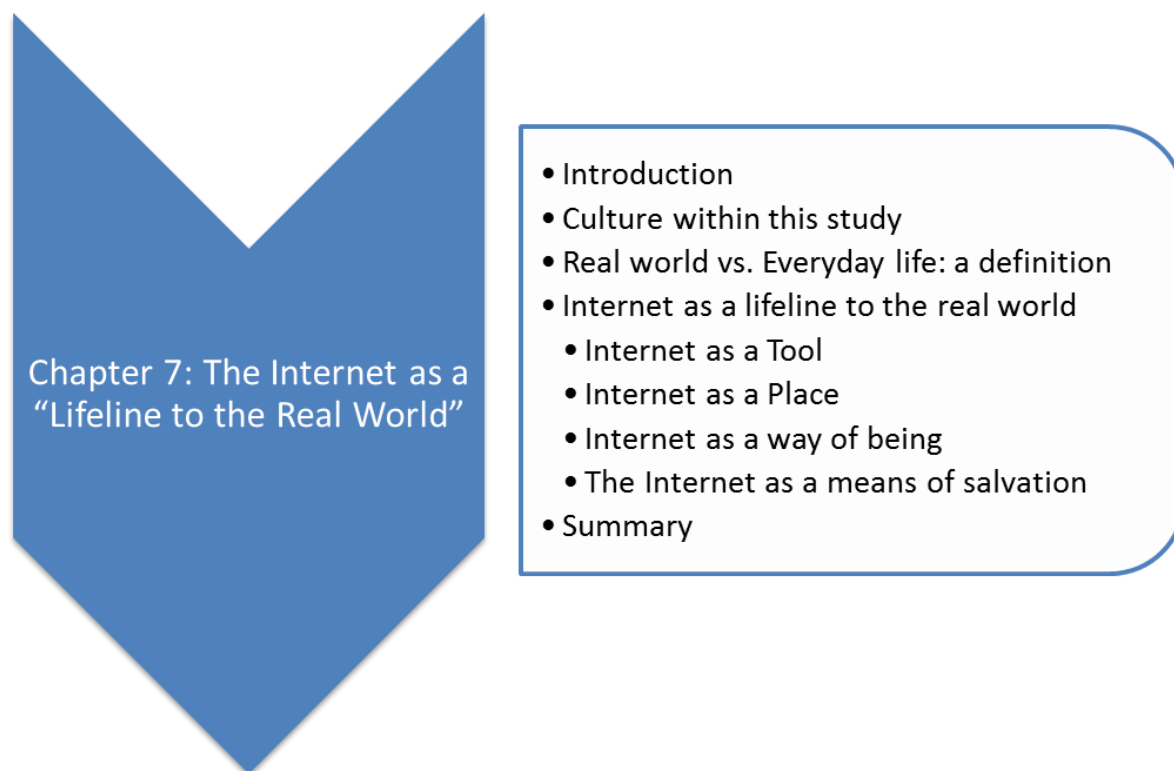
Figure 31: Outline of Chapter 7

7.2   Culture within this study

Haslberger (2005a, p. 5) argued that in terms of expatriate adjustment: "*novelty makes adaptation harder*". The novelty of a host country is greatly influenced by the local culture. Chapter 5 provided a contextual overview of the conditions in the KSA. It is evident that the culture of the KSA will have a great influence on the experiences of expatriates. This section will provide an understanding of how expatriates perceived the culture of the KSA.

The focus of the current study is on expatriates living in "Westernised" compounds. Therefore, expatriates who are part of a compound community are partially protected from the differentness of the KSA culture. The culture shock usually experienced by expatriates is amplified when the cultural distance is large (Mavrides, 2009). Culture shock refers to the disillusionment and increasing frustration with surroundings as the initial infatuation wears off, and expatriates realise that they have to settle into a new routine (Lysgaard, 1995 cited in Pires et al., 2006). Aspects that usually trigger culture shock are the language barrier as well as stark differences in social issues such as:

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public hygiene, traffic safety, the type and quality of the food (Mavrides, 2009). Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the dress code, rules regarding the use of alcohol and consumption of pork products, ban on women driving and restrictions on women working can also contribute to culture shock.

Interviewee 10 stated that "*I find that expatriates do experience a culture shock from living in KSA and some strategies to survive that shock include living in compounds, taking vacations outside of KSA, and using tools such as the Internet to stay occupied and in touch with the outer world*". [Interviewee 10]

Expatriates in this study verbalised their perceptions of the KSA culture differently. Table 8 below provides excerpts of interview data that summarise their perceptions.

	Interview excerpt	Interviewee
1	*"They don't agree with our culture and religious views and in some cases are openly aggressive about it."*	1
2	*"Since we were living in England at the time we were able to participate more fully in cultural and community activities as opposed to our oppressed existence here in KSA."*	2
3	*"I have lived in other countries before and was able to be immersed in the culture and language which allows you very quickly to feel more at home, this isn't easy in this culture."*	8
5	*"The culture is also more nocturnal than Western culture."*	8
6	*"The local people are not as friendly as my home country and some of their ways take a little time to get used to."*	9
7	*"… it is proving difficult to make friends outside of work and outside of compounds due to the Saudi people not probably wanting to or being interested in making friends with expats, this is just my opinion but that's how it feels."*	9
8	*"KSA has many legal and cultural limitations for women that make life challenging."*	10
9	*"Living in KSA is not much different from living in Jordan or any other Arab country. It's all based on the way we were brought up. One of the little differences is that in Jordan everything is available and we can freely decide what to do and what not, on the other hand in Saudi Arabia the law limits your options and your freedom to choose."*	11

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10	*"In some respect, and a way that I sometimes describe it to friends in the UK, is that KSA could be on another planet from us sharing very little (if any) history, traditions or beliefs."*	17

Table 8: Expatriates' perception of KSA culture

Table 8 demonstrates, with the exception of Interviewee 11 who is Jordanian, that there is a large CD between expatriate's home culture and that of the host culture (KSA). Living in a compound partially protects expatriates from the relatively difficult realities of life in the KSA, such as the rules and regulations. Table 9 below provides excerpts from the interview data detailing how expatriates perceived cultural distance.

	Interview excerpt	**Interviewee**
1	*Matters such as not being able to drive, needing sponsorship to work and not having freedom of speech (comparatively to Lebanon) are all limitations that I have experienced.*	10
2	*"No mixing of sexes in public, no female driving, no free speech, threat of punishment at work for making mistakes, witnessing slavery, police check points etc."*	2
3	*The main issue arise when I have to leave the compound to do everyday activities such as grocery shopping, eating at a restaurant or getting a cup of coffee. Aside from the obvious restrictions on life outside the compound like wearing trousers and shirts (as opposed to shorts and T-shirts in the heat), prayer time closing [shops] five times a day or having to eat in the singles section of restaurants, there are many other restrictions. I have been denied access to supermarkets and shops as a man on my own, making buying a pint of milk very hard if it happens to be on a Friday, which is deemed family time!"*	12
4	*In Saudi the people are not allowed (for lack of a better word) to interact. They don't agree with our culture and religious views and in some cases are openly aggressive about it.*	1
5	*We do not have access to newspapers and books like we do at home. We can't go to our local library so we rely on the Internet for information. We also feel isolated because there is a language barrier and an enormous cultural barrier so we can't create relationships with the locals.*	1
6	*This is most easily explained to my friends by the fact that it is the year 1433 and does not have the same months or even the same number of days in each year, the working week is Saturday-Wednesday and we share NO holidays or festive*	17

> *seasons. This is mainly due to our cultural/ seasonal and historical/ religious differences.[9]*

Table 9: Examples of Cultural distance as explained by Interviewees

The interview excerpts given in Table 9 above illustrate the differences in expatriate culture (in terms of what they perceive as normal) compared to the reality of what they experience in the KSA. Previous research has found that CD can be reduced with an increase in pre-departure knowledge of the host country (Parker & McEvoy, 1993). With this knowledge, the expatriate and his spouse/ family will aim to contribute to their capacity to lead a "*meaningful and portable life*" (Fish & Wood, 1997, p. 445). Expatriate literature also indicates that pre-departure training is an effective way to reduce the cultural distance as expatriates are more aware of what to expect (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Harvey, 1983; Selmer et al., 2007). Furthermore, if an expatriate knows what to expect, it will decrease his/ her degree of culture shock (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998). In an effort to overcome culture shock, expatriates will benefit from knowing and connecting with their own culture which is important within the individual's own frame of reference (Black et al., 1991). Waxim and Panaccio's (2005) study of 224 managers of culturally diverse backgrounds, has confirmed that cross-cultural training is an imperative factor in the adjustment of expatriates especially in terms of general adjustment. However, none of the expatriates in this study indicated that they had received cross-cultural training prior to their arrival or upon arrival in the KSA. Interviewees 1 and 4 indicated that they did some research on the Internet, prior to coming to the KSA. Interviewee 1 stated that the research that she did with her children: *"help[ed] them to have an image and some understanding of where we were moving to"*. She said this research helped her prepare for "*this extremely foreign environment in terms of Saudi etiquette and laws"*.

The study showed that an expatriates' status*,* i.e. whether the expatriate is accompanied or unaccompanied/ single, can influence the extent of cultural distance experienced as there are physical restrictions imposed by the customs and laws of the country on single or unaccompanied expatriates. For example Interviewee 12 reported

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[9] Following examination it was pointed out that all Hirij calendars (depicting the year 1433) have the same number of months as the Gregorian calendar. Furthermore, after the interview had been conducted, the working week of the KSA was changed from Saturday – Wednesday to Sunday – Thursday.

that the "*total ban and near impossibility of meeting or mixing with members of the opposite sex"* was difficult for him. There is not a lot of literature available on the adjustment processes of single/ unaccompanied expatriates, and the role that the Internet plays in this. Section 11.5.3 recommends that further research be dedicated to this topic.

The exception to the above discussion was Interviewee 13. She had travelled extensively prior to coming to the KSA, visiting many developing countries: *"I had some experience with the Arab culture. I also had experience living away from my home country for many years at a time. So I guess that has to help with reducing culture shock"* [Interviewee 13].

Interviewee 13 believed that expatriates needed to make an effort to learn about the local culture as this can make the transition easier:

> "*I think once you know a little about a culture, make a few local friends, get out and <u>experience</u> local life a little you are less fearful. You also need to take the time to read a little and get to know a bit about the region, religion, the customs etc. and also world politics so you have some <u>knowledge</u> about what you are dealing with especially in a place like Saudi. I am amazed at how little, many Westerners know about the country they have chosen to live in"* [Interviewee 13].

The interview excerpts above show that expatriates in the KSA do find the local culture very different from their own. Expatriates living in "Westernised" compounds are partially protected from this "differentness". However, how expatriates manage this differentness depends on the individual. The following section will illustrate how expatriates define the difference between the "real world" and "everyday life".

7.3   Real world vs. Everyday life: A definition

The second contextual concept that was evident from the study was the distinction between the expatriate's perceptions of "real world" versus "everyday life". The definition of the "real world" is relative to the expatriate and his/ her degree of adjustment. The trade-off between "real world" versus "everyday life" is a reality as 95% of the interviewees stated that they do not consider life in the KSA to be "real" or "*norma*l", sometimes describing it as "*alien*", "*a strange existence*", "*challenging*", "*oppressive*", "*living in a bubble*". Everyday life in the KSA context is largely very different from life at home as a consequence of the large cultural distance. Interviewee 12 defined everyday life in terms of "everyday" activities such as "*grocery shopping, eating at a restaurant or getting a cup of coffee*" which he now struggles to accomplish because of his expatriate status as a single male. This was supported by Interviewee 16, a spouse, who stated that *"… doing grocery shopping or any shopping for that matter at your own leisure. To be able to drop my kids off at school on regular week days. To not live a life always pressed for time due to a prayer schedule"* is very difficult. These everyday activities are now classified as "real world" activities.

This study indicated that life in the KSA can be described as "*not normal*" [Interviewee 3], "*different*" [Interviewee 20], and as a "*strange existence*" [interviewee 7]. All of these terms indicate that "everyday life" in the KSA does not reflect how expatriates would describe   life in "the real world". It is important to define these two concepts as they are continually referred to throughout the forthcoming chapters and also feature in the description of the core category. When asked to clarify what they would consider "normal" Interviewee 3 responded:

> *"I certainly would not consider living abroad yet completely surrounded by other Brits/ Westerners, in a secure, defended compound with 100% of the male population in work, a low crime rate but higher-than-average terrorist risk as being normal. The real world is where you hear what is going on all over the world, good, bad and indifferent, whether it is favourable or not to your country and your government, somewhere that you experience life, warts and all, not where you are wrapped in cotton wool"* [Interviewee 3].

Highmore (2002) states that "everyday life" in Western cultures comprises those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, and those most inhabited spaces that make up the day-to-day experience. He uses Sherlock Holmes as a metaphor to explain that the non-everyday (the exceptional) is there to be found in the heart of "everyday". Whereas Hasselkus (2006) states that everyday occupations are all part of the rhythms of daily life; they are the occupational fabric of our everyday experiential worlds. Everyday pursuits are a primary means by which we organise the worlds in which we live; the intermeshed patterns of ordinary occupations are what give shape to our daily lives. She proposes that it is around these features of everyday living that we build meaning and community in our lives.

Familiar scenes of everyday life are perceived as normal, and include what people have in common with others, and what they usually take for granted (Garfinkel, 1964 cited in Hasselkus, 2006). Everyday life provides the "*points of departure and return*" (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 225 cited in Hasselkus, 2006) for every kind of variation in daily life that we impose on ourselves; for example, people say things like, "*Oh, it's so good to get back to norma*l" after having house guests, or after a period of remodelling, or after a time of travel — all temporary departures from our usual routines. Everyday life is like an anchor in our lives. In this study expatriates said that "everyday life" in the KSA contained elements which they would not find in the "real world" such as those detailed in Table 10 below.

	Everyday life	Interviewee
1	*"Cultural barrier"*	1
2	*"Checkpoints"*	2
3	*"Slavery"*	2
4	*"No women driving"*	2,18,20
5	*"Threat of being fired at work easily"*	2
6	*"Compound living"*	1,2,3,
7	*"Restricted movement"*	20
8	*"Being more visible as a Westerner"*	3,20
9	*"Having a driver/ houseboy"*	8, 18
10	*"Restricted visitors"*	3,18
11	*"Covering up/ wearing an abaya"*	3,18

12	*"Prayer time"*	18
13	*"Little interaction with locals"*	1,3
14	*"Language barrier"*	1,3
15	*"No religious freedom"*	1,8
16	*"Cannot create relationships with locals"*	1

Table 10: Description of everyday life by expatriates in this study

Table 11 details the terminology used by expatriates to describe the reality of everyday life. It summarises the terminology used by expatriates in this study when describing the real world. These terminologies/ activities illustrate aspects of their lives that they were used to and are now missing out on.

	Real World	Interviewee
1	*Living close to family*	10
2	*Freedom of expression*	10
3	*Having rights as a woman*	10
4	*Go to local library*	1,2
5	*Access to newspapers and books*	1,3
6	*Ride mountain bikes*	2
7	*Go to movies*	2
8	*Hang out at coffee shops*	2
9	*Freedom to socialise with members of opposite sex*	12
10	*Pubs, nightclubs, cinemas*	12

Table 11: Description of real life by expatriates in this study

From data gathered in this study, it was evident that expatriates use different terminology to describe the world outside the boundaries of the KSA when compared to the descriptions of life in the KSA as previously discussed. Descriptions of the world outside of the KSA include: "*home*" [Interviewee 1], "*free world*" [Interviewee 2], and "*real world*" [Interviewees 3].

A review of literature engaging with the topic of "real world" vs. "everyday" experience indicated that the definition of the "real world" is a subjective concept influenced by the realities of everyday life.

For a student, life after college represents the real world where they are finally on their own. There is no safety net and they find out if they have learnt enough to earn enough to survive outside the safe environment of the college. Students associate this independence with the freedom to make their own choice (Farrell, 2010). In a women's prison study, Muscat (2008) reported on a programme that helped women break the cycle of violence and live healthier lives both inside and outside of a correctional institution by simulating the abuse of the "real world" whilst being in prison. The report also found that violence in women's jails and prisons is not a dominant aspect of "everyday life", but exists as a potential, shaped by time, place, prison culture, interpersonal relationships, and staff actions.

In terms of online gaming Ng and Wiemer-Hastings (2005) stated that it is clear that users of multimedia online role playing games have a tendency to spend more hours devoted to their game and find the social aspects of the in-game world more pleasant and satisfying than what occurs in the real world. These users have a different perspective on social life, which could be labelled as anti-social or introverted by most, and as such choose to spend their social time and energy in-game rather than socialising in the real world.

Similar to the online gamer's perspective of social life (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005) is the perspective of the expatriate or research subject's definition of "everyday life" and "real world" which is very important, as what constitutes "everyday" activities for one person are not necessarily the same for another expatriate or research subject. For example, Interviewee 12, said that his main problems begin when he leaves the compound. Because of his single status he has been *"denied access to supermarkets and shops as a man on [his] own, [which] mak[es] buying a pint of milk very hard if it happens to be on a Friday, which is deemed family time!"* Therefore, everyday life in the KSA, is not deemed "real" by expatiates as it is bears little similarity to the existences that they would consider "normal" in their home country. Additionally, for many expatriates, only the home country is labelled as the "real world" as life in the KSA is very different from their home country and therefore seems to be "unreal".

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7.4   Internet as a lifeline to the real world

The Internet as a lifeline is a metaphor that has consistently been used throughout this study, directly stated by Interviewees 1,6,10 and 18 as well as being alluded to by Interviewees 3, 4, 6 and 9 who stated that they would not be in the KSA if they did not have access to the Internet. In accordance with the GTM "in vivo" codes are generated from concepts by using the actual words of research participants rather than named by a researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65). In vivo codes are useful because they preserve participants' views and actions in coding itself, which encapsulates meanings or experiences, or "insider" terms specific to a certain group (Dey, 1993, p. 55). For this reason the researcher named the core category "Internet a lifeline to the real world". Jamet (2010, p. 11) states that metaphors can be considered a "*handy, useful way of constantly re-describing reality*". Metaphors create the opportunity to make sense of individual experiences in larger cultural systems, and metaphorical meanings and entailments will vary by culture.   *"Metaphors … are lenses which refract current cultural beliefs and values. They not only provide a prism through which to understand consumption behavior but, in their use/ instantiation by individuals, are creative ways of seeing*" (Johnston, 2009, n.p). It was apparent from this study that culture played a significant role in the lives of expatriates due to the wide cultural distance that exists between Western expatriates and the local population (as previously discussed in detail in section 7.2). Therefore expatriates' use of metaphors is understood and defined in terms of their own culture when they try to make sense of life in the KSA. These descriptions of their perception of the KSA culture and their environment reflect comparisons with something that they can relate to. Johnston (2009) states that when individuals choose the metaphors they use to describe the Internet, they also select a filter for viewing the Internet. Therefore, the metaphor "Internet as a lifeline to the real world" represents the views of expatriates as they try to make sense of the realities of life in the KSA.

According to the Advanced English Dictionary (AED) (n.p) a lifeline can be defined as "*support that enables people to survive or to continue doing something (often by providing an essential connection)*". Furthermore, the AED (n.p) defines support as "*the activity of providing for or maintaining by supplying with money or necessities"*, support can also be described as *"something providing immaterial assistance to a*

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person or cause or interest". The proposed theory argues that the Internet is the "something" through which human activity manifests itself as a lifeline which enables expatriates to fulfill various roles in their communities (both local and at home), and maintain their quality of life and support their emotional well-being in the form of positive affect. Figure 32 below illustrates the position of the "Internet as a lifeline" in the theoretical model.
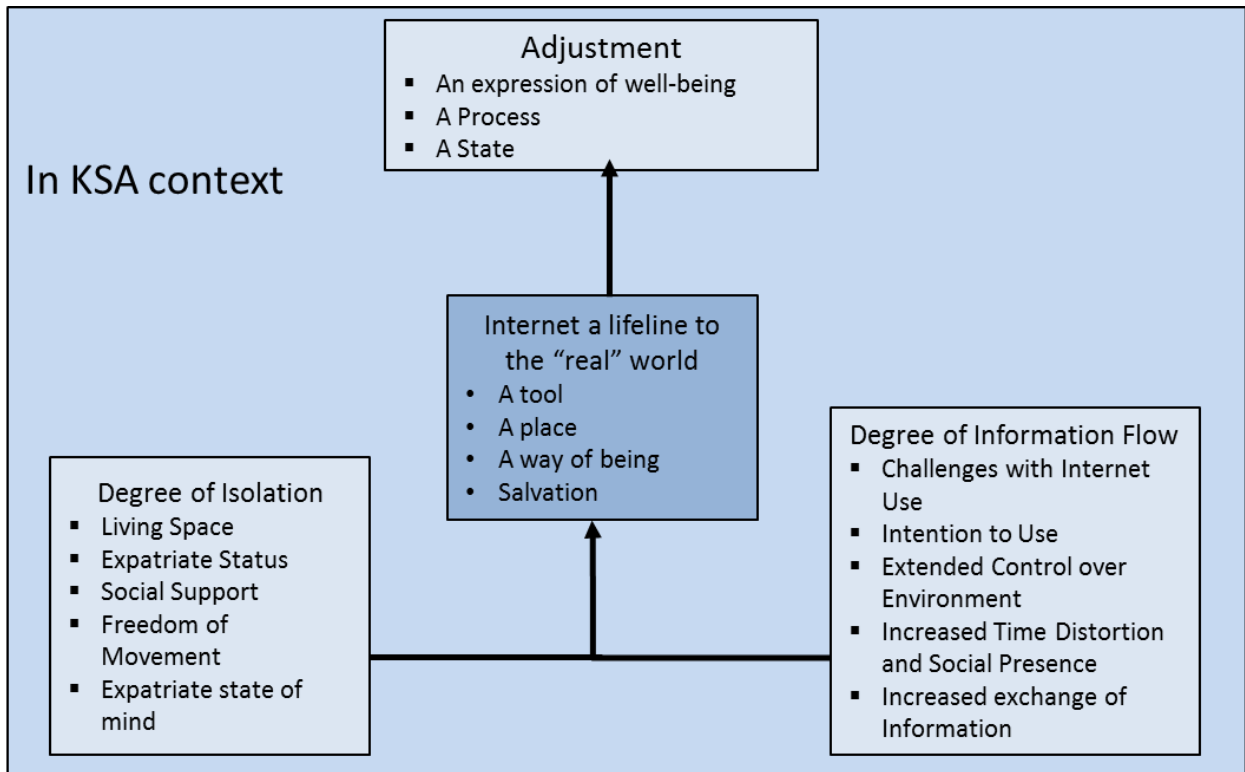
Figure 32: Proposed Model of Negotiating adjustment in the KSA by using Internet as Lifeline to Real World

In literature, the Internet has also been described as a lifeline. For example Mallchock (2009) reported that the Internet can provide older adults with many valuable services, but in particular it can provide increased social interaction, which can relieve some of the isolation that many seniors feel. Fletcher's (2009, p. 1) ethnographic study of expatriates living in Indonesia, explored a case where an American expatriate in Indonesia described e-mail *"as her lifeline"* claiming that *"life in Indonesia would be impossible without it".* She concluded that corporate expatriates in Indonesia, especially women, value the Internet as a source of social continuity and ideological assurance.

The core category is informed by four concepts: Internet as a tool, Internet as a place, Internet as a way of being and Internet as a means of salvation. These concepts are based on the metaphorical classification of the Internet by Johnston (2009) and Jamet (2010). For example, "*surfing the net*" [Interviewees 3, 16, and 21] refers to the Internet as a tool, a place and a way of being. As a tool, it allows expatriates to extend their reach to products and/ or services not available in the KSA. As a place, it refers to the online platform where these transactions take place for example Youtube [Interviewee 7]. Finally, as a way of being, refers to the general acceptance of the progress of the host society as well as the inability of expatriates to do certain things in the KSA, which can however be done online. The latter refers to the mediating role of the Internet in the KSA between the expatriates and the environment. The outcome of this transformative effect that the Internet has on expatriates, their activities and how they feel on an emotional level, describes the salvation brought by the Internet as described by the interviewees.

These concepts with their respective codes obtained from the interview data are illustrated in Table 12 below.

Core Category	Concepts	Codes
Internet a lifeline to the real world	Internet as a Tool	booking and planning holidays, reading news, cooking recipes , party planning, teaching preparation, research health issues, book reviews, communication, school projects, pre-arrival information, property management, home country laws for repatriation, pre-arrival research etiquette and laws of the KSA, *"Internet provides a means"* , *"I use the Internet several times daily and consider it essential to modern life"*, *"it assists me"*, fantastic learning tool for the children, cheap or free phone calls, manage finances, filing tax returns, buy items not available in the KSA, purchase property, sourcing suppliers, keep up to date with home country news, property, watching sports, online gaming, check exchange rates, check TV listings, download British TV on BBC iPayer, check out locations using Google Earth, send greeting cards, listen to Internet radio, progress of local rugby union [in home country], follow sports, share photos via Photobucket, *"list is endless"*
	Internet as a Place	Entertainment, Facebook, Skype, online gaming, get travel ideas, online community, embassy website, [company] website, [School] communication system, Youtube, *"window into the world wide community in my home nation and also gives me an insight into modern day international trends and cultures"*
	Internet as a way of being	*"[Pre-arrival research] - image and some understanding of where we were moving to"*, *"share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly despite not being face-to-face"*, maintain contact with relatives/ friends, *"I check what is going on*

		in the free world", *"depend almost entirely on the Internet"*, Internet widower, *"all the information that is required in one's daily life is available at the fingertips. In fact, it is almost becoming a necessity in the present environment, where most of the world population is using it"*, *"my ability to stay connected to my family and help manage our household while being employed 9,000 miles away is 100% dependent on the Internet"*, inconceivable [not having the Internet], *"Internet is everything to me living in the UK or abroad and I take it for granted but I always appreciate having access to it"*, killing time
	The Internet as a means of salvation	*"Lifeline to normal life, feeling of connection to home is crucial, the link to the life he used to have"*, *"absolutely essential to my life in the KSA"*, *"Here I check what is going on in the free world with the Internet"*, *"The Internet has become absolutely essential to my life in the KSA"* , *"lessens the feeling of isolation and living in a bubble that you can experience out here (life in the KSA is not normal!)"*, [no Internet] *"disconnected from the real world"*, *"pathetic and cut off from my home country in particular, and the rest of the world in general"*, *"without [the Internet] I would be on my way home tonight"*, assist spouse that remained at home – emotional salvation, *"I use the Internet to … keep my sanity"*, [without Internet life in the KSA] – more difficult, *"The Internet … is also a way of escaping the harshness of the environment in which I exist"*, *"I've been in Kingdom for 404 days. I plan to leave in 549 days, unless a good job back home is available, in which case I would leave immediately"*.

Table 12: "Internet as a Lifeline to the Real World" Concepts and Codes as defined in the study

Based on the concepts with their corresponding codes in Table 12 above, Figure 33 below illustrates the metaphorical classification of the Internet and the transformation that occurs.

Internet as a Tool	Internet as a Place	Internet as a way of being	Internet providing salvation
• Modern Lifeline	• World	• "Real"	• Emotional Lifeline
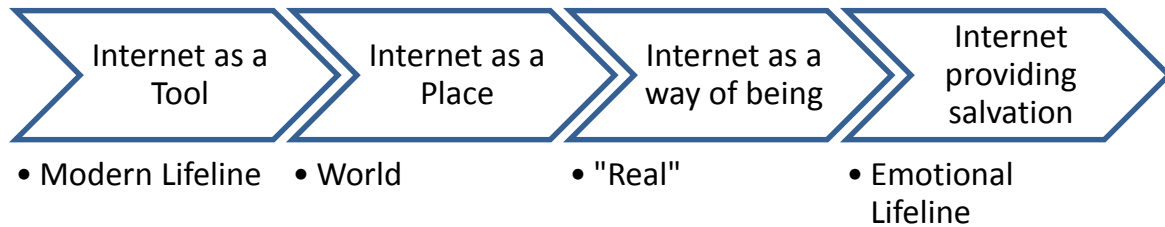
Figure 33: Metaphorical classification of the Internet

The discussion to follow will demonstrate that the role of the Internet in this study can be conceptualised as a tool that creates a place of being with the consequential result of salvation. The explanation of the core category can be obtained through the following deconstruction. "Lifeline" refers to Internet as a modern tool which can be used as a means of salvation from the difficult environment, "Real World" refers to transforming the Internet from a way of being into a hybrid place of being.

7.4.1 Internet as a Tool

Expatriates in this study reported on the variety of activities that they engaged in when using the Internet. Grounded in this information the researcher classified the Internet as a modern tool – which is an everyday tool available to expatriates much like Markham's (2003) classification of the Internet as a tool that can be thought of as a prosthesis, a conduit and container. Internet as a prosthesis describes the extending, reaching capability of the Internet. It allows individuals to extend their limbs and senses great distances to connect with other people or databases. Internet as a conduit focuses on the Internet as a medium for transmission of information from one location to another. Internet as a container describes the Internet's ability to hold or store quantities of material. Therefore, Internet as a tool may be viewed as consisting of three sub metaphors.

The Internet has been recognised as a prosthesis, conduit and container properties of the Internet as can be seen in the response from Interviewee 5 who indicated that it is

"fast business these days" (conduit) and that the Internet allows access to "*all info at your fingertips*" (container). He further stated that although he lives in the KSA, "*most of my stakes are in my home country*" (extension) and he uses the Internet to attend to those matters.

The role of the Internet for the purposes of connecting with other people, gives expatriates an extension to their interaction capacity; text or video becomes the representation or simulation for the person who is not physically present. The impact of this ability to extend themselves, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9 as it creates an increased social presence for the expatriates within their benevolent communities.

The Internet as a tool relates to the ubiquitous nature of the Internet in society. It also refers to the modern alternative to everyday business. Expatriates in this study, not unlike the general population, access the Internet on a daily basis, and in the majority of cases more than once a day. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> *"I use the Internet several times daily and consider it essential to* **modern life**. *[Modern life is] using present technology to enhance or make life more comfortable"* [Interviewee 2].

The Internet was used as a tool to complete a number of everyday activities such as those detailed in Table 13.

	Activity	Interviewee	Ranking
1	Booking and planning holidays	1,2,4,7,8,13,14	5
2	Reading online news (home and other)	1,2,3,5,8,10,12,22	4
3	Recipes/ cooking	1,9	9
4	Party planning	1,7	9
5	Work	1,4,5,7	7
6	Entertainment (music and Youtube, Internet radio, TV)	1,2,5,6,7,8,9,12,16,17, 22	2
7	Research/ online courses	4,10,14,20,21	8
8	Book reviews	1	

9	Communication with family and friends (e-mail, Skype, Facebook)	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13, 14,15,16,17,18, 19, 20, 21, 22	1
10	Education	1,2,5,8,9,13,20	5
11	Online Banking	2,3,5,6,7,10,13,14,16,21	3
12	Company information	1,2	9
13	Communication with school	1,8,22	9
14	Communication with Embassy	1,5,8,13	7
15	e-commerce	3,5,6,7,8,9,12,13,14,16, 21	2
16	Communication with businesses (official communication)	3,5,6,13	7
17	Communication with other expatriates	1,5,8,9,13,22	6
18	Confirm exchange rate	7	
29	Confirm TV listings	7	
20	Google Earth	7	
21	Sport	7	
22	Share photos	7,8,12	8
23	Christian literature	8,22	
24	VPN	12, 17, 18	
25	Real estate	1,13	9
26	Health information	1,13,15	8

Table 13: Internet usage by expatriates in study

From Table 13 above, it is evident that all of the interviewees, with the exception of Interviewee 23, who is an ISP and was not asked the question, used the Internet to communicate with their family and friends via methods such as e-mail and Skype. Communication methods be it Skype or e-mail are cited as being cheaper or quicker than the alternative and more traditional methods of communication such as the telephone or letters. Using the telephone as a means to communicate was cited as very expensive [Interviewees 3, 6, 7, 12, 13]:

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"My wife still has a box of all the letters I sent her during that tour, one letter for every single day I was gone! And on the few occasions when I was able to make a phone call to there, the phone bills were outrageous. Online Internet phone capabilities like Skype make a HUGE difference" [Interviewee 6].

The majority of interviewees emphasised this activity as being the most important when using the Internet. This study indicated that expatriates communicate with family and friends to: (1) share the experience, (2) maintain ties, (3) connect to home/ not miss out and (4) render support to spouses at home.

Communication methods such as Skype and e-mail can provide social continuity and improve the quality of the expatriate episode abroad by providing social stability and can reduce isolation through improved communication with benevolent communities.

"The Internet provides a means where we can remain close to family and friends despite not being face-to-face. We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly" [Interview 1].

Apart from communication, the variety of activities conducted over the Internet by the interviewees illustrate the advancements of the Internet as a modern tool that allows society to use it for an increasing number of things. In the KSA however, expatriates view the Internet as a necessity particularly when trying to obtain goods that are either difficult to source or unavailable.

"I will still use the Internet for communication (with people in the KSA) but I will be able to buy newspapers, see the news several times a day on TV if I want and be able to go to the shops rather than use their online sites (although, for ease, I will still probably shop via the Internet since it means I do not have the faff of driving, parking etc.). However, in the UK, I can at least go and see something before I buy it, if I want" [Interviewee 3].

The second ranking activities involved using various e-commerce sites such as Amazon and e-bay to shop online as well as using the Internet for entertainment. The former may be because it is a modern alternative and a means to maintain a certain quality of life, but Interviewees 3 and 7 indicated that in their case they made use of online shopping because certain goods were not available in the country. Therefore,

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due to the absence of embodied shopping, virtual shopping was taken up as the modern alternative to such a limitation. Using the Internet for the latter is attributable to the fact that socially the KSA is very different from the home countries of the expatriates who took part in this study. Interviewee 16 indicated that the Internet is a source of counteracting boredom.

"I am currently living in KSA without my wife and 4 children; I am therefore used to a busy household. In comparison, life here is very quiet and lonely. With the Saudi culture being so very different from ours, and the impression that the Saudi's can be easily offended but don't care if they offend us, it is not as attractive to 'go down town' as it would in the UK. Therefore the majority of my entertainment and social interaction is via the Internet" [Interviewee 17].

Third ranking was online banking. It was important for the expatriates to manage their interests in their home country as indicated by Interviewee 5 in the following statement: *"… although I am residing in KSA, most of my stakes are in my home country"*. Internet banking is part of the service evolution of the Internet and Interviewee 13 indicated that Internet banking is one activity that is now done online because of the improvement of the Internet.

The fourth ranking activity was reading online news in order to keep in touch with what was going on in the rest of the world, including their home countries. Interviewees 3 and 4 indicated that the KSA is like "*living in a bubble*" and being "*cocooned inside a totally different way of life compared to the rest of the world*", it is therefore important for expatriates to keep in touch with what is happening outside of the KSA. Interviewee 3 also indicated that because media is regulated in the KSA, the online news might give a more balanced/ complete picture of current affairs.

Fifth ranking was a tie between planning and booking holidays and educational resources. Holidays are an important aspect of life in the KSA. Interviewee 10 indicated that "*taking vacations outside KSA*" is one of the strategies used to survive culture shock. Interviewee 7 indicated that his expatriate status allows him luxuries such as the opportunity to travel. The education of their children was very important for the expatriates in this study and as section 5.7.5 indicated can cause uncertainty among expatriates about whether the host country's education system will meet their expected standard. Interviewees 1 and 2 said that they considered the Internet to be

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an "*essential*" tool in the children's education due to limited resources for Western children in the KSA. Interviewees 9, 13, and 15 said that they used the Internet to obtain literature or activities on educational sites, which they sometimes purchased online or noted to purchase when they were in their home country.

The above examples illustrate that the Internet is a tool that creates the place in which expatriates extend themselves - cyberspace. Cyberspace became the primary metaphor for the Internet, conceptualised as a place where meaningful human activities occur (Markham, 2003). This will be discussed in the following section.

7.4.2 Internet as a Place

This study indicated that expatriates do not necessarily seek out new virtual relationships, but rather continue their current relationships online, thereby establishing hybrid virtual communities. Interviewee 12 discussed this when he said, "*I promulgated my identity into the Internet world, i.e. use Facebook and emails to keep in contact with people in the UK instead of joining WOW or second*". This is consistent with Miller and Slater's study (2000, p. 18) in which they stated that *"what the Internet produces cannot be understood in terms of the liberation of new and fluid identities. Not only were older identities, such as religion, nation, and family, embraced online, but the Internet could be seen by many as primarily a means of repairing those allegiances"*.

Markham (2003) says that in order to perceive the Internet as a place one needs a sense of architecture, but also requires a sense of presence with others. However, even in more mundane interfaces such as e-mail, a sense of presence in a place can be a focal point through the use of the technology. She proceeds by giving the following example: She interviewed an attorney who described her use of e-mail to communicate with employees of a company where she was a management consultant. On a basic level, e-mail was a tool that allowed her to work virtually across the country with this company. At the same time, the technology was not simply a tool; it was a place within which she was striving to achieve a sense of presence. The clients with whom she was in contact would remain psychologically distant from her unless she could establish their texts as a mutual location for interaction, informal communication, and build a sense of trust and common ground. She concluded by

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saying that one can see, by exploring the implications of tool metaphors and spatial metaphors of the Internet, how differently people may define the same umbrella term.

Chapter 8 will discuss how expatriates derive a sense of community (SOC) from their family and friends at home or in locally established communities. The SOC with family and friends at home can only be effectively maintained through a virtual sense of community (VSOC) and all of the expatriates who are part of locally established virtual communities or communities with an online presence will have, by the nature of the relationship, face-to-face contact. By definition this forms a hybrid community (Navarrete & Huerta, 2006). Therefore hybrid SOC is maintained as expatriates in this study did not experience continuous virtual or face-to-face communication. Instead virtual communication is used to strengthen *"older identities"* (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 18) such as family connections and networks of friends. This happens in cyberspace.

Expatriates were questioned specifically on the SOC afforded by the Internet. They reported their membership to communities as follows: (1) Continuation of memberships in previously constructed communities; this included families and friends [Interviewees 1 to 22], (2) maintenance of newly established memberships of various communities since arriving in the KSA; this included social interests such as recipe exchanges, expatriate cultural groups that explored local culture, social support groups for new arrivals, local charity groups and school communities [Interviewees 1, 17, 18, 19, and 22] and (3) social networking groups which included clubs that were not necessarily controlled by the Internet, but had websites. The Internet allowed expatriates to keep up to date with their activities [Interviewees 9, 12 and 20]. However, Interviewees [19], [20] did indicate that although they were members of various locally constructed communities they did not actively contribute , but used these to keep themselves informed about community activities.

Virtual community participants can feel a degree of emotional safety in their community whenever support is available in terms of simple interaction or giving basic verbal support (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002). Members come together because the need for emotional safety reinforces the need to do so and such reinforcement binds them in a cohesive virtual network (Oh & Jeon, 2007). Membership to virtual communities can be used as a means to negotiate the degree of isolation experienced during the

expatriate episode by using it as a means to "*escape*" [Interviewees 2 and 8] the present circumstances.

Interviewee 22 reported a decrease in emotional safety due to aspects associated with the information security of the Internet. However, community members who actively contributed to the community reported that they derived a greater sense of emotional safety from their various communities. Both interviewees 17 and 19 reported that the element of emotional safety refers to their families – the spouse and children of Interviewee 17 who is unaccompanied, and the children of Interviewee 19 who has grown-up children residing elsewhere.

They further reported an increased sense of belonging [17], [19], [22] or a greater awareness of what was going on in their various communities [18].

Expatriates can also communicate with other expatriates through the use of virtual communities that other expatriates participate in and that they find invaluable. However, these virtual communities are only limited to "self-help" or "how-to" communities but can play an important part in the adjustment process and decreasing the degree of isolation experienced by communicating with someone who has been/ currently is in that situation.

> "*There are expat websites catering for communications for social events which can be subscribed to and that also buy and sell belongings when not needed and close monitoring of this can save money but also can help in organising events between companies where expats work i.e. football tournaments and occasion based barbecues*" [Interviewee 9].

> "*Forums where tips for expats are also invaluable in communicating with others, offerings help and advice on all sorts of topics such as schooling. Also where to eat and generally how to make KSA enjoyable place for Westerners to live and reside*" [Interviewee 12].

Only one of the interviewees indicated that she truly participated in a virtual community, only having met with some of the community members after five years. The quote below illustrates an expatriate who influenced her virtual community members and was influenced by them in return by obtaining social and emotional

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support. This supports the study by Zhang (2010) who found a positive relationship between a person's ability to influence a virtual community and deriving a SOC.

"There are two "Online" communities that I would consider myself to play an active role in. Both based on the bounty website, which I was a member of during both my pregnancies. The first is called the [name of group 1] which is 20 women who all gave birth to children in September 2006. The other is the [name of group 2], which has approximately 70 women in, all of whom gave birth to children in February/ March 2009. Initially set up to provide support and answer child related questions, the groups have been supporting each other through further pregnancies, parental deaths, affairs/ separations/ divorces, new jobs, career changes, house moves, marriages, just about everything! It's nice to be able to offer online support to people if able to. Last summer, 10 of us met up from the [name of group 1]. We took the children to London for the day. It was nice to finally be able to meet ladies that had been faces behind computers for the last 5 years. In a bizarre way we were all very comfortable with each and there was no nervousness – it was really like meeting up with old friends" [Interviewee 20].

The above quote supports that even when relationships start online, and develop and mature online, expatriates may still experience a need for face-to-face communication, changing the structure of the community from a virtual community to a hybrid community of interest (Navarrete & Huerta, 2006).

Expatriates reported that their influence increased due to the long duration of their relationships [Interviewee 17] and that they are better known within their communities [Interviewee 19] through their online participation.

Virtual communities such as Facebook and social networking tools such as Skype enable expatriates to have an impact on the lives of their family and friends by exerting influence, and allow them to be influenced in turn. Crowne & Goeke (2012) stated that informational social networks may be especially important for the expatriate's spouse and family members, because of the dual benefit that both receiving and providing assistance can have. They further state that an online informational network should be beneficial to expatriate adjustment because an electronic medium can successfully simulate and sustain the transmission and receipt of information in the host country.

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Expatriates confirmed that by using the Internet, they felt as if they were more integrated in their communities [Interviewees 17, 19, 22]. Expatriates were more aware of what had happened and felt less disconnected from the communities that they were previously involved in [Interviewee 17]. The Internet also assisted with getting to know or reach more people in the newly created local communities [Interviewee 19], particularly when expatriates used the compound Facebook page [Interviewee 22].

Furthermore, due to the lack of embodied entertainment available in the KSA, such as cinemas, theatres, and clubs expatriates had to create their own entertainment – as described previously, they used the Internet as a form of entertainment [Interviewees 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16 and 17]. Depending on the personal needs of the expatriate, the Internet could in the majority of cases fulfil this task.

Table 13 outlines the activities for which expatriates use the Internet. These activities correspond with their needs which are: (a) physical safety, (b) the ability to communicate with family and friends quickly and frequently, (c) quality of education, (d) availability of medical resources, (e) need for entertainment, (f) the ability to buy/ obtain home country products and (g) ability to integrate with the local community. Therefore, although the Internet does not necessarily help expatriates feel more integrated [Interviewee 19] it does succeed in fulfilling some of their needs.

Interviewee 1 stated that: *"The Internet provides a means where we can remain close to family and friends despite not being face-to-face. We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly".* This quote illustrates that the Internet can play a role in positively influencing the shared emotional connection expatriates experience with various communities.

Interviewee 22 felt a greater sense of emotional connection with her fellow compound residents through the compound Facebook page. This allowed her to establish a connection with fellow expatriates, which she followed up later with a face-to-face meeting. This allowed her to form an emotional connection through their developing relationship. Interviewees 17 and 21 felt that the Internet allowed them to maintain their emotional connection to their communities, which was strengthened over time. The Internet allowed unaccompanied expatriates a greater sense of emotional

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connection with their family members who did not live in the KSA [Interviewee 18 and 19].

Virtual communities like Facebook were considered, by the participants, to be an excellent way to keep in contact with family and friends and served the additional purpose of bringing an expatriate into contact with family and friends who had been "lost" for a number of years; for example old school friends. Interviewee 9 advocates the following:

> "*My advice to people coming out to work in Saudi is to make sure they use social networking sites. I only started when I got out here and Facebook has been invaluable. It has helped me keep abreast with what my family and friends have been doing socially and work related. They have also been able to track my life here through comments, pictures etc. If you are an expat and have no interest in social networking sites to keep in touch it can be pretty lonely so I would strongly advise this.*"

The use of virtual communities to keep in contact with family and friends is however a personal choice, as some expatriates feel that the quantity of information compared to the quality of information one sometimes receives on a social networking site is artificial, and they therefore steer away from being part of a virtual community. Interviewee 13 stated that she was still not convinced of social networking sites such as Facebook because although she takes part in it she still sees it as "*quantity over quality*".

The development of Internet has allowed for more interaction with family and friends who are left behind. This is especially important due to the large cultural distance between an expatriate's home country and that of the KSA, which might leave family and friends with a lot of questions. Interviewee 20 said that "*I like the way that I've been able to reassure friends and family, via the Internet that life is not as hard as it could be in KSA. I like the way that I've been able to maintain relationships thanks to this*". Therefore, modern communications allow for family and friends to contribute to maintaining the feeling of shared emotional connection with the expatriates and address the feeling of isolation that may be experienced without it.

7.4.3 Internet as a way of being

This section considers the mediating effect of the Internet in the lives of expatriates as a way of being in the KSA. A number of expatriates have reported that there is no "*way of being*" in the KSA without the Internet, some have not given thought to this because not having access to the Internet appears inconceivable to Western expatriates in this day and age.

Expatriates described the Internet as "*extremely important*" [Interviewee 3], "*extremely useful*" [Interviewee 5], a "*necessity in present environment*" [Interviewee 5], as "*something I rely upon no matter where I live*" [Interviewee 7], an "*invaluable a*sset" [Interviewee 9], a "*very important aspect in my life in KSA*" [Interviewee 10], [Interviewee 12], "*important*" [Interviewee 11] and as "*vital for communication*" [Interviewee 21]. Chapter 10 will explain how the Internet as a tool extends expatriates' control over their environment, how it increases time distortion and social presence, and how it increases the exchange of information.

Seven interviewees [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13] indicated that although they can live without the Internet in the KSA, having the Internet makes life a lot easier. Interviewee 13 indicated that having the Internet reduced the number of trips back home because they could do business online and the Internet, therefore, improved the quality of the expatriate experience as it opened opportunities for them to travel more to other parts of the world.

Interviewee 7 indicated that he never really considered not having the Internet in the KSA, whilst Interview 14 stated that the Internet is "*everywhere and it is not unique anymore*" [Interviewee 14]. The latter statement is supported by Interviewee 2 who said that, "*We are using the technology more now than when we lived at home. I expect we will continue to use it more in the future when we return home*", which confirms the perception of the universal nature of the Internet. Furthermore, other Interviewees [2, 3, 5, 7 and 13] indicated that their usage of the Internet would not differ significantly when they were at home largely because it is a modern tool and they would use it regardless of where they found themselves. Therefore, the Internet is a tool in terms of improving the expatriate episode. However, the main difference

between using the Internet in the KSA compared to at home is the emotion expatriates attach to the availability of their Internet. This will be discussed in section 7.4.4.

Hoffman (2009, p. 3) argues that Internet indispensability arises from the *"micro-level practices"* of daily routine that become ritualised. He uses the example of a person checking his/ her Facebook page each day during breakfast, which represents a ritualisation of the daily routine of reading Facebook. He further states that Internet users who have made the Internet a daily ritual are likely to feel varying degrees of disruption if they are disconnected from the Internet. Expatriates in this study reported experiencing the feelings described by Hoffman if they did not have access to the Internet: disconnection and disruption. Interviewees 4 and 6 indicated that they would not be able to stay in the KSA if they did not have access to the Internet.

The more consumers use the Internet as a news and information source, for communication and correspondence, to conduct the myriad of life's transactions, for entertainment, and for social interaction the more useful they find it. For expatriates in this study it was very important to "*keep abreast*" [Interviewee 3] of their local and world news in general [Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 22]. Hoffman (2009) states that these types of micro-level behaviors are what make the Internet so integral to people's lives and lead to its indispensability. However, he does concede that Internet users who do not have opportunities to incorporate the Internet into their daily lives will not have the opportunity to experience ritualisation, which leads to indispensability. Interviewee 13 indicated that her dependence on Internet usage was due to the fact that it has improved so much in terms of its availability and quality (in comparison to when it was first introduced), rather than because of her location. This was supported by Interviewee 3, also an expatriate with previous experience in the KSA, who said that when the Internet was very poor (compared to the current provision) it had little influence on her, but because it has improved so much (compared to what it was like previously) she would struggle without it. This emotional indispensability of the Internet confirms the metaphor of the Internet as being a "lifeline to the real world". This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Markham (2003) states that one can perceive a situation wherein users, intertwined with their various technologies, tend to experience life and technology on the same plane, without making vast distinctions between the two or by conceptualising life as

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essentially mediated by technology. The Internet is simply the way one learns about, makes sense of, and ultimately knows the social world, and alternative means are not imagined. It has transpired from this study that the Internet was used as a mediating tool by the expatriates to accomplish their ultimate objective of adjustment to the KSA as without it, life in the KSA would be more *"difficult"* [Interviewees 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13].

Mediating tools, or artefacts, such as the Internet, can be described in terms of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) initially developed by Russian psychologist Vygotsky and then further developed by Engeström (Holt & Morris, 1993). CHAT centres on mediation and the idea that the way in which humans undertake an activity is influenced by the environment around them, and their ability to develop an understanding is based on previous experiences which are utilised when making logical decisions. This is supported by the conceptualisation of the Internet "as a way of being" when Markham (2003) states that technology does not hold a position as object outside the agency of the human. This mediation is human-made in so far as the tools that influence a subject have been developed by the subject. Figure 34 below illustrates CHAT in the form of the activity system, which is the unit of analysis in CHAT.
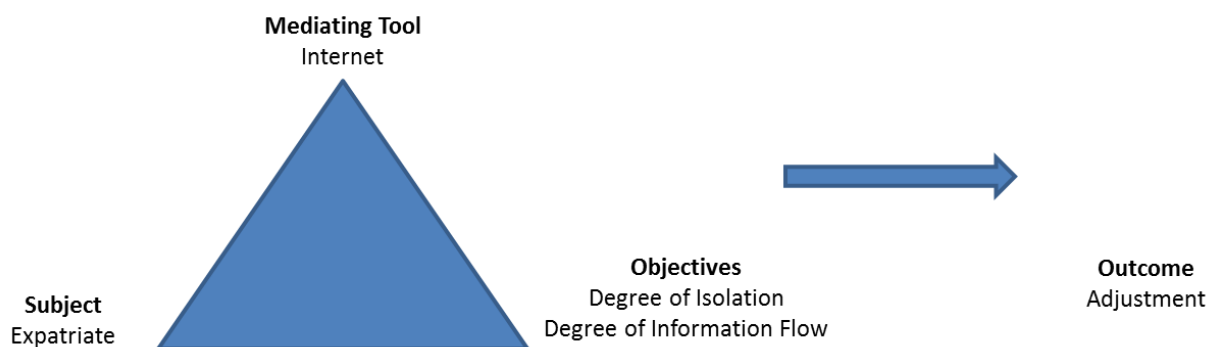
Figure 34: Proposed Model of Negotiating adjustment in the KSA by using Internet as Lifeline to Real World

Holt and Morris (1993) explain that human activity cannot be broken down into separate elements since the internal relations conceal the transformations that occur as activity develops. They further stated that an activity is described as doing in order to transform something, thus it cannot be studied or presented as static or eternal

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models: it must be analysable in its dynamics and transformations, and as a contextual phenomenon. Human activities always contain artefacts which, very widely defined in CHAT, include anything that can be used in the transformation process, for instance technical tools, signs, symbols, language, procedures, methods, laws, and forms of work organisation (Kuutti, 1996 cited in Susi & Ziemke, 2001). The emerging theory has accounted for this by indicating the relationship between the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates and how they use the Internet, as well as the consequential dependence that arises.

Kuutti (1996 cited in Susi & Ziemke, 2001) explains that artefacts serve as mediators of human thought and behaviour, i.e. there is a mediated relationship between subject and object. This allows expatriates to create a "hybrid place of being" for themselves. Through mediated activity expatriates made "everyday life in KSA" more "real". According to Vygotsky (1978 cited in Susi & Ziemke, 2001), humans create stimuli, psychological or material, which determine their own reactions and are used as a means for mastering their own behaviour. The artefacts have a mediating role and every activity contains artefacts, which inform human behaviour as artefacts are used for guiding one's own behaviour, as well as the behaviour of others. Vygotsky did not only consider external, material artefacts, but also internal, psychological ones (Susi & Ziemke, 2001).

In this study, the subject refers to the collective group of expatriates as well as the individual expatriate, which is accounted for in the theoretical model, Figure 34 above, through the substantive categories "degree of isolation" and "degree of information flow". The subject's point of view, very aptly describes the reality of living in the KSA and the theoretical model attempts to present the expatriates' views in a conceptual fashion. The proposed theoretical model accounted for this through the use of the word "degree" indicating the subjective nature of the proposed categories. As explained in section 4.5.2, the word "degree" is also one of the proposed coding families (Glaser, 1978). Chapter 8 will explain how expatriates' "degree of isolation" is dependent on five interrelated perspectives: (1) Living Space, (2) Expatriate status, (3) Social support, (4) Freedom of movement and (5) Expatriate state of mind. These interrelated perspectives account for both emotional and social isolation displayed by expatriates in this study. This discussion will be extended in Chapter 9 with the

development of the EIFM in the substantive category of "degree of information flow". This chapter will explain the consequences and experience of information flow as experienced by expatriates using the Internet as a mediator. It will show that the antecedents to information flow will influence how the subject is positioned in terms of using the Internet as a mediating artefact.

The Internet is therefore a mediating tool that expatriates use to obtain their objectives of decreasing the degree of isolation and increasing information flow experienced while in the KSA. This is accomplished by creating a hybrid place of being in the KSA where everyday life in the KSA is made more *"acceptable"* [Interviewee 21], or *"easier"* [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13] by Internet mediated activities. This means that the Internet can act as a means of salvation which will be discussed in the following section.

7.4.4 The Internet as a means of Salvation

The "Internet as a lifeline to the real world" manifests itself in the role of salvation. Table 14 below illustrates metaphors that reflect salvation as used by expatriates in this study.

	Metaphor	Interviewee(s)
1	*Obtaining my "daily fix"*	20
2	*Internet is a "saving grace"*	20
3	*Internet is a lifeline*	1,6,10,18
4	*No Internet is like "cut[ting] off one of my limbs"*	3
5	*No Internet makes me feel "cut off"*	3,4,5,6,22
6	*Keeping in touch*	6,15,16,7
7	*Voice in the world*	8
8	*Killing time*	8
9	*Track my life through comments*	9
10	*Let off steam*	9
11	*Embraced the Internet*	9
12	*Fill the hole or emptiness*	9
13	*Facilitate life in KSA*	10
14	*Stay connected with family and friends*	6,11

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15	*Internet is a link to the outside world/ real world/ normal life*	2,4
16	*Took the edge off things*	20

Table 14: Internet Metaphors used by expatriates in this study

Apart from the metaphors used by expatriates which illustrate a sense of salvation brought by the Internet, expatriates also expressed emotion if the Internet was unavailable or when imagining life in the KSA without the Internet.

Table 15 below summarises the range of other feelings expressed by expatriates when asked how they would feel should they have no Internet connection.

Emotion without the Internet	Interviewee
"Isolated"	1,3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 22
"Homesick"	1,20
"Depressed"	1
"Frustrated"	3, 8, 13, 16 and 20
"Annoyed"	3
"Angry"	3
"Hamstrung"	16
"Cut off"	3,5, and 22

Table 15: Emotions of expatriates in this study when Internet is unavailable

It is evident from the study that no direct relationship exists between the emotions experienced by the expatriate in the event of not having access to the Internet and their level of happiness or contentment in the KSA, or their experience as an expatriate, or even the duration as an expatriate in the KSA. The following discussions will examine the participant's state or level of contentment in the KSA and their dependence on the Internet. This is an important connection as it will demonstrate that a "content" expatriate can be just as dependant on the Internet as an expatriate who indicated that he/ she is less content with life in the KSA.

Interviewee 1 indicated that the Internet is "*essential*" for her: "*Without it I would feel isolated and homesick. The times when the Internet is down on the compound I can definitely say that I feel depressed. It is like a lifeline to a "normal" life*". She had

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previous expatriate experience, indicated that she was "*content*" with living in the KSA and had been in the KSA for almost three years.

Interviewee 2 indicated that the Internet is "*the link to the life he used to have … I used to ride mountain bikes, go to movies, hang out at coffee shops, public libraries, cinema etc. Here I check what is going on in the free world with the Internet*". He described his mood as "*anxiously awaiting the rest of my life after Saudi*"; he had been in the KSA for three years at the time that he took part in the study. He has had previous expatriate experience.

Interviewee 3 indicated that on the occasions that she had been without an Internet connection that she "*fel[t] as if someone ha[d] cut off one of [her] limbs (slight exaggeration, but not much!)*". "*Having no Internet connection is extremely frustrating and makes me feel cut off from the real world*". She described her mood as "*currently fed-up, normally neutral (neither happy nor sad/ melancholy)*", she had been in the KSA for three years. It was her second time in the KSA and she had travelled previously.

Interviewee 4 indicated that if he had no Internet access he would feel "*disconnected from the real world!*" He had described his mood as happy and had been in the KSA for seven years. He had travelled and lived as an expatriate extensively.

Interviewee 5 indicated that he would feel "*pathetic and cut-off*" from his home country in particular and "*the rest of the world in general*" if he had no Internet access while living in the KSA. He had described his mood as happy and had lived in the KSA for 25 years. It was his first time as an expatriate.

Interviewee 6 indicated that the Internet is his "*lifeline to life back in the real world*". He indicated that at the time of the study he had been in the KSA for 404 days and that he planned to leave in 549 days, "*unless a good job back home is available, in which case I would leave immediately*". He was unaccompanied and had previous expatriate experience. However, he further indicated that he felt "*helpless about assisting my wife [to] manage day to day processes back home*". He now relies on the Internet to assist her with "*set[ting] the thermostat*", settle property disputes, sign documents that require both of their signatures, and find her way home after her car's "*on-board GPS*

stopped working". Emotionally, it helped him to stay connected with her by being able to send flowers or gifts on their anniversary every month.

Interviewee 10 indicated that at times when the Internet was not working, she felt "*disconnected from the outer world*". She described herself as happy and had been in the KSA for 20 years.

Interviewee 15 indicated that he would feel "*totally lost*" if he did not have access to the Internet. He had been in the KSA for six years, had previous expatriate experience and described himself as happy.

Interviewee 16 indicated that she would feel "*paralyzed*" if she did not have access to the Internet. She had been in the KSA for three years, had previous expatriate experience and described herself as happy.

Interviewee 17 indicated that he would be "*very lonely and bored to the point of insanity*" if he did not have access to the Internet as he was dependent on the Internet for the "*majority of [his] entertainment and social interaction*". He had been in the KSA for 15 months, was unaccompanied with extensive previous expatriate experience and described life in the KSA as "*very different from that in Europe*".

Interviewee 18 indicated that she would feel "*very isolated*" as "*the Internet is [her] lifeline and the only way [she] keeps in touch with people*". She had been in the KSA for three years and described life in the KSA as easy with their "*driver, and a houseboy, no housework, ironing or DIY*". However, she did mention downsides such as restricted visits from family and friends and "*obvious restrictions, covering up, not being able to drive and shut down for prayer time*".

Interviewee 19 would feel "*devastated*" if she did not have access to the Internet. She had been in the KSA for three years and six months and had enjoyed her expatriate experience in the KSA.

Interviewee 20 indicated that Internet access was her "*saving grace*". She had been in the KSA for almost three years.

Interviewee 21 indicated that he would feel "*more restricted*" if he did not have access to the Internet. He had been in the KSA for three years, was enjoying his expatriate experience and described it as unique.

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Interviewee 22 indicated that she would feel "*completely isolated and cut-off from family back home …*". She has been in the KSA for nine years and found it difficult in the beginning as she "*didn't know anyone, didn't know [her] surroundings and wasn't used to not having the freedom of going where [she] wanted [to] by [herself]*". But after nine years she described herself as living comfortably "*in a compound that provides many different amenities which contribute to the expats' feeling of freedom within the walls of the compound*".

It is evident from the study that the object of the activities when using the Internet is individualistic and depends on the subject, who is internally constrained by his/ her personality or motivation, but is also influenced by the rules governing the environment under which the activity occurs and the community within which the activity occurs. A review of expatriate adjustment literature indicates that individualistic factors have attracted considerable attention such as the Big Five personality traits (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Ramalu, Wei, & Rose, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2006), self-monitoring, self-efficacy, goal orientation, task and people orientation, ethnocentrism, communicational ability, stress tolerance, relational ability, and international experience which have been linked to expatriate performance (for example, Black, 1988; Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Parker & McEvoy, 1993 and Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). The proposed theoretical model accounts for the individual personal factors by considering "degree of isolation" and "degree of information flow", implying the subjective applicability of substantive categories.

Interviewee 3 indicated that she would not consider living in the KSA if she did not have Internet access. Interviewees 4 and 6 categorically stated that they would not be in the KSA if they did not have the Internet. Interviewee 9 did not express emotion towards the availability or unavailability of the Internet, but had initially indicated that he would not consider living in the KSA if he did not have the Internet. At a follow up interview a month later he revised his statement on his dependence on the Internet.

"*… the Internet is the easy way out. By this I mean it is much easier sitting in front of the computer, blogging, writing on Facebook and not getting accustomed to your environment and learning the language and figuring out the reason why things are the way they are*" [Interviewee 9 after four months].

Interestingly Interviewee 8 did not express any major feelings towards the potential scenario of the unavailability of the Internet despite describing herself as "*content living here but that is not the same as saying I am happy … The Internet is also a way of killing time, of escaping the harshness of the environment in which I exist. I say exist and not live as it more accurately expresses how I occasionally feel here. I have felt like a caged bird with clipped wings at times*".

Characterising the Internet as a means of salvation emphasises the description of the core category "**Internet a lifeline to the real world"**, as depicted in Figure 34. Johnston (2009) classifies the role of the Internet in terms of salvation as being the Internet's ability to save, empower, and enable new opportunities instead of as a destructive and villainous force. According to the AED (2014, n.p.) salvation can be defined as: "*a means of preserving from harm or unpleasantness*". In this study, although expatriates were worried about their physical safety – one of their main concerns – none of them were harmed. Interviewees [7, 8, 9] indicated that they would not have felt comfortable living outside the compound because of the perceived security risks. The expatriates had the perception that, in the compounds, they were protected from terrorists [Interviewees 8, 9], abduction [Interviewee 8], and traffic hazards [Interviewee 8]. Furthermore Interviewee 8 indicated that she "*would not have been [t]here if [she] had not been offered a house within a compound*". Furthermore, the Internet could not have much of an impact on their physical safety apart from being a means of communication between their company and embassy, alerting them to potential threats [Interviewees 1, 5, 8, 13]. The role of the Internet in terms of salvation concerns itself primarily with escaping the unpleasantness imposed by the cultural restrictions. Therefore, the "Internet as a lifeline" is only considered in its metaphorical sense, protecting expatriates from the "unpleasantness" of living in the KSA, which entails being removed from their benevolent community whilst dealing with a new culture and adjusting to the new environment. In this context, the Internet is seen as being a means of salvation.

7.5   Summary

"Internet as a lifeline to the real world" was identified as the core category of this study. The core category is expressed as a metaphor with a mediating effect on the lives of expatriates in this study. This chapter aimed to provide a grounded understanding of this core category by firstly explaining the role that culture plays in understanding the proposed theoretical model and secondly, how expatriates define their everyday existence when compared to the "real world" expressed in the core category. Against this contextualisation, the core category was presented. It was shown that the Internet fulfils four functions expressed through the metaphors: a tool, a place, a way of being and as a means of salvation.

Firstly, as a tool the Internet assisted expatriates in extending themselves by increasing their reach and allowing them to complete a number of activities such as, most importantly, communicating with family and friends. In this sense the Internet was seen as a modern lifeline without which such communication or extension is inconceivable.

Secondly, the Internet as a tool created the place in which expatriates could operate – cyberspace. This was where the communication took place. It was shown that e-mail, Facebook and Skype were popular platforms used by expatriates to communicate with their family and friends.

Thirdly, due to the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, it has become a way of being. This third property describes the mediating effect of the Internet on the lives of expatriates, assisting them with achieving their objectives of managing the degree of isolation and information flow experienced in order to adjust to life in the KSA. Due to the expatriates' dependency on the Internet, it was argued that the Internet has created a hybrid place of being where expatriates make "everyday life" more "real" through the mediated activities.

Finally, the Internet as a means of salvation encapsulates the description of the core category where the Internet is labelled as a lifeline. This chapter has demonstrated that expatriates express strong emotions towards the role that the Internet plays in

their lives to the extent that expatriates will consider not coming to the KSA, or think that they will not be able to remain in the KSA without the Internet.

CHAPTER 8: DEGREE OF ISOLATION

8.1   Introduction

The main emotion expressed by expatriates when they considered life in the KSA without the Internet is "isolation". This is a very important concept and is further explored in the substantive category of "degree of isolation". This chapter aims to explain what contributes to the feeling of isolation experienced by expatriates. It will show that expatriates experience different types of isolation: emotional, social and physical isolation. This chapter will demonstrate that isolation is a multifaceted construct informed by the expatriate's living space, his/ her status, the social support available, the freedom of movement in the KSA, and his/ her state of mind. Figure 35 illustrates the layout of Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Degree of Isolation

- Introduction
- Degree of Isolation defined in this study
  - Living Space
  - Expatriate Status
  - Social Support
  - Freedom of Movement
  - Expatriate State of Mind
- Summary
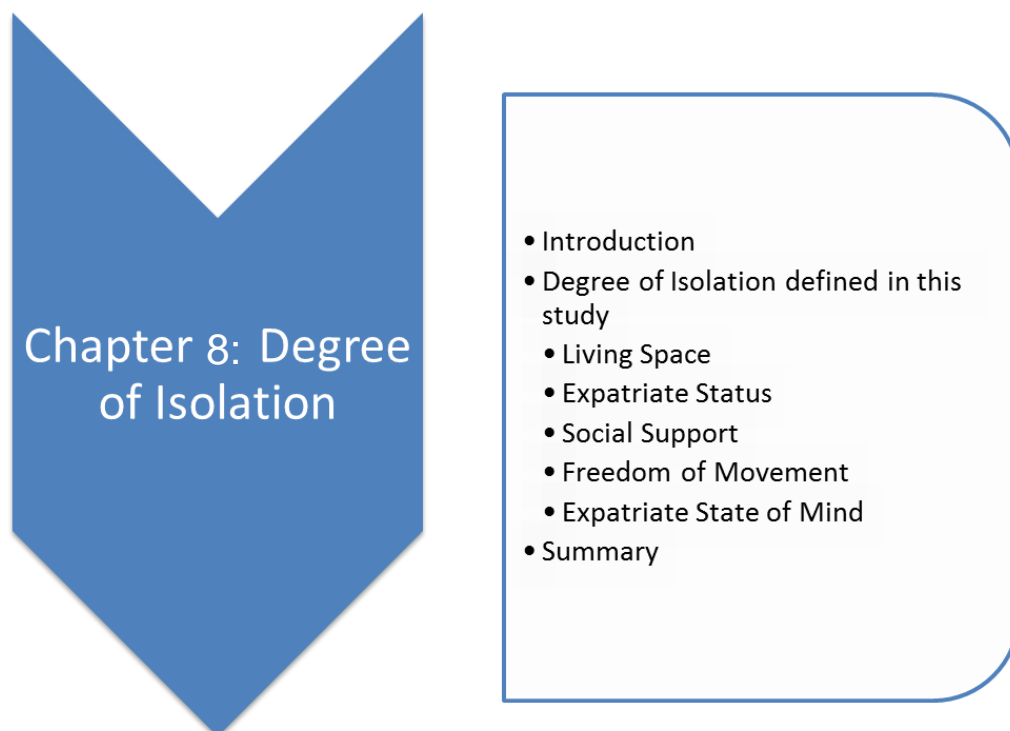
Figure 35: Outline of Chapter 8

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8.2 Degree of Isolation as defined in this study

Previous literature has indicated that the extent to which people experience isolation is dependent on two main factors: individual differences (Cacioppo, Norris, Decety, Monteleone, & Nusbaum, 2009) and personality traits (Johnson et al., 2003). In this study, it was evident that the extent to which expatriates experienced isolation was influenced by these two factors as well as previous expatriate experience, their expatriate status i.e. accompanied vs. unaccompanied, the cultural distance between their home country and the KSA and the level of support available. Isolation, in social literature, is usually considered when discussing loneliness and is sometimes used interchangeably. Loneliness, according to Peplau and Perlman (1984, p. 15) is subjective and can be defined as *"[a]n unpleasant feeling in which a person feels a strong sense of emptiness and solitude resulting from inadequate levels of social relationships"*. One of the most prevalent definitions of loneliness was developed by Robert S. Weiss who identified two types of loneliness: Loneliness of Emotional Isolation (also known as emotional loneliness) and Loneliness of Social Isolation (also known as social loneliness) (Weiss, 1975 cited in Bretherton, 1992).

Emotional isolation is derived from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1983 cited in Ing, 2006), which explains the relationship between parents/ caregivers and children. The premise of the theory is that if a child is securely attached to their parents and is then consequently separated, they display separation distress such as crying, attempts to search for parents and inhibited behavior. Adults get attached to romantic partners and show separation distress when separated from their partners. Based on these foundations Weiss (1999) defined emotional loneliness as *"separation distress without an object"*, which implies that emotional loneliness is caused by the lack of a romantic partner, and feels like the separation distress experienced when a romantic partner is missing.

Social isolation, on the other hand, is the loneliness people experience because of the lack of a wider social network. They do not feel that they are members of a community, or that they have friends or allies who they can rely on in times of distress (Weiss, 1999). Research indicates that perceived social isolation is a risk factor for, and may contribute to, poorer overall cognitive performance, faster cognitive decline, poorer executive functioning, increased negativity and depressive cognition, heightened

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sensitivity to social threats, a confirmatory bias in social understanding that is self-protective and paradoxically self-defeating, heightened anthropomorphism and contagion that threatens social cohesion. These differences in attention and cognition have an impact on emotions, decisions, behaviors and interpersonal interactions that can contribute to the association between loneliness and cognitive decline, and between loneliness and morbidity more generally (Masi, Cacioppo, Hawkley, & Yuan, 2011).

Table 16 below depicts the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates in terms of five interrelated perspectives: living space, expatriate status, social support, freedom of movement and the expatriate's state of mind. These perspectives were developed by following the principles of the GTM as explained in Chapter 4 and following the processes described in Chapter 6. Each of these perspectives was informed by concepts that in turn were informed by codes. Figure 36 shows how these perspectives with their corresponding concepts are interrelated. The dotted lines depict the interactions between the respective perspectives, which will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Substantive Category	Perspectives	Concepts	Codes
Degree of Isolation	Living Space	Compound Life: Safe Haven or jail?	Security, convenience, cocooned, fishbowl, basic necessities, freedom, facilitate life, simulating "home country" life, normal life, social events, sporting events, incestuous, restaurant, privacy, isolating, don't meet locals, tainted view of customs and culture, friendly faces, not real, outsider if single, natural (previous experience), preferable to living in city, pretty, restricted access, facilitate life, artificial
		Cultural Distance State: Oppressive or alien	Religious interpretation, accustomed to rules, segregation of genders, no free speech, no female driving, threat of punishment at work for making mistakes, witnessing slavery, police check points, no religious freedom, strict dress code, regulated media, need a local sponsor, strong Internet content filtering, Dress code, different language, different alphabet, lack of interaction with locals, lack of responsibility, "Allah's Will", erratic driving , wearing of an abaya, business closed for prayer time, nocturnal lifestyles of locals, women only allowed to do certain jobs, lack of entertainment, men barred from entering shopping malls on "family days"
	Expatriate status	Single/ Unaccompanied vs. Accompanied	Feeling like an outsider, spouse an outsider at home (unaccompanied), lonely, miserable because missing family, "I was single and young so the need to stay in contact was not as important", bored

	Social Support	Integration with the local community	Aggressive, language barrier, learn from people, locals can be easily offended but don't care if they offend us – it is not attractive to "go down town" as it would be in the UK.
		Expatriate community	Get travel ideas, receive embassy information, communication with school, access company information, charities, school community, friends, trust, friendly, social activities
		Benevolent community	Feeling of connection to home crucial, keeping abreast of events/ new at home , can still feel part of family, communicate via e-mail, communicate via Skype, communicate via Facebook
	Freedom of Movement	Accessibility of the KSA	Restricted visitors, friends are unable to visit, difficult visa process
		Mobility in the KSA	Wasn't used to not having the freedom of going where I wanted by myself, shopping bus, women not allowed to drive, bus/ taxi schedules, time wasted waiting for transport, effort, off compound visits require planning
	Expatriate state of Mind	Adjusting or surviving	Waiting for the rest of my life after Saudi, currently fed-up, normally neutral, content, comfortable living in a compound, adjusted to a degree, tolerant of the culture, content, melancholy, happy

Table 16: Degree of Isolation Concepts and Codes as defined by the study
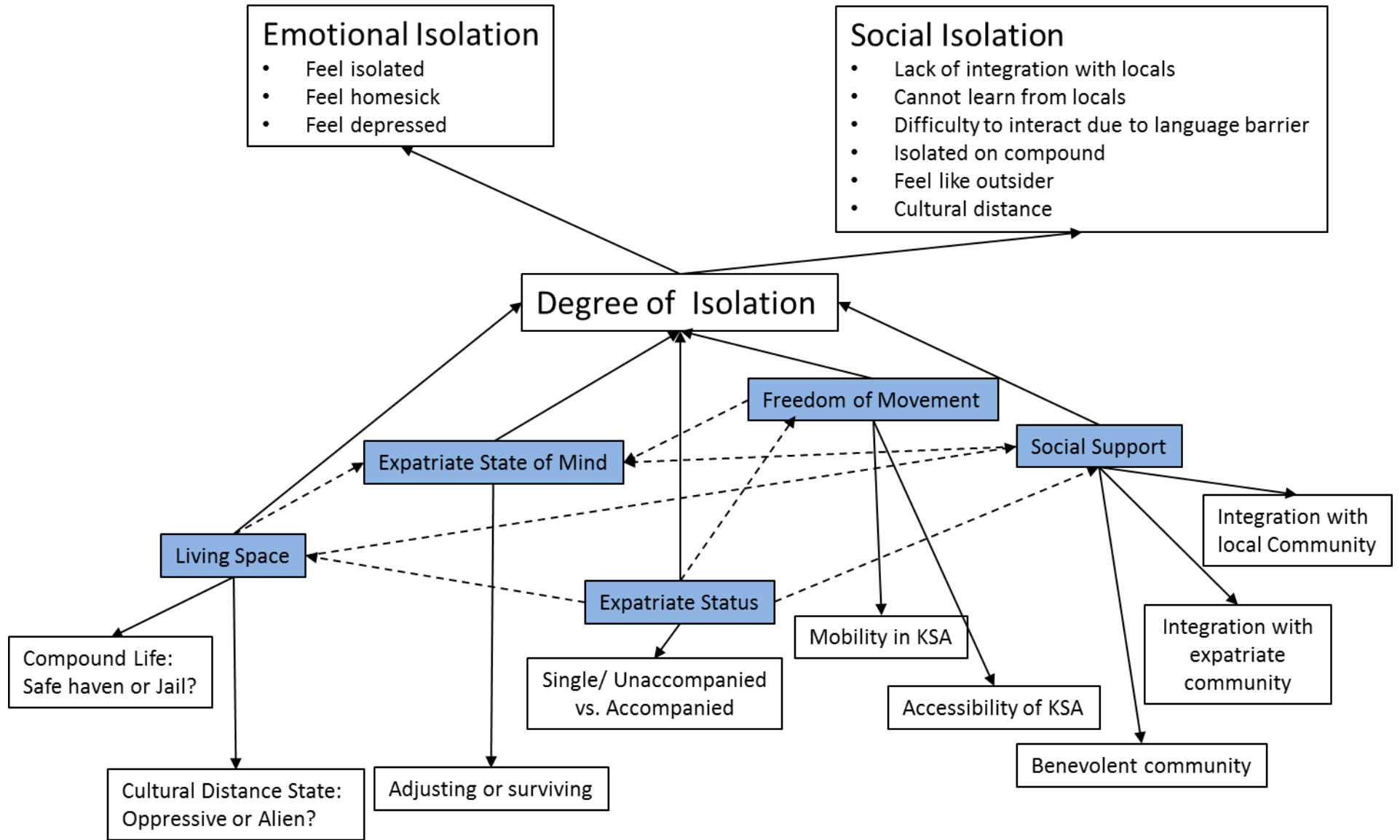
Figure 36: Interrelated concepts of degree of isolation as defined through this study

This study maintains that as a result of the great distance between the Saudi Arabian cultures and that of a typical Western or other Middle Eastern country's culture the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates is amplified. The feeling of living space, the importance of the expatriate's status, the importance of obtaining social support and the restrictions on freedom of movement and the expatriate's state of mind can all be explained by cultural distance. The ranges of the degree of isolation concepts and their related dimensions are illustrated in Table 17 below.

Concept/ Perspective	Low/ Negative perspective	High/ Positive perspective
Compound Life	Jail	Safe Haven
Cultural distance state	Oppressive	Alien[10]
Expatriate status	Unaccompanied/ Single	Accompanied
Integration with the local community	Low interaction	High interaction
Expatriate community	Low interaction	High interaction
Benevolent community	Low interaction	High interaction
Accessibility of the KSA	Low accessibility	High accessibility
Mobility in the KSA	Low mobility	High mobility
Expatriate state of mind	Low level of openness to new culture	High level of openness to new culture

Table 17: Ranges of perceptions of Degree of Isolation concepts and perspectives

These ranges of perception depend on the individual expatriate's experience which is informed by the concepts discussed below.

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[10] "Alien" in the context of this study is defined as the positive counterpart of oppressive, which is perceived as being negative. "Alien" refers to the recognition that life in the KSA is "different". This definition will be made clear in the discussions in section 8.2.1.2.

8.2.1 Living Space

Firstly, isolation is informed by how expatriates perceive life in the KSA, which was conceptualised as "Living Space". This refers to the feeling experienced by expatriates of living in a surreal world inside the real world. As explained in section 7.3, the surreal world refers to their "everyday life" in the KSA and the "real world" refers to the world outside of the KSA. In this study, the expatriate is not always physically isolated from the outside world because they are surrounded by other expatriates and locals, but instead is emotionally isolated from the outside world because they feel as if they are *"living in a bubble"* [Interviewees 3 and 4]. As discussed in section 7.2 this feeling is brought on largely by the cultural distance experienced by most expatriates in the KSA, when comparing their own culture to that of the ultra-conservative culture of the KSA. However, this feeling is compounded by the fact that most expatriates live inside a compound – which physically isolates them from the locals. Key concepts that emerged from this perspective were conceptualised as (1) Compound life: Safe haven or jail? As described in Chapter 5 strict rules and moral codes are applicable in the KSA, which expatriates are subjected to. These rules are manifested in a large cultural distance, which has an impact on the degree of isolation experienced by the expatriates. Expatriates negotiated the degree of isolation experienced by being part of various communities, the most prominent being the compound community. This was explored in more detail during theoretical sampling. Section 8.2.1.1 provides an understanding of how compound life is perceived by expatriates. (2) Cultural distance: Oppressive or Alien State describes the perception of expatriates concerning the KSA environment in general where they are exposed to the rules and customs of the country. This will be explained in section 8.2.1.2.

8.2.1.1   Compound Life: Safe Haven or Jail?

Compounds were described as having "*fantastic facilities*" [Interviewee 12], and offering "*basic necessities*" such as water, palatable food, and acceptable housing [Interviewee 6]. Compounds were also described as having been "*kept clean, well maintained and the gardens are maintained in an attractive manner*" [Interviewee 7]. A compound community affords expatriates the opportunity to be surrounded by "*like minded individuals*" [Interviewee 12] and to participate in social and sporting events [Interviewees 7, 9, and 12].

Being a member of a compound community allows expatriates to derive a sense of community. Explained through the theory of Sense of Community (SOC) (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) this affords expatriates membership which fosters a sense of belonging, emotional safety, personal investment and an ability to be influenced/ are influenced by other expatriates (members of the compound community), the chance to integrate and fulfil their needs, and share an emotional connection. It has been reported that deriving a sense of community can decrease isolation, especially social isolation (Masi, Cacioppo, Hawkley, & Yuan, 2011; Perlman & Peplau, 1984; Peplau, 1985).

These positive perceptions of compound life underscore how it can be perceived by expatriates as a safe haven where they are protected from the differentness of life in the KSA. However, as the perception of isolation is subjective, there are others who feel that living in a compound shares more similarities to living in a jail. Living in an enclosed community can be challenging since expatriates, as individuals, have different needs for personal space. Interviewee 6 described compound life as "*incestuous*" while Interviewee 12 described it as "*living in a goldfish bowl … and feeling trapped sometimes*". Ironically, protection of a person's personal space is cited by McMillan and Charvis (1986) as an advantage of boundaries offered by a community such as a compound. Interviewee 8 indicated that a downside of living in a compound is not being able to integrate with the local community which would be considered "*normal*" [Interviewee 2] behaviour for expatriates elsewhere.

> "*… I have lived in other countries before and was able to be immersed in the culture and language which allows you very quickly to feel more at home, this isn't easy in this culture*"[Interviewee 2].

Integration with the local community will be discussed in more detail in section 9.2.3.1.

The presence of the Internet aids the expatriate not to just "*merely have [a] life on [compound name]*" [Interviewee 16]. Interviewee 2 indicated that "*rather than seeking out new experiences we isolate ourselves on compounds … I used to ride mountain bikes, go to movies, hang out at coffee shops, public libraries, cinema etc. Here I check what is going on in the free world with the Internet*". Therefore within the comfort of the compound (a safe haven or jail) expatriates use the Internet to "escape" [Interviewees 2, 8, and 9] the current environment.

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8.2.1.2   Cultural Distance State: Oppressive or Alien

The compound community provides expatriates with a physical boundary between that which some expatriates perceive as alien [Interviewees 3] or oppressive [Interviewees 1, 2] and therefore isolates expatriates from the local community. The implication of this lack of integration with the local community is that expatriates cannot learn from the local community – this is in itself "alien". Interviewees [1, 2, 3, 7 and 14] indicated that during previous expatriate episodes they had become used to integrating with the local communities elsewhere and learning from them. Their inability to fulfil their needs, determined through their membership to the KSA community, resulted in their feeling isolated and not deriving a sense of belonging. This created the perception amongst some of the expatriates, that the local community was aggressive and that life in the KSA could be classified as alien [Interviewee 3] and oppressive [Interviewees 1, 2]. Synonyms for "alien" in terms of this study are "different", "a strange existence", "challenging", and "living in a bubble".

From Table 16 it is evident that the codes that informed the "alien vs. oppressed" concept are informed by the cultural distance between the expatriates' culture and the culture in the KSA (the host country). Tables 8 and 9 provide the expatriates' perceptions of the KSA culture and examples of CD. Interviewee 10 indicated that an example of physical isolation is the fact that women are required to wear an abaya or cover their hair (when requested). She says that she does neither in her home country, but in the KSA it is "law". Therefore, some cultural differences can be seen as "alien". However, other experiences of cultural difference can be seen as being oppressive such as *"[n]o mixing of sexes in public, no female driving, no free speech, threat of punishment at work for making mistakes, witnessing slavery, police check points etc."* [Interviewee 2]. These changes in the social environment influence the degree of isolation experienced.

Perlman and Peplau (1984, p. 17) indicated that situational or transitional loneliness is a subset of emotional loneliness. This involves the experience where individuals *"… had satisfying relationships until some specific change occurred, such as divorce, bereavement or moving to a new town. Situational loneliness can be a severely distressing experience".* Expatriates experience situational isolation when moving out of their benevolent community into a "new town" with its own customs, rules and

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culture. Interviewee 10 indicated that she experienced emotional isolation due to *"[her] dependency on [her] husband"* and "*not being able to express [herself] freely*". These two examples can be directly contributed to the KSA having an "alien vs. oppressed" living space, depending on the feelings of the expatriate.

8.2.2 Expatriate Status

"Expatriate status" describes the impact that the feeling of isolation has on the expatriate's personal life while in the KSA, and how it affects the degree of isolation experienced by the expatriate. The expatriate's status, which refers to whether the expatriate is accompanied or unaccompanied/ single, can influence the extent of cultural distance experienced as there are physical restrictions imposed by the customs and laws of the country on single or unaccompanied expatriates. For example, Interviewee 12 reported that the "*total ban and near impossibility of meeting or mixing with members of the opposite sex"* was difficult for him.

A key concept that was identified from data was the difference in perceived isolation between unaccompanied or single expatriates and their married, accompanied, counterparts. Each of these will be discussed in the following sections.

8.2.2.1 Unaccompanied or Single Expatriates

Unaccompanied expatriates are those expatriates who are not accompanied by their spouse and family on the expatriate assignment. This study has highlighted that the absence of their spouse/ family amplifies the degree of isolation experienced in the KSA.

Interviewee 6 indicated that *"every Christmas, anniversary and birthday that I miss makes me feel that much more isolated"* and that the Internet allowed him to feel less isolated from his family as he Skypes his wife "*2-3 hours a day*". Interviewee 6 had previous expatriate experience, but indicated that he was not content in the KSA. Interviewee 9 indicated that "*as the family are not yet with me I do feel isolated"* and that it was "*hard to deal with*" the fact that his two year old daughter and new born son do not see him. He reported that he uses "*Skype with a headset and microphone … and webcam"* to communicate and this *"makes [his] time easier*". He further advocated the joining of social networking sites as "*it can be pretty lonely*". He said that "*any*

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parent would feel lonely and miss their family deeply like I do and this does translate into isolation". Interviewee 17 indicated that he is currently living in the KSA without his wife and four children and that he is used to having a busy household. In comparison "*life [in KSA] is very quiet and lonely*". He uses the Internet for entertainment and social interaction as without it he would be "*lonely and bored to the point of insanity*".

In addition to missing their families, some restrictions are placed on unaccompanied/ single expatriates by the laws and customs of the KSA, such as not being allowed to interact with the opposite sex in public and the lack of public entertainment facilities such as cinemas (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2010, p. 233) which can increase the experienced degree of isolation. Interviewee 12 indicated that one of his main concerns was "*the total ban and near impossibility of meeting or mixing with members of the opposite sex, heightened by the complete lack of pubs, nightclubs, cinemas, or any other public gathering places!*" Furthermore, unaccompanied/ single expatriates can be refused entry to shops and events based on their status.

Unaccompanied or single expatriates might inadvertently be excluded from the family community due to their unaccompanied/ single status and in turn feel socially isolated. For example, Interviewee 6 said that:

> "*… I tend to feel like an outsider, since 98% of my fellow married peers are able to live here with their wives (or will be shortly) … At the end of a work day, my fellow peers can all look forward to going home and seeing their families, while I simply dread coming back to this barren, lonely dorm room … *"

Section 9.2.3.2 will discuss the support that unaccompanied/ single expatriates can derive from the expatriate community. Interviewees 9 and 12 reported that as single/ unaccompanied expatriates, the sporting and social activities or events hosted by the various compounds helped them keep busy. They invested their time in participating in these activities and in return they received the necessary support from the compound community. Furthermore, Interviewee 9 invested his time in getting to know his neighbours who invited him to their houses and also gave him good advice about to how to "*find good shops for various Asian foods*" or "*offered [him] food on weekends*". This illustrates that expatriates who invest their time in various expatriate/ compound communities can receive support in return.

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Other restrictions placed on single/ unaccompanied expatriates include not being allowed to move freely on "*family days*". Interviewee 12 said that "*the main issue arise[s] when I have to leave the compound to do everyday activities such as grocery shopping, eating at a restaurant or getting a cup of coffee. Aside from the obvious restrictions on life outside the compound like wearing trousers and shirts (as opposed to shorts and T-shirts in the heat), prayer time closing [shops] five times a day or having to eat in the singles section of restaurants, there are many other restrictions. I have been denied access to supermarkets and shops as a man on my own, making buying a pint of milk very hard if it happens to be on a Friday, which is deemed family time!*" Interviewees 9 and 17 also had this experience.

There is not a lot of research available on unaccompanied/ single expatriates apart from the acknowledgement that they do exist (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011; Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2008) and that the family stays behind (Gupta, Banerjee, & Gaur, 2012). This study therefore highlighted that they have different needs from their accompanied counterparts and that the extent to which they experience isolation can be amplified.

8.2.2.2   Accompanied Expatriates

The role of expatriate spouses is a well-researched topic in expatriate adjustment literature. Black and Stephens (1989) found that a spouse's general adjustment was positively related to all forms of the expatriate's adjustment. Kraimer et al. (2001) state that the spouse is vital in fulfilling all social support to expatriates. This includes aid, affect, and affirmation to expatriates. Furthermore, married expatriates experience relatively less stress related to self-esteem than single expatriates (Purgal-Popiela, 2011). Family support can help expatriates mobilise their psychological resources to deal with emotional problems and raise their confidence so that they can successfully manage the cross-cultural transition (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Caliguri, Hyland, Joshi and Bross (1998) examined expatriate adjustment through the lens of Family Systems Theory, which is based on the premise that families are cultural systems that attempt to maintain a sense of equilibrium. Therefore, if one member of the family is experiencing problems adjusting to the host country, the family's equilibrium is affected. Their study has consequently shown that spouse and family cross-cultural adjustment positively influenced expatriates' overall cross-cultural adjustment. As

defined earlier on, "spouses" in this study refers to the female expatriate accompanying her expatriate husband.

The accompanied expatriates did not particularly indicate that their accompanied status was making them feel less isolated. The distinction was rather that the single/ unaccompanied expatriates (as discussed previously) reported that the lack of family made them feel isolated in addition to the restrictions placed on them.   The accompanied expatriates still experienced isolation. Interviewee 1 indicated that without the Internet she would feel "*isolated and homesick … it is like a lifeline to a "normal life*", yet she had been in the KSA for almost three years, described herself as content and had previous expatriate experience. Interviewee 2 indicated that he would rather isolate himself within the compound than seek out new experiences and that he uses the Internet to replace this aspect of his life. He also had previous expatriate experience, and had been living in the KSA for three years, but indicated that he was not content in the KSA. Interviewee 3 indicated that the feeling of isolation in the KSA was amplified because their "*cocooned*" life and the regulation of the media. (This will be discussed in more detail in section 9.2.1.1.2. Interviewee 4 indicated that without the Internet he would feel "*disconnected from the real world*" and he implied that the KSA is isolated from the "real world" as it is "*cocooned inside a totally different way of life [when] compared to most of the rest of the world*". He had extensive previous expatriate experience and had been living in the KSA for seven years. Interviewee 5 highlighted the impact of the Internet on expatriate status when he said that the Internet allows expatriates to contact family and friends "*particular[ly] [for] those who are staying without wives and children*". Interviewee 10 indicated that there is an element of physical and psychological isolation that she experiences in the KSA. She described the physical isolation in terms of her inability to just "*go out for a walk*", "*not having the ability to drive*" and having to wear an abaya.   She experiences psychological isolation and explained that it was her "*dependency on her husband … due to the man oriented laws and regulations*" and not being able to "*express [herself]*" which contributed to this. The latter was also reported by Interviewee 8. Interviewee 13 indicated that isolation stems from living in a compound where expatriates are isolated from the local community and culture which can "*breed a little fear*". Interviewee 15 reported that the support of his family and social network helped him overcome the challenges and that without the Internet he would feel isolated from the

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rest of the world. Interviewees 16, 18 and 22 indicated that without the Internet they would feel isolated from her friends and family.

The discussions above indicate that although all of these expatriates are accompanied they do experience isolation. Their isolation refers both to their belief that the KSA is isolated from the "real world" which can only be overcome by using the Internet, and that they are isolated from their family and friends (their benevolent community, to be discussed in detail in section 9.2.3.3).

8.2.3 Social Support

Human beings live in an interdependent society and, as such, are not self-sufficient (Bradburn, 1969 cited in Wang & Nayir, 2006). The well-being of individuals will also inevitably be dependent on interpersonal interactions and social support (Rook, 1984 cited in Wang & Nayir, 2006). When people are embedded in a caring network, they are able to obtain social resources, such as instrumental and emotional support, to cope with daily stress or uncertainty (Johnson et al., 2003). Expatriates will start to establish a new social network and they will seek support from the new people around them. Expatriates, as members of a benevolent community of family and friends, will be separated from that community when embarking on an expatriate episode as they will be thrown into a foreign culture with a lot of uncertainty and unknown customs (Wang & Nayir, 2006).

"Social Support" describes the support expatriates derive from the various communities. Key concepts that emerged from this perspective were conceptualised in the concepts: (1) Integration with Local Community, (2) Integration with Expatriate community, and (3) Benevolent community. Each of these will be considered in turn.

8.2.3.1   Integration with Local Community

According to Haslberger (2005a) discretion granted to the individual by the host environment allows him/ her to influence surroundings and to offload some of the burden of adaptation. However, expatriates in this study reported that interaction with the local community, in order to learn from them, is limited as "*Saudi people are not allowed (for lack of better word) to interact*" [Interviewee 1]. Interviewee 1 further described the reason for this: "*they don't agree with our culture and religious views*

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and in some cases are openly aggressive about it". Interviewee 2 stated that *"although we are considered expats in Saudi we do not lead a normal expat life in terms of mixing with the locals. The Internet has become a replacement for that aspect of life*". Interviewees 2 and 3, both with previous expatriate experience, did not have the opportunity to mix with the local community, which they had done on previous expatriate episodes. Furthermore, the rules and customs of the local community meant that expatriates (as the locals) were restricted in their movement. Shops were closed for prayer time, female expatriates were not allowed to drive and were therefore dependent on the Internet. Table 18 below illustrates how the rules of the local community influenced the expatriates' use of the Internet as a mediating tool to complete a number of activities.

	Reasons for Internet use	Interviewees
1	Lack of resources such as newspapers, books	1,2,3
2	Lack of entertainment facilities such as movies, coffee shops, cinemas	2,11,17
3	Online shopping for products not available in the KSA	3
4	Alternative method to keep in touch due to restriction on visitors	3
5	The Internet allows me to control people I want to have in my life	11
6	Lack of educational resources	13
7	Lack of health information	13,15

Table 18: Internet use by expatriates due to rules imposed by local community

Another reason for the lack of interaction is that all of the expatriates in this study lived in compounds, thereby physically isolating themselves from the local culture. Interviewee 2 indicated that *"rather than seeking out new experiences we isolate ourselves on compounds*". Furthermore, Interviewee 13 indicated that "*if you come straight onto this compound I think females have less chance here to meet Saudi and really get to know this place*". The rules of the compound community allow regulated access which makes the expatriates feel safe, creating an increased SOC.

Although expatriates participated in a number of other communities such as benevolent communities of family and friends, school communities and other

expatriate communities, the rules of these communities did not have an impact on the expatriate's use of the mediating tool – the Internet – to obtain their respective objectives. Rather, the expatriate's role in the communities and the responsibilities of being members of these communities influenced how they used the Internet to obtain their objectives.

Haslberger (2005a) indicated that there are two types of discretions granted to expatriates by the host country: the level of tolerance within the host society and the socioeconomic status that the stranger enjoys in the host country.

The level of tolerance within the society is influenced by two aspects: pressure to conform and the host society's receptivity to strangers. The pressure to conform is defined by Haslberger (2005a, p. 5) as being "*the extent to which the environment challenges strangers to adopt the normative patterns of the host culture and its communication systems*" or "*the degree to which the environment overtly or covertly expects or demands the strangers to follow its normative cultural and communication patterns*". Haslberger (2005a) explains that conformity pressure is the deviation allowed from the average culture such as values, norms, behaviour. It may also be expressed as the homogeneity or heterogeneity of lifestyles in a particular social environment. The society's receptivity to strangers is defined by Kim (1988, pp. 66 & 128 cited in Haslberger, 2005a) as "*the opportunity offered to strangers to participate in on-going social activities*" or the *"degree to which a given host environment shows openness and acceptance toward strangers"*.

A number of expatriates expressed their desire to interact with the local community [Interviewees, 1, 2, 3, 8, 7, 9, and 17]. However, Interviewees [2, 3, 7, 9, and 17] described their perception of the local community as being unfriendly. Interviewees 9 and 13 advised that expatriates invest some time in getting to know the locals as they will then appreciate the cultural difference, as illustrated by Interviewee 14 who participated in a clandestine "*midnight email club*" when the Internet was still illegal in the KSA. Due to the restrictions placed on entering the compounds, expatriates cannot easily integrate with the local community, which erects a physical barrier between them and the local community as described by Interviewee 9.

"If [expatriates] stay within the bubble of the compound it will only enable them to form [a] negative opinion of the people of KSA based on what they have heard or the few experiences [that] they [have] had." [Interviewee 9 after four months]

As reported in Chapter 3, current adjustment literature is based on the principle or assumption that expatriates can learn through interaction with the local community. For example, the model of Black et al. (1991) provides for interaction adjustment, which is not applicable in the current study because the expatriates, who formed part of this study lived in compounds. According to Black et al. (1991) interaction adjustment is the most difficult to achieve, as differences in mental maps and rules reveal themselves in interactions with host nationals. Selmer (2006) indicated that interaction adjustment may be the most important of the three dimensions of adjustment as defined by Black et al. (1991) since both general adjustment and work adjustment are based on interpersonal interactions. Therefore, expatriates in the KSA are definitely at a disadvantage as they are "missing" an important component in sociocultural adjustment, the ability to freely interact with the local community. This can cause feelings of isolation, as they will not feel part of the KSA as *"normal expatriates"* [Interviewee 2]. Interviewee 2 indicated that they (he and his family) "*do not lead a normal expat life in terms of mixing with the locals".* He chooses to isolate himself in the compound rather than seek out new experiences and describes the Internet as having become *"a replacement for that aspect of life"* referring to the interaction with the local community.

8.2.3.2   Integration with Expatriate Community

Living in a compound, creates a physical boundary between the residents and non-residents, which includes the locals. Access to compounds is controlled [Interviewees 8 and 9]. Membership to the expatriate community in the case of this study is by default, as all of the expatriates in this study who were living in a compound were directed to live in a specific compound by their respective organisations, which are their sponsors. Therefore, membership to an external community, i.e. the organisational community, which does not form part of this study, afforded expatriates membership to this community. Turner (1984 cited in Sonn & Fisher, 1991) states that in some cases of imposed membership, groups may develop forms of behaviour, norms, and attitudes that are indicative of group cohesion and positive group identity. The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), for example, suggests that humans

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have a tendency to identify with a group while also deriving their self-worth from the group. As cultures are comprised of groups, an individual may use his culture as a source of self-esteem as well.

This is evident in this study as expatriates identify with one another, especially expatriates from the same nationality, same organisation and from the same compound. The boundaries of a compound community are clear: there are physical boundaries directed towards the outside community and membership is obtained either through organisational application or personal application that will be vetted. Boundaries established by membership criteria provide the structure and security that protect group intimacy. Security provided by boundaries includes emotional, physical and financial security (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The most important aspect afforded by membership to the compound communities was the emotional safety brought about by the physical safety measures employed to protect the boundaries of the compound. Interviewees [7, 8, 9] indicated that they would not have felt comfortable living outside of a compound due to the perceived security risks. The expatriates perceived the compounds as providing protection from terrorists [Interviewees 8, 9], abduction [Interviewee 8], and for traffic safety [Interviewee 8].Furthermore Interviewee 8 indicated that she *"would not have been here if [she] had not been offered a house within a compound"*.

Furthermore, expatriate literature has indicated the importance of general adjustment with respect to the general living conditions and culture of the host country (Black & Stevens, 1989; Black et al., 1991; Kraimer et al., 2001; Haslberger, 2007). Interviewees [6, 7, 9 and 12] reported that they were satisfied with the amenities provided in the compounds.

> "*... my compound has most amenities and so I don't have to go far to find something to do. Provided, that is, that you like going to the gym, pool, coffee shop, hairdresser or beauty salon! [Interviewee 8]*

The availability of these amenities is very important mentally for an expatriate as Johnson et al. (2009) stated that even the most routine tasks such as buying a newspaper or calling a taxi require mental preparation or even assistance, for expatriates in general. Black and Stevens (1989), Fish and Wood (1997) and Purgal-Popiela (2011) reported that having good amenities decreases the stress the

expatriate may experience. Collectively, the structure afforded by the availability of these types of amenities, gives the expatriate a sense of increased emotional safety.

Interviewee 22 stated that the different amenities contribute to the expatriate's *"feeling of freedom within the walls of the compound"*. Interviewee 10 was of the opinion that although sometimes like a jail, compounds can *"facilitate life in Saudi"* as these can *"simulate"* the life of one's home nation. This was supported by Interviewee 8 who stated: *"There is also more freedom for me in that I can dress as I wish within the compound as there are no Saudi nationals allowed to live here and so the restrictive dress code does not apply"*.

The emotional safety derived from living in a compound is influenced by the rules and regulations of the environment. As described in Chapter 3 there are certain restrictions on dress code and activities that are deemed unacceptable in the KSA, and the fact that expatriates can continue with these activities (to an extent) in a compound is emotionally very important in terms of the degree of isolation experienced.

Expatriates derive emotional safety from their compound membership. This emotional safety provides expatriates with a solution to their physical safety concerns. Interviewee 7 indicated that "*without those sporting facilities or friendly faces living close by that I would feel fairly isolated and maybe venture out a lot less"*.

Expatriates need to rely more on the expatriate communities to provide them with informational support regarding educational, medical and general cultural information due to the lack of integration with the local community (as discussed previously). Lazarova et al. (2010) indicated that expatriates experience a loss of support from their extended family and friends and become more dependent on one another.

Integration with expatriate communities also provides expatriates with instrumental social support which refers to the creation of a supportive environment by providing expatriates with necessary resources (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Instrumental social support is especially important for unaccompanied or single expatriates who are without the traditional family support system. Expatriate communities, especially compound communities can address these needs by "looking after" these individuals. Furthermore, expatriates provide instrumental support to other expatriates by assisting them with sourcing skills and services that are difficult to find or are unavailable in the KSA. This is evident in services rendered by compounds such as DVD rental places,

beauticians, hairdressers etc. Caligiuri & Lazarova (2002) indicated that any of the sources of social relationships obtained through community membership (such as other expatriates or family members) could provide one or more types of social support, with the collective purpose being to contribute to the expatriate's psychological and physical well-being, which in turn can provide fulfillment of their needs.

Expatriates need to support and consequently derive support from other expatriates. By using the Internet, they are positively influenced and extend their power to influence fellow expatriates. Table 19 below illustrates how expatriates use the Internet to fulfil their role, directly or indirectly, within the expatriate community.

Sn	Excerpt	Interviewees
1	*"I do for sending out invitations or links to websites I feel are important. Also, for Facebook especially to get travel ideas. We also receive embassy information and check the [company] website. I also use it for communication with the school. [School name] has a system called [system name] in which they send out information and newsletters."*	1
2	*"[I use the Internet for] organising Indian expatriate community gatherings (social, religious, etc.)"*	5
3	*"Forums where tips for expats are also invaluable in communicating with others, offering help and advice on all sorts of topics such as schooling. Also where to eat and generally how to make KSA an enjoyable place for westerners to live and reside."*	9
4	*"There are several Internet organized activities available such as hashing, running and triathlon groups amongst many other groups and message boards that provide information and ways of meeting people - people should maybe consider joining these or societies at their respective embassies, many of which hold regular events for expats."*	12

5	*"[I use the Internet within the expatriate community] mainly to receive information regarding social events (film club, 4wd club, Aust & NZ womens org, Riyadh galleries etc., embassy information (security warnings) … there are several websites we visit regarding activities & services available around Riyadh."*	13
6	*"Via Facebook I can see what the local friends/ colleagues are doing and even invite myself along."*	17
7	*"I am a member of several communities, a couple relating to the compound, 2 charities, a few recipe exchanges, Riyadh info."*	18
8	*"Before working I belonged to some groups that interacted via the Internet. These were social groups. I still belong to the groups that can be maintained outside of working hours: [Charity name 1] - a charity based group for ladies, [Charity name 2] - a cultural group that explores the cultures in the Middle East, [Name of] Wives Club - I was a member of the committee that provides support and activities for wives and families of husbands serving with the [company name]."*	19
9	*"I belong to a [Name of] wives group on Facebook, but the only use for that page, as far as I can notice, is the arranging of the monthly Bunco night. I don't post or read any other expat forums, although I am aware that they are there."*	20
10	*"I am part of the School community … since they have an online newsletter and information about the school and its activities online and sent by email."*	22
11	*"I'm able to be active in a charity that operates primarily through a Facebook page here in Riyadh."*	22

Table 19: Contact within expatriate community via Internet

Integration with expatriate communities gives expatriates a sense of community that, according to McMillan & Chavis's (1986) definition, provides them with a sense of belonging and emotional safety derived from membership. As explained earlier when adults, such as expatriates, are separated from their family it can cause emotional isolation or loneliness, as explained through Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1983 cited in Ing, 2006), which gives us a fundamental example of people's innate desire for affiliation. Being part of a community increases expatriates' sense of belonging in the community as it affords expatriates freedoms associated with their culture. This includes the freedom to dress as they deem appropriate [Interviewees 8, 10], and the freedom to practise a religion other than Islam [Interviewee 8]. Interviewee 9 (unaccompanied at the time) stated that the professionals in his compound were friendly and welcoming and assisted him with finding shops for Asian foods, whilst Interviewee 12 indicated that his compound had *"likeminded individuals"*.

8.2.3.3 Benevolent community

Expatriates have physically moved away from their benevolent communities to their host countries, like the KSA. These benevolent communities provided them with structure and support (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Expatriates therefore, become dependent on new social structures in their host country, such as those to be found in their compound communities. However, at the same time social structures are being altered (Giddens, 1984 cited in Rose & Scheepers, 2001) by the expatriates' activities and need to adjust. Therefore, the social structures are the medium through which human activities are facilitated as well as the result of those activities. Social structures not only restrict behaviour, but also create possibilities for human behaviour (Giddens, 1984 cited in Rose & Scheepers, 2001).

Bird and Dunbar (1991, p. 146) state that an expatriate assignment requires role transition: "*A manager leaves one role with all of its attendant responsibilities, relationships, and patterns of behaviour, and takes on a new one"*. They further state that viewing expatriate assignments as role transition is useful because there is a greater understanding about transitional experiences which can be applied to an expatriate. All transitions require separation and exit from previous roles. In the case of expatriates, they must let go or change patterns of behaviour that were appropriate to the previous role. Interviewees did not discuss their work situations in detail. However Interviewee 2 indicated that he considered life in the KSA oppressive due to

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the "*threat of punishment at work for making mistakes*". Interviewee 6 indicated that "*the rotation in KSA [made] [him] feel like a common mercenary, simply punching a time clock for money, and not contributing anything productive to society*". For those with parents or grandparents, being an expatriate had a huge impact as they still had a responsibility to continue the sense of belonging to a family circle. Therefore, they still had a role to play and a responsibility to continue their existing relationships within their benevolent communities. Expatriates also have a role to play in supporting new/ fellow expatriates. Personal need and circumstances influence how expatriates use the Internet to fulfil their role and responsibilities within a community, and accomplish their objectives. An example of this can be seen in how expatriates use the "roles" of family and friends (benevolent community) to keep in contact:

"The Internet provides a means where we can remain close to family and friends despite not being face-to-face. We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly" [Interviewee 2].

For Interviewees 6 and 17 who were unaccompanied, with their family remaining at home, the Internet allowed them to still fulfil their traditional role in the "household". Interviewee 6 explains:

"When the power went out during a thunderstorm, the thermostats lost all the preset programs that I had entered. My wife didn't know how to reprogram them and I wasn't familiar enough to tell her how to do it from memory. But then she used the webcam feature of Skype so I could view the thermostat data entry panel and talk her through it."

Table 20 below illustrates the quotes from expatriates describing what role the Internet plays in communicating and "connecting" not just referring to the technological connection, but also the emotional connection with their benevolent communities.

Sn	Excerpt	Interviewees
1	*"Means to stay close to family despite not being face-to-face."*	1
2	*"Feeling of connection to home is crucial."*	1
3	*"We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly."*	1
4	*"I speak to my parents by video Skype 2 x a week and email friends daily."*	2
5	*"I phone my mum on Skype every day."*	3
6	*"I probably Skype my wife 2-3 hours a day."*	6
7	*"Email allows me to keep in touch with friends and remain networked with career contacts that are essential for continuing on with life once I'm back in the real world."*	6
8	*"I use the Internet on a daily basis to talk to [fiancé name] on Skype … I also use Skype to talk to my mother and my grandmother as well as many of my friends."*	7
9	*"I use the Internet to … keep in touch with family and friends. Skype is very useful – when it works – as we can see our family and friends."*	8
10	*"I use Skype with a headset and microphone. I also use a webcam which is very useful to see my wife and children. It makes my time easier. I talk to them every day via this method and also use Facebook and email to keep in touch with family."*	9
11	*"I believe the Internet is a very important aspect in my life in KSA because it keeps me connected to family and friends."*	10
12	*"Using the Internet allows me to control the people I want to have in my life and it keeps me connected to my friends abroad."*	11
13	*"Use Skype a great deal to speak to friends and family members."*	12

14	*"Improved frequency, speed of contact with home and video/ Skype calls has enhanced communication especially with kids being able to see grandparents, cousins etc."*	13
15	*"Living abroad and visiting friends and family annually would make life frustrating in the sense of not being able to email news and photos of our progressing life whilst residing in KSA. If is far more economical communicating via Skype or merely operating via email, rather than the occasional international phone call."*	16
17	*"… my parents have split up yet I can still have two separate conversations without the other being involved (obviously non audio i.e. text, email, Facebook etc.)"*	17
18	*"The Internet is my lifeline and the only way that I keep in touch with people, I get the odd letter but the bulk of my contact is via social media and email."*	18
19	*"The Internet is keeping the lines of communication open between myself and my family."*	19
20	*"I have been able to maintain friendships back home that I wouldn't have been able to maintain if we didn't have the Internet. We Skype our families most weekends, in fact, because of Skype, I was able to see my nephew when he was just a day old."*	20
21	*"It is vital for communication and would have a negative effect on family life, particularly given our situation with children and grandparents etc."*	21
22	*"To have a connection with family and friends back home in South Africa via the Internet has been very helpful in keeping family connections strong. It's actually put some in place and caused them to be stronger."*	22

Table 20: Contact with benevolent community mediated through the Internet

It is also important for expatriates to maintain their role with their former work communities and the Internet allows them to easily maintain contact with former

colleagues. This is necessary for expatriates to enter the job market again when finishing with the expatriate assignment. Therefore, the Internet plays a role in the expatriates' future role.

Table 21 below illustrates how expatriates keep in contact with former colleagues in order to remain networked when repatriated.

Sn	Excerpt	Interviewees
1	*"E-mails allow me to keep in touch with friends and remain networked with career contacts that are essential for continuing on with life once I'm back in the real world"*	6
2	*"I use email lots to email old work colleagues from previous jobs to keep in touch and to keep an eye on the job market for my sector in the UK and it is an invaluable asset which I could not do without"*	9
3	*"Work community: Via LinkedIn I can converse about academic and work issues/ training"*	17

Table 21: Contact with former colleagues to remain networked

Maintaining a professional network is important for expatriates as an expatriate assignment is finite and they will have to repatriate home or to their next assignment. Arman (2009) stated that expatriates should make personal attempts to re-socialise and attempt to stay informed about changes in the environment to which they will repatriate. Although expatriate repatriation is outside the scope of the current study, the ability for expatriates to prepare for repatriation by means of social networking is an important component that contributes to their contentment in the KSA.

8.2.4 Freedom of Movement

The "Freedom of Movement" perspective describes the restrictions placed on residents within the KSA, which is extended to expatriates when moving within and across the borders of the KSA. Key concepts that emerged from this perspective were conceptualised in the concepts: (1) Accessibility of the KSA and (2) Mobility in the KSA. Each of these concepts will be discussed next.

8.2.4.1   Accessibility of the KSA

Chapter 5 reported that during an expatriate's stay in the KSA his/ her sponsor will retain his/ her passport. In return he will provide the expatriate with an identity document called an "Iqama" which should be carried at all times. Only the sponsor can obtain the necessary exit and re-entry visa, which will be put in an expatriate's passport and returned to the expatriate before he/ she leaves. If was further stated that only close family visits are allowed and only the sponsor can apply for these visit visas (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011).

The ability to receive visitors has been indicated as an important aspect in the adjustment process as it reduces the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates. Expatriates themselves have indicated that it would have been preferable for them to receive visitors, not necessarily family but also friends which is impossible in the KSA as only close family are allowed [Interviewees 1, 3, and 18]. However, Interviewee 7 indicated that he *"dislike[s] the limitations on freedoms in KSA which make [him] inclined to not encourage visitors"*.

> *"I feel visits are important because your family wants to see where you live, what the country is like etc. because your conversations will have much more meaning to them when they can picture what you are talking about. They also want to see for themselves that you are happy and in a nice place, which they cannot necessarily tell from telephone conversation or e-mails. Obviously these visits can also be stressful depending on how well you get on with the relations who are visiting! From that point of view, it would be good to have friends visit because you are close to them not just because of family ties or obligations but because you actually like them! Unfortunately, that is not an option in KSA"* [Interviewee 3].

To further the understanding provided above, visits from family and friends can reduce the feeling of isolation. It is important for family and friends to assure themselves that everything is satisfactory in the host country for the expatriates. This will assist in decreasing their anxiety with regards to what the expatriates experience during their expatriate episode and will allow the expatriates to feel less guilty about leaving family and friends behind or more at ease when reassuring them that everything is indeed fine.

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"*Since we were living in England at the time we were able to participate more fully in cultural and community activities so the need to stay connected was not as crucial as it is in Saudi. We also had many visitors many times*" *[Interviewee 1]*.

Receiving visitors is about more than just a vacation with a "free holiday home" in the host country for family and friends. It is about sharing the culture, sharing the experience. Interviewee 3 explained that in her opinion visitors are important "*because your family wants to see where you live, what the country is like etc. because your conversations will have much more meaning to them when they can picture what you are talking about.   They also want to see for themselves that you are happy and in a nice place, which they cannot necessarily tell from telephone conversation or e-mails*". The restriction placed on expatriates as far as visitation is concerned can exacerbate their feeling of isolation and may inhibit the continuation of a shared emotional connection.

8.2.4.2   Mobility in the KSA

The challenges associated with mobility in the KSA mainly affect women and unaccompanied/ single expatriates. A number of expatriates, found the ban on female driving frustrating [Interviewees 8, 10, 16, 18, 20, 22]. Shmuluvitz (2011) reports that in the KSA there is no law stating that it is illegal for women to drive, rather a convoluted pair of laws makes it de facto illegal. Saudi guardianship laws are ambiguous and based on the most restrictive interpretation of a Qur'anic verse. Her argument is that if women are allowed to drive, even if they were required to have permission from their guardians, it would be the first step in undermining guardianship laws. However, Interviewee 13 indicated that the KSA is the "*last place on earth*" where she would want to drive, referring to the "*erratic driving*" as described by Interviewees 8 and 9 (see section 5.7.3). The restriction on women driving can be isolating. Women are forced to be dependent on a driver [Interviewees 3, 8, 11, 18], a compound bus [Interviewee 22] or their husbands [Interviewee 10] to take them outside of the compound. Interviewee 2 said that the ban on women driving is a sign of the "*oppressed*" life in the KSA which was argued in section 9.2.1.2 and which can be isolating in and of itself.

Another restriction on mobility is the fact that unaccompanied/ single expatriates can be barred from entering places due to their status. Chapter 5 reported on the

recreational activities available in the KSA, but a visit to the parks, the zoo or cultural sites (Janadriyah Festival) are not permitted or only permitted on certain days in the case of the latter.   Unaccompanied/ single expatriates also cannot enter shopping malls on certain days, usually on a Friday because it is deemed a family day. This places a restriction on the unaccompanied/ single expatriates and can contribute to their feelings of isolation.

8.2.5 Expatriate state of mind

The "Expatriate State of Mind" is concerned with the psychosocial state of the expatriate in the KSA and how this affects the degree of isolation experienced by the expatriate. The overall state of mind of an expatriate will influence his/ her ability to be open to the new culture. Hammer, Gudykunst, and Wiseman (1978) reported that expatriates need to possess three skills in order to operate effectively in a foreign culture: an ability to deal with psychological stress, an ability to communicate effectively and an ability to socially integrate. The expatriates' ability to demonstrate these skills will influence whether they will adjust to life in the KSA or simply survive the period.

(1)   The ability to deal with psychological stress includes the expatriate's ability to deal with frustration, stress, anxiety, different political systems, pressure to conform, social alienation, financial difficulties, and interpersonal conflict. Intercultural experiences often expose the expatriate to many novel situations. If the expatriate cannot manage stress, he/ she may have difficulty coping with changes concerned with the new living and working situation. Other researchers have also emphasised the importance of the ability to deal with psychological stress (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer, et al. 2006; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). This study has shown that "everyday life" (as defined in section 7.3 earlier) had an impact on how expatriates felt emotionally, how they changed their habits and what they considered to be normal. These changes in expatriate behaviour can be explained through Structuration Theory, a general theory of the social sciences (Jones, 1997). Structuration Theory was advanced by Giddens and is based on the premise that the classic actor/ structure dualism has to be reconceptualised as a duality - the duality of structure. The structural properties of social systems exist only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronologically across time and space. Behaviour and structure are

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intertwined; people go through a socialisation process and become dependent on the existing social structures (Giddens, 1984 cited in Rose & Scheepers, 2001).

One way of dealing with the "everyday" psychological stresses imposed by the new environment can be found in the expatriates' motivation for being in the KSA. Interviewee 6 responded: "*Yes, I am content to be in a position to be securing my family's financial future. However, personally, I'm miserable here …* " Interviewee 7 explained that he too came to the KSA to obtain financial freedom to afford the "*luxuries*".

> "*I suppose that my purpose in being here is very much the same as other expatriates based out here. On the whole there is more money to be made and our cost of living is very much less than in our home countries. Therefore we can save money and thus invest in property or save for other luxuries that perhaps would have presented more of a struggle at home*" [Interviewee 7].

 Interviewee 10 indicated that the KSA provided her and her husband with "*financial security*". Interviewee 22 indicated that they were in the KSA to "*make a better future for [their] children*".

Interviewee 16 reported that both the financial security, which enabled them to *"enjoy great holidays abroad",* as well as living in a Western compound helped her deal with the physical and psychological challenges experienced by Westerners in the KSA. This introduces the second mitigating factor regarding psychological stress that expatriates experience in the KSA; compound living. Section 8.2.1.1 explained the conceptualisation of life in a compound as being a "safe haven"*.* Interviewees 10 and 22 indicated that living in a compound can simulate life in their own country, in terms of freedom of movement and amenities. This therefore reduces the stress that expatriates may experience as a result of cultural novelty.

Finally, Interviewee 15 indicated that the Internet helped him mitigate the physical and psychological stresses of the KSA. He described that "*in a way my life relies on the Internet, it gives [me] a sense of security. Without it the physical and emotional strains in KSA will reach levels difficult to maintain. [The] Internet gives order and a feeling of comfort in your life that one tends to get addicted [to] and without it leaves a sort of emptiness".* This supports the conceptualisation of the Internet as a "lifeline", as

discussed in section 7.4 above, which impacts greatly on expatriates' well-being. Expatriate well-being mediated by the Internet will be discussed in more detail in section 10.4.

(2) The ability to communicate effectively, involves the ability to enter meaningful dialogue with other people in order to initiate interaction with a stranger, deal with misunderstandings, and to effectively deal with different communication styles. Expatriate communication has also been investigated by Selmer (2006), Tung (1986) and Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005). Because expatriates usually live in compounds, and are surrounded by "*likeminded individuals*" [Interviewee 12] they found it easy to communicate effectively with their counterparts. Also, due to the availability and nature of the Internet, expatriates were able to communicate with their benevolent communities. They have reported that communication with family and friends is what they primarily used the Internet for. This is an important aspect highlighted by the study, because expatriates reported that without the ability to communicate they would not only feel isolated, but depressed [Interviewee 2] and frustrated [Interviewee 6]. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

(3) The ability to establish interpersonal relationships concerns an expatriate's ability to develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships with other people, as well as being able to accurately understand the feelings of another person, empathise with another person, deal effectively with different social customs, and effectively work with others. The previous discussions showed that as a result of the sense of community that expatriates derived from their fellow community members they were able to create and maintain relationships. Interviewee 10 reported that: "*Being part of different expatriate communities in KSA has brought me close to friends. That played a major role in my ability [to] cope with the limitations of the Kingdom*".

Interviewee 22 said that the early days of her expatriate episode were "*hard because I didn't know anyone ... luckily I made friends quickly, [and] started going to places on the shopping bus …*" Interviewees 6, 7, 9, and 12 all indicated that establishing new friendships or joining social groups helped "*make [their] time easier*". This illustrates how the formation of interpersonal relationships can positively influence the expatriate's state of mind and help the expatriate feel less isolated.

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8.3 Summary

This chapter reported on the factors that contributed to or assisted with negotiating the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates in the KSA. The preceding discussions confirmed that the degree of isolation is a multifaceted concept, grounded in the data, consisting of five concepts: (1) the living space of the expatriate, (2) the expatriate's status, (3) the social support received from the communities that the expatriate interacts with, (4) the freedom of movement in the KSA and (5) the expatriate's state of mind.

Firstly, "living space" is informed by two concepts: "compound life: safe haven or jail" and "oppressive or alien existence". It was shown that expatriates living in a compound may perceive the compound as a safe haven, when considering the facilities and safety that is provided. On the other hand, some expatriates, although appreciative of the advantages to be found when living in a compound, found the space too small for their needs describing it as "incestuous" or "like a jail". The trade-off between an "oppressive or alien existence" for the relative security of the compounds is indicative of the large cultural distance that some expatriates experience in the KSA. As reported in Chapter 5 the rules, customs and laws of the KSA may be considered ultra-conservative. Therefore, some expatriates might perceive life in the KSA as oppressive, e.g. the ban on women driving [Interviewee 2], or as "alien" which in the context of this study has the same meaning as "being different", e.g. the shops closing for prayer time.

Secondly, the study has found that based on the expatriate status, the expatriate might experience different types or degrees of isolation. It was shown that unaccompanied/ single expatriates do feel isolated from their immediate families as well as their extended families. Whereas, accompanied expatriates feel isolated from their extended family and friends. Both accompanied and unaccompanied/ single expatriates consider the KSA to be an isolating country and use the Internet to decrease that feeling of isolation.

Thirdly, it was found that expatriates interact within three communities: the local community, the expatriate community and the benevolent community. It was shown that the lack of integration within the local community contributes to the feeling of isolation. Integration with the expatriate community decreased the feeling of isolation

via the sense of community derived from that integration. The ability to have continued interaction with the benevolent community by using the Internet also decreased the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates.

Fourthly, the freedom of movement of expatriates is informed by two concepts: the accessibility of the KSA to visitors of expatriates and the mobility inside the KSA for expatriates. It was reported that the rules of the KSA dictate that only close family visits are allowed, which increases the feeling of isolation for expatriates because it restricts their ability to share their expatriate experience with extended family and friends. The latter referred to the restrictions placed mainly on women and unaccompanied/ single expatriates particular examples of which include the ban on women driving and the restrictions placed on unaccompanied/ single expatriates concerning malls or areas of recreation such as parks and the zoo.

Finally, it was found that the expatriate state of mind influences the degree of isolation experienced and that there are three skills that expatriates need for effective operation in a foreign country like the KSA. The ability to deal with psychological stress, the ability to communicate effectively and the ability to form interpersonal relationships influenced how open they were to the new culture in the KSA. It was shown that personal motivation, living in a compound and the Internet helped reduce the psychological stresses experienced. Living in a compound also promoted expatriates' ability to communicate effectively with likeminded individuals and further allowed expatriates to integrate socially.

CHAPTER 9: DEGREE OF INFORMATION FLOW

9.1   Introduction

The degree of information flow in the context of this study represents the extent to which information can be exchanged between expatriates and other entities, be it family, friends or the outside world in general not excluding communication with other expatriates in the KSA.

This study revealed that expatriates experience a number of challenges during their expatriate episode largely attributable to cultural distance. The following sections will demonstrate that the degree of information flow that expatriates experience is not just concerned with Internet use, but is an all-encompassing experience of achieving total unencumbered and enjoyable involvement in the process of adjustment to cultural life in the KSA. This extends the previous discussion in Section 7.4.3, of the Internet as a "way of being". Although the expatriates' use of the Internet is the focus of this study, the following sections will provide an understanding of the integral part that the Internet plays in obtaining information flow whilst in the KSA regardless of the initial intent of the expatriate.

Figure 37 below, outlines the structure of this chapter. Firstly, the chapter will consider the factors that have an impact on how expatriates experience information flow. This will be done by explaining how the codes obtained from interview data are defined and understood in this study. The interview data will be presented through detailed discussions of the EIFM which was developed from the interview data by utilising the framework present in Flow Theory (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001).
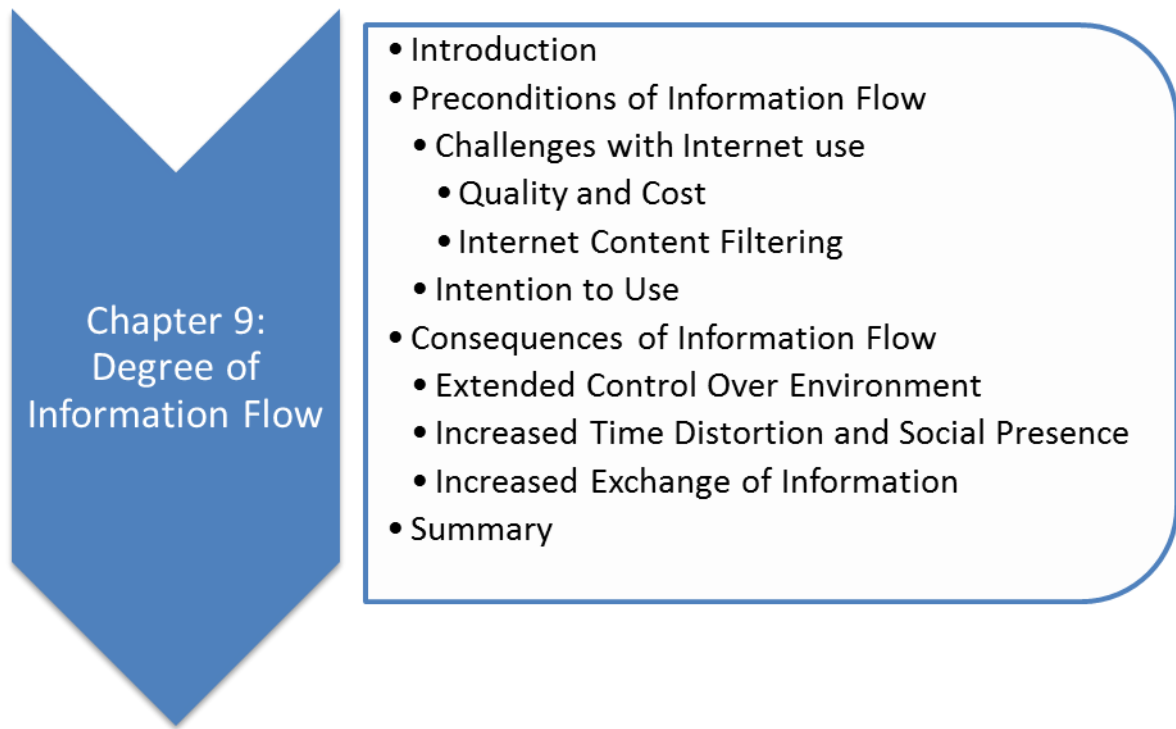
Figure 37: Outline of Chapter 9

9.2 Information flow as understood in this study

This study has identified a number of factors that could have an impact on the degree of information flow.

Table 22 below illustrates the concepts and their respective codes obtained from the interview data. The table also depicts the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates related to the two perspectives "preconditions to information flow" and the "consequences of information flow". These perspectives were developed by following the principles of the GTM as explained in Chapter 4 and following the processes described in Chapter 6. Each of these perspectives was informed by concepts that are in turn informed by codes.

Substantive Category	Perspectives	Concepts	Codes
Degree of Information Flow	Preconditions to Information Flow	Challenges with Internet Use	Low speed, high cost, content filtering, security, safety issues, VPN, poor provision of Internet services, poor signal, intermittent, biased news, religious literature, *"my mum's broadband in the UK: her connection is about 20 times faster and a fraction of the price"*
		Intention to use	Quality over quantity, essential to modern life, *"[the Internet] can also contribute to homesickness. Sometimes when we miss a big event at home and read about it on Facebook it can make you feel very far away. But that small negative does not outweigh the positives of the Internet"*
	Consequences of Information Flow	Extended control over environment	Rely on Internet for information, *"My children also use the Internet for school projects because of the lack of other resources available in Saudi for Western children"*, get travel ideas, send out important links, and send out invitations, *"Although we are considered expats in Saudi we do not lead a normal expat life in terms of mixing with the locals. The Internet has become a replacement for that aspect of life."*
		Increased time distortion and social presence	Maintain contact with relatives/ friends via e-mail and Skype, *"The feeling of connection to home is crucial"*, *"The Internet*

| | | | *provides a means where we can remain close to family and friends despite not being face-to-face", "Internet has enabled closer contact with family and friends", "feel part of the family and keep in touch with what people are up to", "I am happy that I don't feel that I've missed out on seeing my 1 year old nephew too much during his first year as I have been able to Skype him each week and my sister has been able to Facebook and email me pictures and updates."* |
| | | Increased exchange of information | *"We do not have access to newspapers and books like we do at home"*, *"We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly"*, obtain information from company website, communication from embassy, communication from school, Internet allows reliable, cheap, instantaneous communication |

Table 22: Degree of Information Flow Concepts and Codes as defined by the study

Figure 38 below, is a pictorial representation of some of the codes obtained from the interview data as illustrated in table 22 above. The "degree of information flow" refers to activities on a practical level, examining the push and pull of information by expatriates. However, as Figure 38 illustrates, the factors that increase the "degree of information flow" have either a positive effect in the case of the former or a negative effect in the case of the latter on the well-being of the expatriate. This is supported by the work of Hassenzahl (2013) who posits that technologies, such as the Internet, play a crucial role in creating and shaping meaningful, positive experiences. However, the outcome of his theory is that the true value of such technologies lies in the resulting experiences: *"It is about what we can do and experience with a thing, about the stories unfolding through using a technology, not about its styling, material, or impressive list of features"* (Hassenzahl, 2013, p. 1). It is proposed that the role of the Internet in this study transcends the practical level, such as the ability to communicate, to the emotional level, such as the feelings experienced when communicating with family and friends.
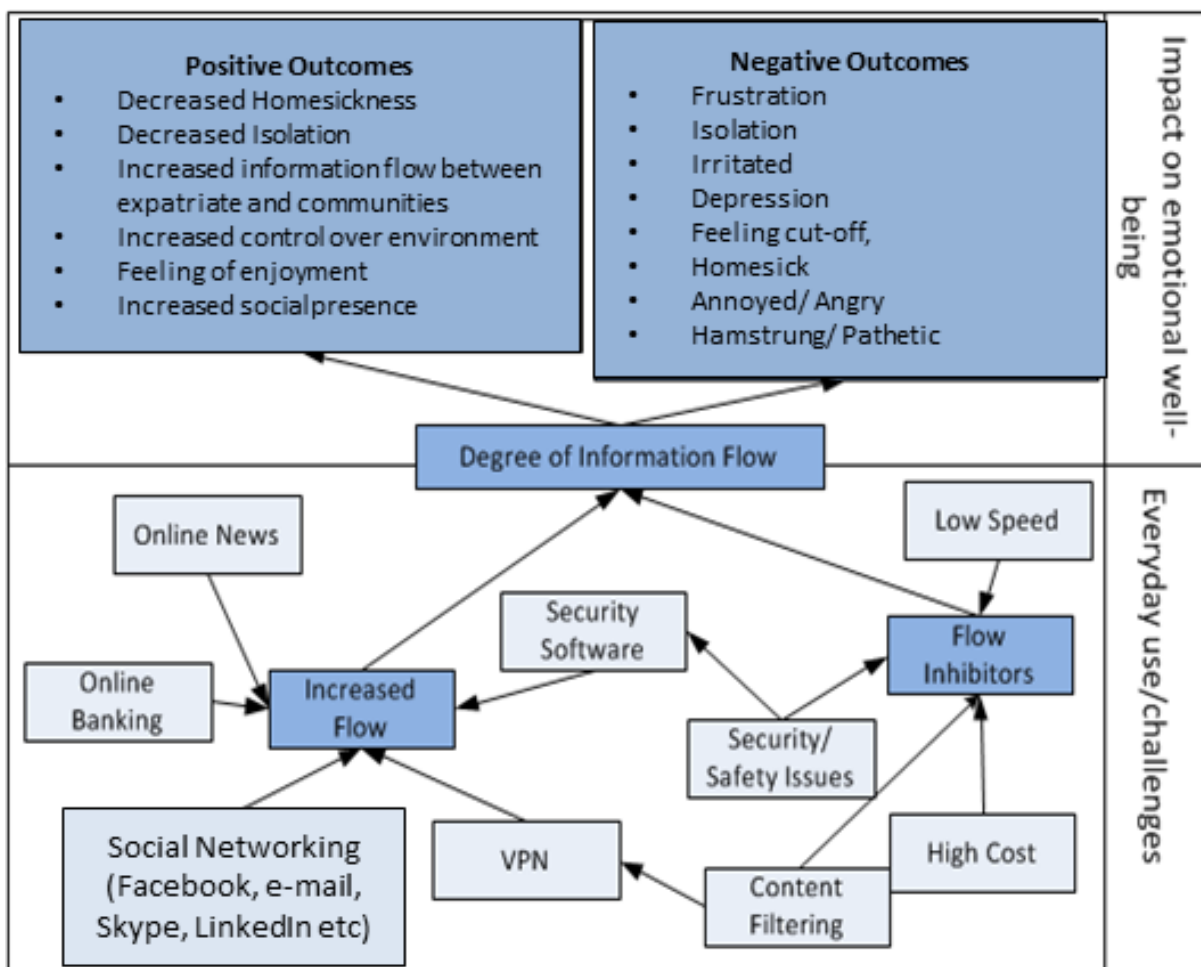
Figure 38: Degree of Information Flow in this study

Categorising the concepts identified from the data helped the researcher develop the EIFM as illustrated in Figure 39 below This classification assists the understanding of the substantive category of "degree of information flow" as it not only accounts for the factors experienced by expatriates that can cause or inhibit information flow, but also provides an understanding of the positive impact of using the Internet to communicate with family and friends, which is a consequence of information flow. The classification of preconditions and consequence of information flow is similar to the notion of the stages of the Flow Theory framework which is made up of three constructs: (1) flow antecedents, (2) flow experience, and (3) flow consequences (Finneran & Zhang, 2000). In the EIFM, the consequence of information flow includes an explanation of the experience of information flow. However, it needs to be explained quite clearly that the term "flow" in the "degree of information flow" as defined in this study is not the same as the term "flow" in the Flow Theory developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975 cited in Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001). With the exception of the discussions in section 9.2.2.2., Flow Theory considers "flow" as the affective state of optimal experience that creates pleasure by balancing the challenge of the task at hand with the skills of the person (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001).

"Flow" in this study is operationalised as the affective state that expatriates achieve through the flow of information by using their Internet skills as a means to balance the challenges imposed by the culturally different environment of the KSA.
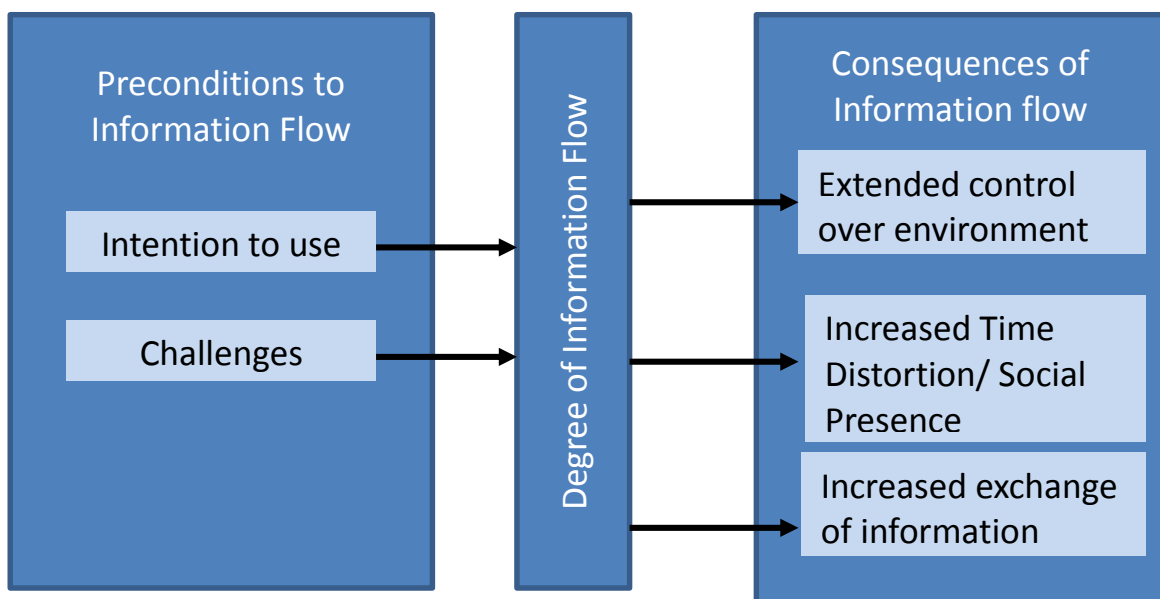
Figure 39: Expatriate Information Flow Model

The EIFM, as depicted in Figure 39 above is described and explained in the following sections.

9.2.1 Preconditions of Information Flow

Expatriates in this study used the Internet for various means. As reported in Chapter 7, the main activity for expatriates using the Internet was to communicate with family and friends, with the goal being to maintain contact. Immediate feedback was obtained through relatively instantaneous contact, which was quick and easy. Although the interviewees mentioned other specific uses such as the main activities listed in Table 15, they also mentioned that they like to *"surf"* the web to counteract boredom [Interviewees 8, 9, and 16], which is symptomatic of an environment with a lack of social entertainment platforms. However, it is important to note that in this study the expatriates' skill in using the Internet balanced the challenge of living in the KSA by influencing the degree of information flow between them and the other entities with whom they interacted such as family, friends, and business entities. The following section will provide an understanding of the challenges that expatriates encountered in generating or obtaining effective information flow.

9.2.1.1 Challenges with Internet Use

The challenges that expatriates encountered when using the Internet, which sometimes led to *"frustration"* were attributed to third parties, such as ISPs [Interviewee 3 and 17] and the rules enforced by the KSA government (Green & Karolides, 2005), and were not related to a lack of skill in using the Internet on their part.

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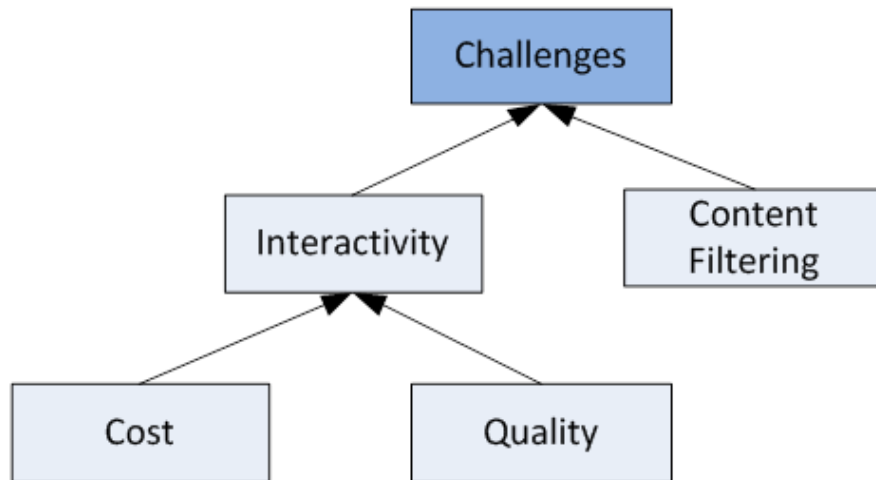
Figure 40: Challenges which impact information flow as defined by this study

This study has identified a number of challenges that expatriates experience, which have an impact on the conditions needed to obtain flow, as illustrated in Figure 40 above. Each of these challenges will be discussed in the following sections.

9.2.1.1.1   Quality and Cost of Internet Connection

The low quality and high cost of Internet connections in the KSA are a source of frustration for the expatriates. However, the expatriates reported that the frustration associated with the low quality and high cost is endured because of the importance of the Internet in their lives. The following quote illustrates this. "*Internet access has been very difficult due to the poor provision of Internet services. For a long time, we could only access it via a 3G card and the signal was very poor and intermittent. We have a better link now, although only at 256 kb/s, but it is still very expensive. Nevertheless, it is such an important tool to us that we happily pay the price and put up with the frustrations!*" [Interviewee 8]

Most expatriates are from countries with a high quality of Internet provision (Britain, Canada, America, and Australia). Interviewee 3 stated that, in her opinion, the Internet provision in the UK is 20 times faster than the service in the KSA, and comes at a fraction of the price. Interviewee 7 was concerned about the cost associated with subscribing to faster Internet services and whether the ISP offers the speed of service that he desires in order to accomplish a task, e.g. download more music and video content, but the "*relatively slow services available in KSA*" have stopped him from doing this. Interactivity is an important factor in human–computer interaction, which aids a person in generating information flow. Furthermore, high speed will result in

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"*getting immediate response*" as greater speed of interaction contributes to greater focused attention, social-presence and time distortion (Rettie, 2001, p. 14). This will be discussed in more detail in section 9.2.2.2.

Information flow continues despite the high cost as it was indicated that the emotional return that expatriates in this study received from the Internet outweighed the financial cost associated with access. Interviewee 3 stated that the high price associated with the Internet is "*almost irrelevant in terms of what you are getting, i.e. connection to the world outside KSA*". This sentiment was supported by Interviewees 3, 6, 7, 8, and 12. Therefore, as illustrated by the quote above, expatriates in this study accepted the higher prices readily and persevered with relatively bad Internet connections as it was deemed an important tool. However, even though the relatively high prices of Internet connection do not inhibit information flow, the low quality definitely does. Low quality connections amplify the physical distance between expatriates and their family and friends, which increases the feeling of isolation and homesickness.

9.2.1.1.2 Internet content filtering

Expatriates in this study were aware of the risk associated with Internet usage as would be the case with any other Internet user. These risks are associated with spending too much time on the Internet [Interviewees 1 and 16], revealing too much personal information on the Internet - especially on social networking sites such as Facebook [Interviewees 20 and 22] - and the need for appropriate software to protect against malicious programmes [Interviewees 4, 15, and 17]. In addition to the strict rules mentioned in Chapter 3, the Internet content is filtered and regulated by the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC). Content filtering is not just applicable to the Internet in the KSA as it is also applied to magazines, printed media, television etc. which are not part of the scope of this study (Green & Karolides, 2005). Therefore, it is unsurprising that this study indicates that the content filtering of Internet will inhibit flow of information and pose a challenge to expatriates.
"*You do not get unbiased, unedited news coverage in KSA, you only hear what the government wants you to hear (e.g. strong bias against Israel)*" [Interviewee 3].

Expatriates in this study indicated that content filtering of "innocent websites" left them feeling "*annoyed*" [Interviewee 17] and "*irritated*" [Interviewee 18] calling it "*ridiculous*"

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[Interviewee 20], "*silly as there is always a way around it*" [Interviewee 21] and "*frustrating*" [Interviewee 22].

Content filtering is especially problematic for those expatriates who use Internet for study purposes. Liao (2006) has indicated that interactivity was the most important factor for distance learning students, influencing their motivation and behaviour. Interviewee 20 reported that the content filter reduced interactivity by limiting her ability to obtain the necessary information for her studies:

> "*… the filter is ridiculous. My studies are for [a] midwifery based biology course and health sciences. Some of my early course work required me to watch a birthing video but that was blocked. Also when researching the effects of drugs and alcohol on drivers, that information was also restricted*" [Interviewee 20].

Residents, including expatriates, can use Virtual Private Network (VPN) to bypass some of the content filtering issues and aid information flow. A web search has revealed a number of VPN suppliers[11] who explicitly state on their websites that the system will bypass all content filtering in the KSA. However, only Interviewees 12, 17 and 18 reported making use of VPN services. Interviewees 17 and 20 stated that they knew which websites to avoid in order not to cast suspicion on themselves as all Internet activities are tracked. Some Interviewees just endured the frustration, such as Interviewees 8 and 22 who attempted to visit "*innocent Christian sites*", and others such as Interviewee 19 have not experienced content restrictions yet.

Lawrence Lessig's theory "code is law" is appropriate in the KSA's application of Internet content filters and is defined in the following way: *"[a] rule is defined, not through a statute, but through the code that governs"*. The theory is based on the premise that technology can fulfil a regulatory function or at least have the same effects as regulation does (Lee & Liu, 2012, p. 128).

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to comment on the appropriateness of Internet filtering as an effective tool for government to obtain control over online information. With the availability of VPNs expatriates, and potentially the local community, can obtain access to "inappropriate" content. As pointed out by Interviewee 21, there is always a way to get around the filtering.

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[11] For example www.supervpn.net/saudi-arabia-vpn.html or http://www.happy-vpn.com/

9.2.1.2 Intention to use

Intention to use refers to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour which proposes a model that measures how human actions are guided. It predicts the occurrence of a particular behaviour, provided that behaviour is intentional. Intentions are the precursors to behaviour. In this study, intention to use is defined as the expatriates' intentional use of the Internet. All expatriates in this study indicated that they use the Internet daily, often more than once a day, with the exception of Interviewee 14.
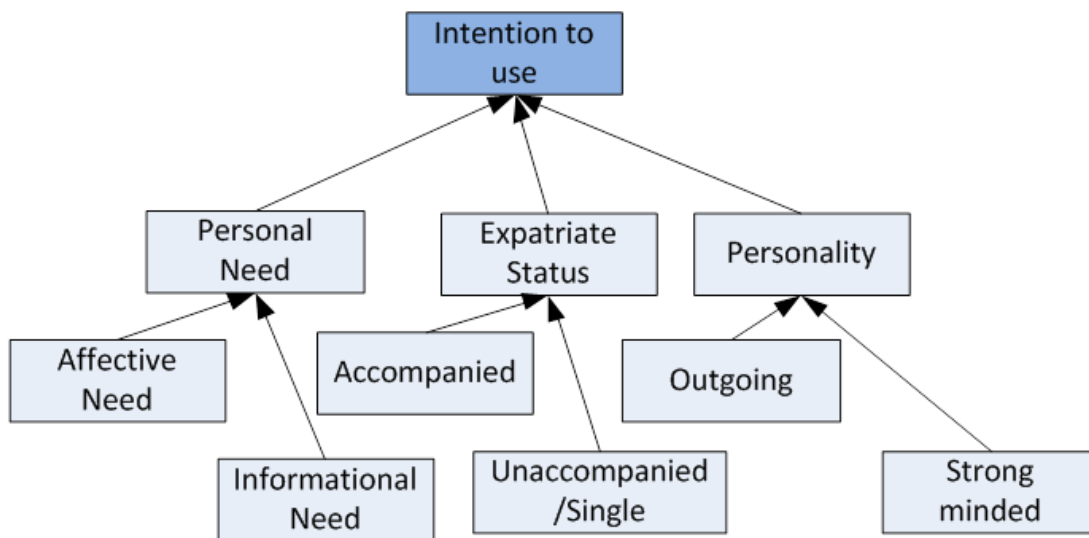
Figure 41: Intention to Use as defined by this study

This study has indicated that the intention to use is influenced by expatriate's personal need, status and personality as illustrated in Figure 41 above. These constructs refer to the expatriate as an individual and the use of the Internet as subjective action, although intrinsically motivated through dependence. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in activity without receiving reinforcement other than enjoyment (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992). Each of these constructs will be briefly discussed.

Expatriates in this study had different needs which included: (a) physical safety, (b) the ability to communicate with family and friends quickly and frequently, (c) quality of education, (d) availability of medical resources, (e) need for entertainment, (f) the ability to buy/ obtain home country products and (g) the ability to integrate with the local community. In terms of using the Internet, these needs can be classified as either affective needs or informational needs. The former relates to the expatriate's

emotional well-being which improved when the expatriate communicated with their family and friends in their benevolent communities. Furthermore, the Internet provided a means by which not to "*miss out*" on important family events such as seeing grandparents [Interviewee 20] or seeing cousins [Interviewees 13 and 21]. Also, as an example of the extreme emotional reliance on the Internet, Interviewee 8 stated that she needs the Internet to keep her "*sanity*". "Informational need" refers to reading the online news, doing Internet banking and other modern day activities detailed in Table 15. Access to this type of information has an impact on the "degree of isolation" experienced by expatriates as it reduces the feeling of "*isolation*" [Interviewees 1, 3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 22] and the feeling of being cut-off [Interviewees 3, 5 and 22] from the world outside.

Expatriate status is also a sub-construct of "degree of isolation". This is significant in that it shows how the degree of information flow relates to the degree of isolation experienced by an expatriate depending on his/ her status. Interviewee 1 indicated that on her previous expatriate experience, when she was single, the need to stay in contact was not as great as now that she is married with children. This study has confirmed that the status of the expatriate does have an impact on the intention to use the Internet. The unaccompanied expatriates [Interviewees 6, 7, 9 (initially), 12 and 17] described how difficult it was to live away from their wives and fiancée during their expatriate episode and were therefore dependent on the Internet to continue that relationship. Interviewee 9 indicated that he used Skype with a web camera to see his family and that it "*[made] [his] time easier*". Furthermore, unaccompanied/ single expatriates relied heavily on the Internet for entertainment due to the unavailability of entertainment facilities and the rules against mingling with unrelated women in public.

Expatriate personality is similar to the sub-construct "state of mind" in "degree of isolation" in the sense that an expatriate's state of mind is dependent on his/ her personality and how he/ she copes under stressful circumstances. The level of stress is greatly influenced by the degree of information flow experienced by an expatriate. A study by Shaffer et al. (2006) has provided strong evidence that the assessment of the individual differences of expatriates could be of enormous value to international human resource managers looking to have adaptable, committed, socially and technically competent individuals on international assignments. In Zhang's (2010) study it was proposed that expatriates, especially first time expatriates, need to be

emotionally stable, able to handle stress, outgoing and agreeable, and open and willing to take risks. Interviewee 9 indicated that because he is an *"open person"* he *"rel[ies] on [his] personality to make friends with people from different nationalities and religions"*. Interviewee 8 indicated that she is content in the KSA, but not happy as it is an "*unusual kind of life for a Western woman with an education and a mind of [her] own*". She stated that the Internet is invaluable and used it to navigate the unique restrictions in the KSA. Interviewee 15 indicated that his positive approach to life helped him "*look beyond the challenges in KSA*" and that he relied on his family structure and social network for support. Therefore, it can be seen that an expatriate's intention to use is influenced by their personality and the degree to which they have experienced isolation in the KSA. Interviewee 9 has an outgoing personality and is therefore less dependent on using the Internet for his personal needs as discussed previously. Interviewee 8, on the other hand, describes herself as strong minded and relies heavily on the Internet in order to keep herself sane. Interviewee 15 provided a more balanced opinion which recognised the challenges in the KSA, and overcame these by making use of support from his family (he is an accompanied expatriate) supplemented with Internet use. Therefore, an expatriate's personality determines how self-sufficient they can be with or without the Internet.

9.2.2 Consequences of Information Flow

Notable studies on users of information systems have found evidence that time and space specific factors can predict user behaviour better than individual differences (Finneran & Zhang, 2000). This has been confirmed in this study as the intention to use is influenced by personality and the needs of the expatriate. Figure 39 illustrates that a positive effect is derived from the perceived control that expatriates have over their environment, the people that they communicate with, an increase of social presence and an increased exchange of information between expatriates and their benevolent communities. Positive Affect (PA) is described as feelings that reflect a level of pleasurable engagement with the environment, such as happiness, joy, excitement, enthusiasm, and contentment. These can be brief, longer lasting, or more stable trait-like feelings (Cohen & Pressman, 2006)**.** In Lyubomirsky, King and Dienter's (2005, p. 803) study, PA was described as the *"hallmark of well-being"* which is one of the key concepts of adjustment which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10. The characteristics related to PA include confidence, optimism, and self-efficacy, likability and positive construal of others, sociability, activity, and energy, prosocial

behavior, immunity and physical well-being, effective coping with challenges and stress, and originality and flexibility (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). The following sections will describe each of these constructs in more detail.

9.2.2.1   Extended Control over environment

Extended control can be defined as the level of one's control over the environment and one's own actions (Zhang, 2010). Using the Internet to *"tak[e] charge of one's life"* was an early discovery made by Dyson (1997 cited in Brey, 2006, p. 1), who was considered a futurist in 1997 when she stated that: "*The Net offers us a chance to take charge of our own lives and to redefine our role as citizens of local communities and of a global society. It also hands us the responsibility to govern ourselves, to think for ourselves, to educate our children, to do business honestly, and to work with fellow citizens to design rules we want to live by*". This definition of perceived control and the predicted role of the Internet in obtaining control, resonate with this study which shows that expatriates used the Internet to establish/ retain control over their lives whilst in the KSA. The extended control, as illustrated by Figure 42 below, includes deciding who to communicate with, surrounding themselves with familiar things by shopping over the Internet, and having access to or obtaining information that is restricted in the KSA by using a VPN.
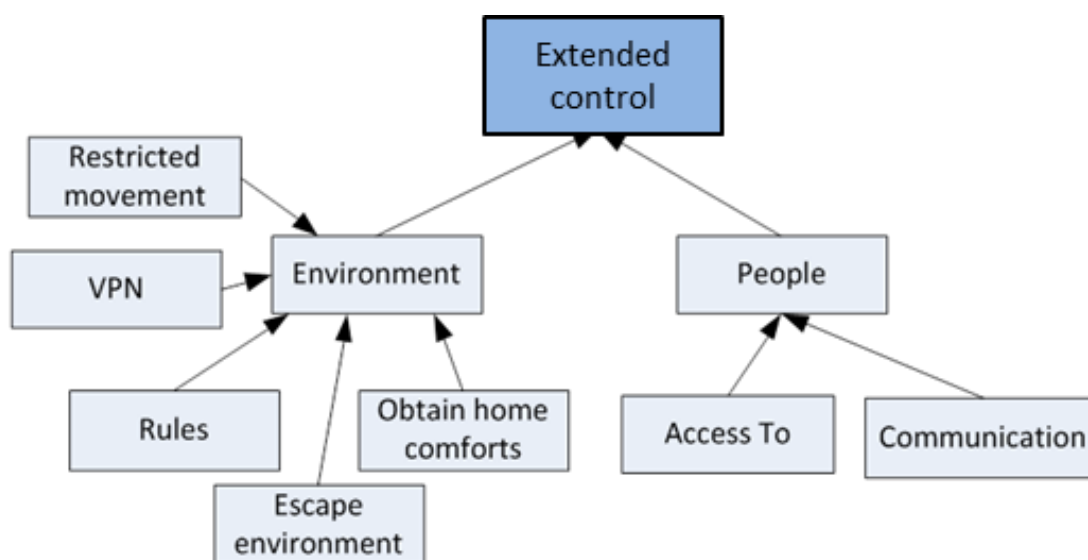

Figure 42: Extended control over environment as defined by this study

There are restrictions on movement, especially for women, in the KSA as explained in Chapter 5, which are further exacerbated by it being illegal for women to drive. The Internet allows women, including expatriate women, to lead a less sheltered or isolated

life. It affords them the opportunity to let people into their lives. This was the case for Interviewee 11, a single Jordanian woman living with her parents, who indicated that the Internet *"allows me to control the people, I want to have in my life"*. She further explained that the Internet gave her a *"sense of independence"* because she had more control to "*do what I want when I want without answering to anyone's enquiries about what to do, who to talk to … etc.*"

Furthermore, Interviewee 22 indicated that a lot of time is wasted on transport arrangements and that women are dependent on a bus or taxi schedule which makes it difficult "*to come and go"*. The Internet helps expatriates make contact with people off compound using e-mail and Facebook. This has been affirmed by Interviewee 20 who indicated that she "*missed the spontaneity of just being able to pop out"* which is difficult for women to do in the KSA as it is illegal for them to drive. Furthermore, Interviewee 8, referred to shops' prayer times, and the advisability of checking opening times on the Internet, although she concedes it still only gives her a 50-50 chance of being right – a symptom of customer service, which Interviewee 3 argues is very poor.

The expatriates' use of a VPN as a means of bypassing the controls imposed by the KSA government is another example of how expatriates obtain control over their lives in the KSA. As reported previously, Interviewees 12, 17 and 18 use a VPN to address their main concerns in the KSA, which for interviewee 12 was a *"lack of places and chances to socialise"*. Interviewee 17 was reliant on the Internet for entertainment and social interaction.

Interviewees 2, 8, and 9 in this study also indicated that they used the Internet to escape the current environment, which is another means of maintaining control over their lives whilst in the KSA. Interviewee 2 describes this as "*check[ing] what is going on in the free world with the Internet.*" Interviewee 8 described using the Internet as a means of "*killing time, of escaping the harshness of the environment in which I exist*". Interviewee 9 used the Internet to "*pass the time*" as there are "*no cinemas or activities for single people to do*".

Expatriates are removed from their own environment and placed in potentially vastly different environments. Expatriates used the Internet to obtain more personal items in order to make themselves feel more at home. Interviewee 15 indicated he used the Internet to "*place first world commodities within reach, at a cost*". They surround

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themselves with things that are important, which for some people might be ordinary things like their favourite recipe off the BBC website [Interviewee 9], receiving religious teaching [Interviewees 8 and 22] and their favourite magazines, greeting cards, clothes [Interviewee 3], games [Interviewees 5, 8], downloading music [Interviewees, 2, 5, 8, 12], or ordering books [Interviewee 13] that are very difficult to obtain in the KSA.

9.2.2.2   Increased Time distortion and Social Presence

Increased information flow increases time distortion and social presence of expatriates. Both of these concepts are in line with the Flow Theory (briefly introduced above), described in Chen, Wigand, and Nilan (2000), Liao (2006), Rettie (2001), Riva, Manos, Botella, Wiederhold, and Gaggioli (2011) and Skadber and Kimmel (2004). Time distortion refers to the degree to which the expatriate loses a sense of time whilst using the Internet (Liao, 2006). Interviewees have specifically indicated that they lose track of time when "*surfing randomly*" [Interviewee 3] and using Facebook [Interviewee 20]. Interviewee 3 called her husband *"an Internet widower"* as she conceded that she might spend too much time on the Internet. Interviewee 20 also indicated that her husband would say that she spends *"hours each day on [Facebook]"* which suggests that she is perhaps unaware of how much time she spends on Facebook.

The positive technology framework is concerned with the use of technologies to support and improve the connectedness between individuals, groups, and organisations (Hassenzahl, 2013). It is concerned with obtaining a sense of social presence whilst at a distance. It is the feeling of being socially present with another person in a remote location. Interviewee 17 illustrated this by saying: "*Last night I was playing an interactive online game with 3 of my children who are 3500 miles away! I was able to chat with them and give them tasks to keep them busy whilst chatting as if I was really with them*". This study has shown that communication is the core concern, making it a basic need, and that Skype and Facebook enhance the presence. In Kramer (2012) it was shown that after a user makes a Facebook status update with emotional content, their friends are significantly more likely to make a valence consistent post. Kramer (2012, p. 767) further stated that the effect of that response was significant even three days later, which indicates that "*not only is emotional*

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contagions possible via text-only communication and that emotions flow through social networks, but also that emotion spreads via asynchronous media".

Conventional computer-mediated communication tools, such as e-mail or text-based chat, are regarded as having lower social presence and social context cues than face-to-face communication. Interviewee 22 stated that making contact through telephone calls and e-mails helped to negate the feeling of homesickness. When she joined Skype for the first time it was "*wonderful*" and because she has Skype and Facebook, she has an "*instant connection*", which has made it easier to be far from home. Interviewee 1 indicated that the Internet assists him/ her with "*remain[ing] close to family despite not being face-to-face*". Interviewee 6 cited various examples of how he used the Internet to have a continued social presence in his wife's life by helping her set the thermostat when the power went off, sending her gifts on their anniversary etc. He summarised it as "*being 100% dependent on the Internet to stay connected to his family and help them to manage their household while being employed 9000 miles away*". Interviewees 19, 20, and 22 all gave examples where they were able to share important events with their families, which helped them feel that they were not missing out on anything because it was so easy for people to e-mail or Facebook them. This confirms that the heightened information flow experienced by expatriates when using the Internet, especially to communicate with family and friends, generates a positive affect.

9.2.2.3   Increased Exchange of Information

An increased exchange of information as indicated in Figure 43 below, refers to the way in which the Internet is instrumental in empowering expatriates and makes them more aware of other expatriates, their family and friends, their home country and the world in general. This is important as Chapters 3 and 5 explained what expatriates could expect in terms of life in the KSA and pointed out key differences in Saudi culture when compared to most Western cultures. In the KSA there is no freedom of expression, right to association, open communication through various media/ Internet sources, transparency in the areas of justice, political debate or freedom to travel (Almugaiteeb, 2010).

The Internet has the power to enable a free flow of information and helps create a freer society (Lee & Liu, 2012). In this study it was evident that expatriates are now able to "push" information to their family and friends more quickly, more easily and more

frequently [Interviewee 1] than without the Internet. Historically the degree of information flow was very low in the KSA – largely attributable to it being a "closed" society and because of the late introduction of the Internet. Interviewee 14's description of the midnight e-mail club described the clandestine operation of the Internet in the late 1990s: *"The [midnight email] club was a group of young Saudis who wanted to have the Internet before it was available in Saudi. They set up their own network which you call using standard modem and once "online" could chat with others online. They also had a mail system where once every 24 hours they would connect to the real Internet - upload and download emails, which [was] the reason I was using it. It was clandestine in the early days and 'came out' once Internet was approved and was one of the first providers here".*

Before Internet, expatriates relied on the telephone [Interviewee 3, 13, 18] or had to wait for a letter to arrive. However, with the use of the Internet, expatriates are now able to have experiences among a variety of groups, as illustrated in Figure 43.
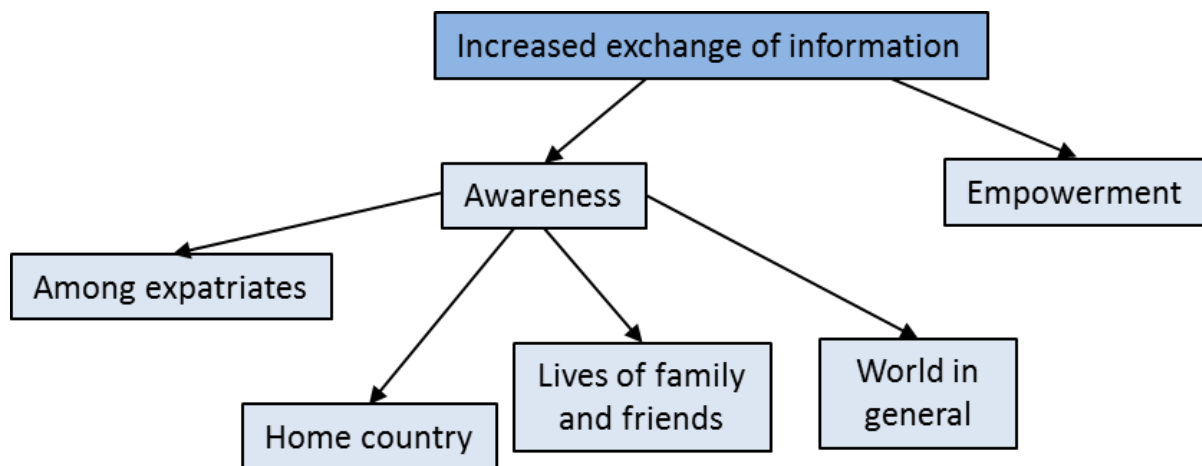
Figure 43: Increased exchange of information as defined through this study

As a result of the Internet the following aspects are enabled: (1) Create awareness among their family and friends about their lives in the KSA very quickly. This is especially important because of the restrictions on visits from family and friends; visits are limited to close family members only. (2) Expatriates are more aware of what is happening in the lives of their family and friends, and the rest of the world in general. Interviewee 3 described living in the KSA as *"living in a bubble"* and Interviewee 4 described the KSA as a world cocooned within the real world. Therefore it is important for them to keep track of what is happening in the world outside the KSA. (3)

Expatriates are now made more aware of activities within their expatriate community, by receiving e-mail, news from school etc.

The main method of creating awareness is by using Facebook and Skype. Expatriates use these tools to communicate among themselves and also with family and friends. One of the reasons why this is so successful is because these methods of communication are protected against the strict rules of content filtering as applied in the KSA. Social networking sites such as Facebook are nearly impossible to shut down quietly, whereas individual websites and proxy servers are easy for governments to block because they are specific. But if a government were to shut down Facebook, it would alert far too many people to their actions (Green & Karolides, 2005). Expatriates in this study [Interviewees 18, 20 and 22] are, however, not convinced that the Internet helps to create awareness between expatriates and the Saudis, mainly because the rules and regulations grounded in Saudi culture are heavily policed. Interviewee 17 felt that although the local community is "*physically isolated with their homes surrounded by 10ft walls so they don't even get to see their neighbours they can also learn of things that they are not allowed to have such as cinemas and theatres*". However, Interviewee 8 felt that the Internet could initiate change and create an "*open society*" for the local community and pointed out that "*each step towards freedom for Saudi women does make our lives easier too. The more open the society becomes, the less restrictive it will be for us, and the less suspicion and misjudgement there will be against Western women*".

Self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's confidence in the achievement of a goal and interpersonal relationships developed for goal attainment (Shaffer et al. 2006). This definition is similar to that of Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 678 cited in Ramalu, Wei, & Rose, 2011), who defined self-efficacy as "*a self-evaluation of one's competence to successfully execute a course of action necessary to reach desired outcomes*". Individuals with strong self-efficacies regulate their emotional states effectively; they not only persevere, but also set goals and expectations so that they will proactively search for new and useful strategies for approaching the objectives of intercultural encounters. Generally, increased self-efficacy may have a number of effects relevant to the expatriate situation. Fenner and Selmer (2007) surmised from various authors, that self-efficacy may affect expatriates' level of interest in their job, their contribution to their teams' effectiveness, setting of higher goals, and ultimately

through higher performance. Similarly, high levels of self-efficacy have been theorised to lead to positive choices (e.g. welcoming the challenge of a new task), motivational effort (e.g. people will try harder), and perseverance (e.g. be resilient when meeting problems and even failure).

Expatriates in this study used the Internet as a mediator to increase their self-efficacy. Interviewees 1, 3, 4, and 17 indicated that they researched the KSA prior to starting the expatriate episode in order to have, as Interviewee 1 put it, an "*image and some understanding of where we were moving to*" . Knowledge about the host country acquired before moving appears to positively influence adjustment (Black, 1988; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Furthermore, Furutani, Kobayashi and Ura's (2009) study showed that Internet use had a positive effect on the cognition of network-changing possibility. The idea that it is possible to connect people with different social backgrounds by using the Internet also had a positive effect on self-efficacy.

Table 13 details how expatriates in this study used the Internet whilst in-country. Individual's judgement about their abilities to control life-affecting events is quite central for human agency (Hünler, 2012). Expatriates indicated that their Internet use in the KSA would not differ a lot from how they would use it at home [Interviewees 2, 13]. This implies that these everyday activities can be conducted wherever expatriates find themselves – making them self-efficient. However, a number of activities conducted in the KSA by expatriates are largely attributable to where they find themselves [Interviewee 3] and are influenced by the lack of resources; for example education [Interviewees 1, 2, 5, and 9] and healthcare [Interviewees 13, 15, and 16]. Interviewee 13 indicated that because of the Internet, they do not have to go "home" that often and rather enjoy the expatriate experience by going on holidays. This is because the Interviewees, as reported in the interviews, could manage their "*stakes*" [Interviewee 5] in their home country via the Internet from the KSA, or "*anywhere in the world*" [Interviewee 13]. For example, Interviewee 3 bought and furnished a flat in the United Kingdom, Interviewees 1, 3 and 5 indicated that they could easily access "*government pages*" needed to obtain information regarding repatriation [Interviewee 1], filling in UK tax returns [Interviewee 3] and visa applications [Interviewee 5]. The ability to do remote Internet Banking was cited by 45% of the Interviewees. In extreme cases, expatriates used the Internet as a tool to virtually "*escape*" the KSA [Interviewee 2, 8, 9]. These activities arm expatriates with the tools needed to "*cope*" [Interviewees

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19] and therefore meet their objectives whilst in the KSA. Interviewees 8 and 16 indicated that one of their coping mechanisms was to "*surf the net*".

Self-efficacy plays a critical role in exercising control over one's motivation. (Hünler, 2012). In the absence of the caring and supportive environment of the benevolent community, expatriates, especially those who are unaccompanied or single might question their personal motivation for being, and remaining in the KSA. It is usually the financial benefit that brings expatriates to the KSA as higher than average salaries are usually offered. Richardson and McKenna (2003) have reported that academic expatriates tend to go to the KSA for monetary reasons, whilst they might go to other expatriate destinations, including other Middle Eastern countries for self-enriching experiences. Interviewees 6, 7, and 16 indicated that the financial security and financial benefits that they obtained from working in the KSA allowed them to take holidays (planning holidays was the top 5th Internet activity) which they would not have been able to do if they had not come to the KSA. This appears to be one of the ways in which expatriates alleviate the stresses of living in the KSA. The motivation of self-initiated expatriates, which all of the expatriates in this study were, is also different.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984, cited in Ramalu, Wei, & Rose, 2011) argued that individuals evaluate environmental demands depending on their personal beliefs — such as self-efficacy. Individuals with a high self-efficacy tend to interpret environmental events as a challenge rather than a threat, in cases of migration, they could accept adaptation to a new country as a challenge. As a result, this approach is expected to result in better psychological adaptation to the stressful demands of acculturation. Interviewee 15 indicated that:

> *"Although life is different in KSA it depends on your outlook on life how you face challenges. My positive approach to life helps me to look beyond challenges in KSA. Every challenge is seen as a hurdle that potentially can be overcome. One has to accept the challenges you can't change and live around it. Family structure and a vibrant social network supporting you, help to cross the hurdles. Internet can help as well, placing first world commodities within reach, at a cost. Life goes on and you have to cope with all the challenges and restraints no matter in which part of the world you are."*

Expatriates 7, 9, 10, and 15 also indicated that their positive demeanour helped them overcome challenges in the KSA, or accept that it was their choice [Interviewee 16], or that the difficulties would only be experienced for a limited period [Interviewee 12]. Hunler's (2012) study of expatriates in Turkey demonstrated that thinking about going back to the home country and low self-efficacy are related to the increased depressive symptomatology of expatriates. Interviewee 13 affirmed the sentiment that expatriates should consider their host country as home:

"… as a family we live is Riyadh as if it is our 'home'. I think if you live in a place for years and always say you are just 'visiting' or your home is somewhere else then you will never really feel at home."

However, Interviewee 3 indicated that she did not think that any Western expatriate would think of the KSA as home:

"I have always referred to where my husband and I live as "home" but also where I was born and my family lives, so I have two homes: the physical house where I reside and where I come from. I do not think any Westerner would ever consider KSA as "home", it is somewhere you live/ reside/ work but it is not home."

Therefore expatriates in this study had opposing views regarding where "home" should be. Fourteen of the twenty-three expatriates used the word "home" in their responses. From these, 21.4% of the Interviewees referred to the KSA as home, whilst 64.4% of the Interviewees referred to the home country as their home. Only 14.2% (two Interviewees) referred to both the KSA and their home country as "home".

The increased self-efficacy reported in this section, does not refer to "Internet self-efficacy" in the sense of Gangadharbatla's (2008) definition which refers to the Internet user's ability to use the Internet. It was stated in Chapter 8 that all Interviewees were competent in their usage of the Internet. In this case the increased self-efficacy refers to the expatriates' ability to accomplish a number of activities whilst in the KSA which is enhanced or extended by using the Internet as a mediator. By using the Internet the expatriates were able to accomplish a number of tasks.

The Internet empowers expatriates by allowing them to take control of their environment as discussed in section 9.2.2.1. Furthermore, Interviewee 15 reported

that it gave him freedom and that he felt restrained without it. For expatriates who are restricted by rules and regulations it is one way of getting away from those restrictions.

It was the opinion of Interviewee 8 that the Internet in the KSA plays a role in creating a "*more open society*" as it gives a *"voice"* to the local population, especially the women. However, upon testing this opinion with other Interviewees, Interviewee 21 indicated that the Internet has succeeded in creating a "*virtual open society*" that makes life in the KSA for expatriates *"acceptable".* Interviewee 22 indicated that she thought that the Internet has the potential to create an open society, but not in the KSA *"due to the culture*" rather than the "*rules and regulations".* Interviewee 18 indicated that due to the "*rules and regulations [of the KSA with regards to the Internet]*" which allow for the Internet to be strongly policed, it would not be possible to create an open society, however it may enable the Saudis to gain greater insight into how people outside of the KSA live. The latter part was supported by Interviewee 17. Interviewee 19 agreed with Interviewee 22 about the possibility of the Internet creating a more open society, but felt that it relied heavily on opportunities to access the Internet freely (referring to the content filtering that was discussed in section 9.1.1.2). Furthermore she felt that the problem is a generational issue, and that it would be the younger generation that would gradually take this forward.

By using the Internet to create an increased exchange of information between expatriates and the "outside world" including their benevolent communities, they become empowered and more aware of developments in these communities. This led to a more pleasant, engaged and meaningful life, which reflects the three pillars of "Authentic Happiness" as defined by Seligman (2001 cited in Riva, Manos, Botella, Wiederhold, & Gaggioli, 2011) which are linked to well-being in the framework of positive technology and therefore, improve the emotional well-being of the expatriates.

9.3   Summary

This chapter argued that information flow aided by the Internet, has a positive impact on expatriates' state of mind, which aids the overall adjustment to the KSA. A fundamental part of this theory involves understanding how expatriates use the Internet whilst in the KSA. The chapter illustrated that expatriates, not unlike any other Internet user regardless of their location, used the Internet as a tool, as defined in Chapter 7, for communication, entertainment purposes, e-commerce activities, online

banking, reading online news etc. However, the study has indicated that expatriates have an emotional relationship with the Internet, on which they are dependent in order to decrease the feeling of isolation. This understanding was obtained by developing an EIFM which indicates that those constructs that influence information flow (preconditions of information flow) include the challenges associated with Internet service provision in the KSA: cost and quality of Internet connection and Internet content filtering. The impact of information flow, had a positive effect on the well-being of the expatriates as they had extended control over their environment which includes the people with whom they interact, their ability to increase their social presence with benevolent communities, and the increase in the exchange of information between themselves and the benevolent communities.

CHAPTER 10: EXPATRIATE ADJUSTMENT MEDIATED BY THE INTERNET

10.1 Introduction

This study conceptualised adjustment as both a process and a state, where the process of adjustment should lead to the state of adjustment. The researcher has used the world "should" because the discussions to follow will indicate that this is not always the case. Furthermore, adjustment is measured through the well-being of expatriates. The preceding chapter reported on those factors influencing adjustment and the role that the Internet played in mediating it, hence the name of the theoretical model "negotiating adjustment". The negotiation of adjustment was also discussed in Selmer, Ebarhini and Mingtao's (2000, p. 238) study where the following definition of adjustment was given: "*the expatriate's ability to negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture measured by the degree of difficulty experienced in managing day-to-day situations in the host culture*".

Furthermore, the discussion in the preceding chapters, particularly Chapter 9, provided an understanding of the impact of these factors on the well-being of expatriates.   The connection between well-being and adjustment is also reflected in literature.   Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) defined psychological adjustment, which is also called sense of well-being, as feeling reasonably happy in the new surroundings, being able to enjoy one's day-to-day activities and being able to face one's problems.
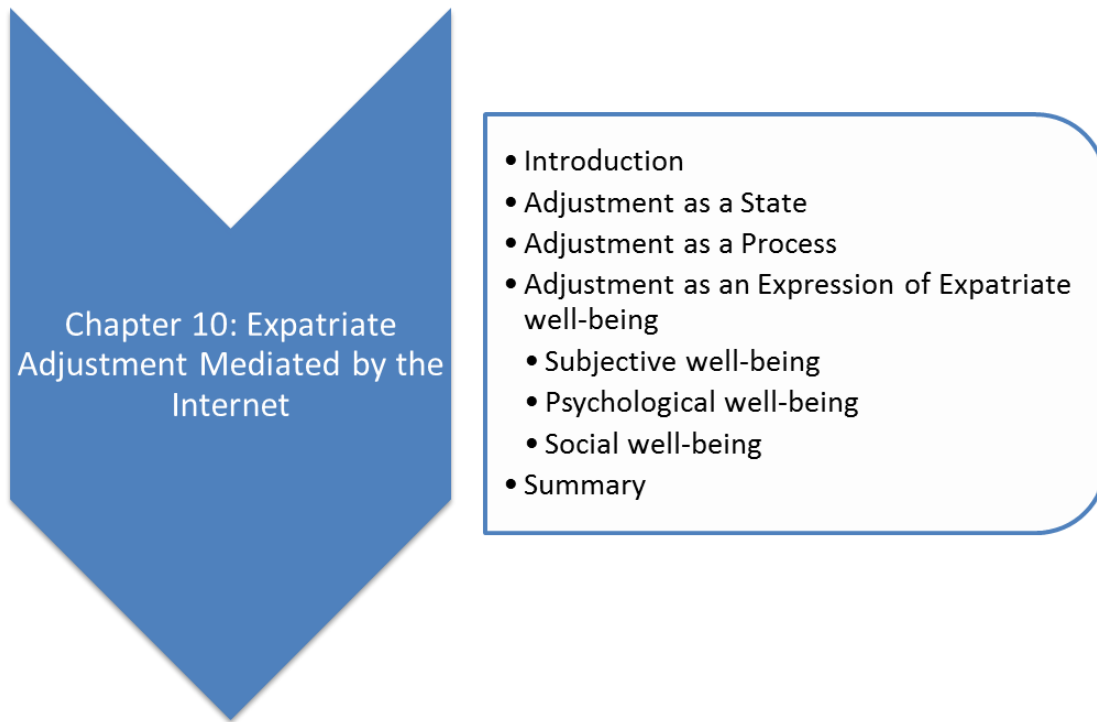
Figure 44: Layout of Chapter 10

This study will therefore provide an understanding of how adjustment as a process, adjustment as a state and adjustment related to expatriate well-being are mediated by the Internet. Figure 44 above represents the layout of Chapter 10.

This chapter will commence with a discussion of adjustment as a state and to what extent expatriates in this study reported being "adjusted". This will then be followed by a discussion of expatriate adjustment as a process, defining the transition in the expatriate's skill set to manage the KSA environment. This chapter will close with a discussion of the understanding obtained from this study of expatriate adjustment and well-being which will consider subjective well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being.

10.2 Adjustment as a state

Expatriate adjustment, as a state, is conceptually different from other constructs such as acculturation and adaptation. Berry (1992) defined adjustment as a state of change occurring in the individual in the direction of increased fit and reduced conflict between the environmental demands and the individual's attitudinal and behavioural inclinations. The U-curve (Pires et al., 2006) of adjustment, discussed in Chapter 3, refers to the period just before the expatriate has mastered the environment. Mohr and Klein (2003) have explained that adjustment is not the same as satisfaction or contentment. They argued that satisfaction and adjustment are different constructs which are related. The researcher proposes that this be called "adjusted" so as not to become confused with the process of adjustment as discussed previously. Therefore, when an expatriate is adjusted (he/ she has mastered the environment according to the U-curve) there is a complete fit between the person and the environment.

This study has indicated that there were some expatriates who have not reached the state of adjustment that implies that they can operate with confidence in the new culture. Instead of labelling themselves as adjusted, the Interviewees described themselves as "*tolerant*" [Interviewee 17] or "*barely adjusted*" [Interviewee 21]. However, Interviewee 2 was "*waiting for the rest of [his] life after Saudi*" and Interviewee 6 was counting the days until he could return home: "*I've been in Kingdom for 404 days. I plan to leave in 549 days, unless a good job back home is available, in which case I would leave immediately*". Furthermore, there were some expatriates who indicated that they are content, but reported feelings of depression and isolation if the Internet was unavailable [Interviewees 1, 3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 22]. Furthermore, as was indicated by Interviewee 8, to be content is not the same as happy [Interviewee 8].

The premise of this study is that the Internet plays a significant role in contributing towards reaching the "adjusted" state. Interviewee 6 indicated that he was *"content"* but that he would not be able to live in the KSA without access to the Internet. Therefore, there is a strong link between the state of adjustment and the presence of the Internet.

When adjustment is considered to be a state, it is evident that some expatriates skip the state of adjustment as depicted in Figure 8 (introduced in Chapter 3), and attain the state of mastering by using the Internet both as a modern and indispensable emotional tool whilst in the KSA. This might contradict the original definition put forward in the U-curve Theory where mastering is defined as being "*the final phase when small incremental increases in the expatriate's ability to function effectively in the new culture become visible*" (Pires et al., 2006). Rather, expatriates are able to cope within the KSA environment by using the Internet as a mediator in order to meet their personal objectives without ever describing themselves as adjusted.

10.3 Adjustment as a process

A process is defined by the AED (2014, n.p) as *"a sustained phenomenon or one marked by gradual changes through a series of states".* Therefore, the process of adjustment for expatriates in the KSA refers to the gradual changes in their level of comfort with the environment, which in turn will lead to   the state of adjustment, as defined in section 10.2 previously.

Given the vocabulary lent to the researcher by considering the mediating role of the Internet, expatriate adjustment as a process can be understood by looking at how Vygotsky and Luria use the concept of re-arming to describe the cultural mechanism of development. "*While developing, the child not only grows and matures, but also receives a number of new skills and new forms of behaviour. In the process of development the child not only matures but is re-armed*" (Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, p. 110 cited in Holt & Morris, 1993). In the current context, the expatriate is developing adjustment capabilities, by using the Internet as a tool, a place, a way of being, and as a means of obtaining salvation to re-arm him/ herself with skills and supporting mechanisms to reach their objective of adjustment, which also involves making everyday life more real. This is supported by the material in Chapter 9 which introduced the field of positive technology wherein researchers suggest that human computer interaction is moving past addressing the basic needs and goals of users towards the growth of humans (Riva et al., 2011). This growth is also present in adjustment literature where adjustment is described as a process (Pires et al., 2006).

Figure 45 below illustrates that the study defines the process of adjustment as being the incremental changes in the expatriate's state of being through which the expatriate

reaches a steady state of contentment in the KSA. Section 10.2 indicated that some expatriates have never "adjusted" to the KSA. In these cases, expatriates did however find a balance between why they want to be in the KSA and being in the KSA. This definition is different to that defined through the U-curve theories (Pires et al., 2006), introduced in Chapter 3, which were influenced by the length of time that the expatriate had resided in the KSA. It was not part of the scope of the study to verify whether the expatriates did indeed follow the "u-curve", rather the interview data indicated that there was a change in the expatriate's well-being which could be attributed to their use of the Internet. It became evident that expatriates experienced a transition from initially finding the environment harsh and isolating, to being in control and feeling connected. The Internet as a mediating tool is therefore central to expatriates feelings of contentment in the KSA as it mediates activities on a practical and emotional level.
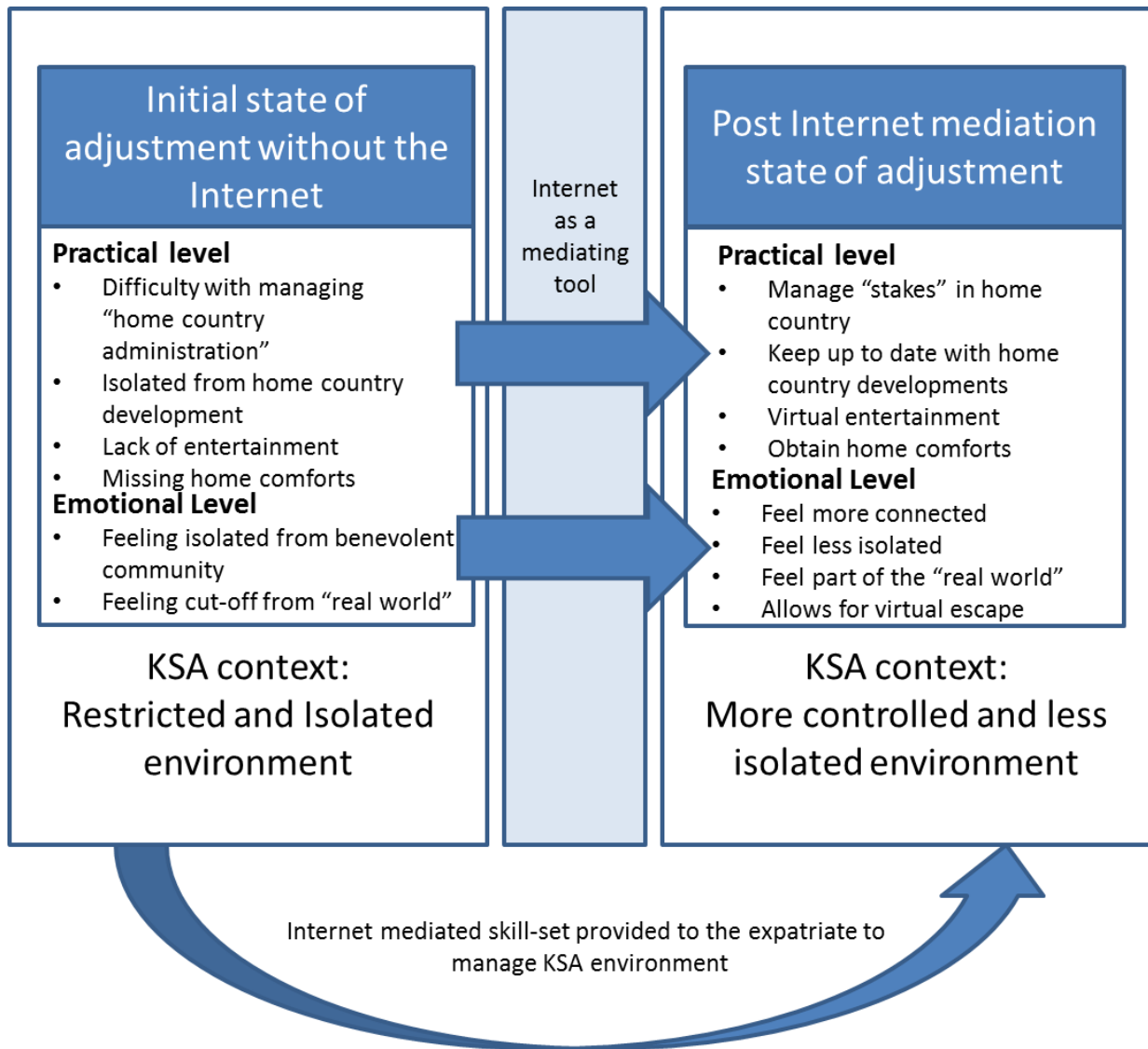
Figure 45: The process of adjustment of expatriates in the KSA[12]

In this study, the process of expatriate adjustment is therefore conceptualised as the state of well-being of the expatriate mediated by the Internet. As stated previously, the Internet aided expatriates with addressing the challenges imposed by the environment which consists of many rules, customs and laws (as reported in Chapter 5). However, the researcher does acknowledge that expatriates have, in addition to the Internet, at least two other sources of support. Firstly, the presence of other expatriate communities, which helped expatriates with the adjustment process as explained in Chapter 8 and secondly, the longevity of expatriates in the KSA (10+ years). Therefore, rather than measuring the process of adjustment over time, this

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[12] "Home administration" refers to the administrative tasks reported by the Interviewees such as banking, filing tax returns, and corresponding with solicitors.

study has shown that the presence of the Internet allowed expatriates to achieve a "state of adjustment" after completing the process of adjustment. The state of adjustment will be discussed in the following section.

Interviewee 7 indicated that he adapted to the challenges (implying a process) by planning more visits to see his fiancée (who was not allowed to accompany him due to their unmarried status). In the meantime he used "*all forms of communication available to keep in touch*". He reported that not having the Internet would be "*inconceivable*".

As part of the process of adjustment, Interviewee 9 indicated that he was far more dependent on the Internet earlier on in his expatriate assignment when he claimed that he would not be able to live in the KSA without the Internet because "*[he] [didn't] think [that] [he] [would] be able to pass the time*". Later on, during his expatriate assignment (approximately four months) he said that the Internet is the "*easy way out*" and that expatriates should attempt to become "*accustomed to [their] environment and learn the language and figure out the reason why things are the way they are*". In this case, the process of transition is clear when looking at this expatriate's earlier dependence on the Internet as opposed to his later independence, which emerged after the culture shock phase occurring around the three month point.

Interviewee 10 reported that her longevity in the KSA (at the time of the interview she had been residing in the KSA for 25 years) helped her adjust to life in the KSA:

"*I think one of the main reasons why I have adapted to living in KSA is the number of years that I have lived here*". She further stated that being part of expatriate communities helped her "*cope with the limitations of the kingdom*". She stated that "*keeping in touch with friends and family through the Internet brings me a level of happiness and without it I would be more aware of the physical and psychological isolation of living in KSA.*"

Interviewee 22 initially indicated that she was not used to having limitations on her freedom of movement, but now nine years later she is "*comfortable*", living in the walls of her compound with a large group of friends. Furthermore, she reported that in the beginning, when she had just arrived in the KSA she felt "*left out*" and "*isolated*" from her family and that she mainly communicated with them via e-mail and telephone. But

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now, because she has Skype and Facebook, which provide an "*instant connection*", it is easier to be so far away from them.

10.4 Expatriate adjustment and well-being

A review of expatriate adjustment literature indicated that there is ongoing discourse about the construct of adjustment. Multiple definitions of adjustment exist. Black and Mendenhall (1991, p. 1) define adjustment as *"the perceived degree of comfort"*. This definition has received criticism for its lack of theoretical foundation and empirical evidence (Haslberger, 2005a). Furthermore, Thomas (1998) questioned the use of the word "comfort" which is criticised for being ambiguous and only referring to expatriates' general feelings. Expatriate adjustment is defined by Wang and Nayir (2006) as the process by which the expatriate interacts with the social aspects of the local environment to obtain psychological well-being. In turn expatriate psychological well-being will influence the expatriate's interactions in the local environment. This interactive adjustment process happens within the local environment and will be influenced by contextual factors at the cultural, organisational and family levels (Wang & Nayir, 2006).

Expatriate well-being was introduced in Chapter 9 as a combined result of a high degree of information flow. The following discussion will expand on the concept of well-being by explaining how it is conceptualised in this study. Well-being is a multifaceted construct which is problematic to define (Mitchell, Vella-Brodrick, & Klein, 2010). In their paper, Mitchell et al. (2010) identified three major conceptual approaches to defining and measuring well-being. Firstly, the hedonic approach defines well-being in terms of subjective well-being which refers to how an individual evaluates his/ her own life and incorporates both affective (positive and negative emotions) and cognitive (satisfaction judgements) components. Secondly, the eudaimonic approach focuses on the degree to which a person is fully functional and emphasises personal growth and meaning. This is also called psychological well-being. This includes components such as personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations with others. Thirdly, they reported that a number of researchers have indicated that these classifications are not mutually exclusive and combined models have emerged. An example of an integrated model is Keyes's model of the Mental Health Continuum (2005, 2007, cited in Mitchell et al., 2010) which comprises three

factors: (1) emotional well-being, (2) psychological well-being and (3) social well-being. The first two dimensions have been described above. Social well-being consists of five dimensions: social acceptance, social contribution, social coherence, social integration and social actualisation.

Although the well-being of expatriates, positive or negative, cannot be wholly explained by the presence or absence of the Internet in their lives, it is an important contributor to their state. In terms of this study, well-being refers to subjective well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being as expatriates have demonstrated that all three were affected when using the Internet.

10.4.1 Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being is also known as happiness or emotional well-being (Mitchell et al., 2010). Internet use was found to have both a direct positive relation to subjective well-being, as well as an indirect positive relation, mediated through social support (Wangberg, 2007). This study has also shown and confirmed that expatriates derived happiness and satisfaction when using the Internet. Interviewee 20 indicated:

> *"I am happy that I don't feel that I've missed out on seeing my 1 year old nephew too much during his first year as I have been able to Skype him each week and my sister has been able to Facebook and email me pictures and updates."*

Expatriates' subjective well-being improved as a result of the increased social presence as a consequence of increased information flow facilitated by the Internet. Wellman and Wortley (1990 cited in Lee, Leung, Lo, Xiong, & Wu, 2011) found that strong social ties usually led to better social outcomes. They stated that contact with neighbours, friends, and family, and participation in social groups, have been found to improve people's level of social support, fulfilment of their own relationships, making sense of life, self-esteem, commitment to communities, and psychological and physical well-being. Furthermore, as a result of the increased emotional safety that expatriates derived from membership to the communities that they were involved in, expatriates felt safer generally.

The interviewees reported that they derived a sense of enjoyment [Interviewee 17] or happiness [Interviewee 20] from using the Internet. Interviewee 20 clarified this by saying:

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"I am happy that I don't feel that I've missed out on seeing my 1 year old nephew too much during his first year as I have been able to Skype him each week and my sister has been able to Facebook and email me pictures and updates".

Table 15 summarised the interviewees' emotions when the Internet was unavailable. All of the emotions were negative, or unhappy; conversely one can conclude that the Internet positively influences expatriates' subjective well-being. This relationship between the Internet and subjective well-being is supported in a recent study by Wickramasinghe and Ahmad (2013) who investigated the influence of Internet usage on social capital, community connectedness, inventive achievements and subjective well-being on the grassroots level inventive community of Sri Lanka. Their study confirmed that the Internet has a significant direct influence on the subjective well-being of the participants. Their study further showed that Internet usage indirectly influences the subjective well-being through social capital and social connectedness.

10.4.2 Psychological Well-being

Upon arrival in the foreign environment, the expatriate's previous social network is interrupted and his/ her psychological well-being is threatened. The establishment of a personal network in a local environment will signal the settlement of the expatriate and will facilitate the maintenance of psychological well-being (Wang & Kanungo, 2004).Research has shown that the Internet was used as a mediating tool by migrants (Chigona, 2009; Elisas & Lemish, 2009). It was demonstrated that frequent communication had a mostly positive impact on their well-being. In Orellana-Damacela's (2012) study it was shown that social support exerts a mediating role on the relationship between immigration related stresses and psychological well-being. As explained in Chapter 9, expatriates derived extended social support through Internet communication from their benevolent communities. Lee, Leung, Lo, Xiong and Wo (2011, p. 1) stated that "*Communication is crucial to people's well-being. To communicate is to be human… Humans, like other organisms, cannot survive without interacting with their environment. Getting information from outside is crucial to one's existence and growth. Society is a sum of relationships which are formed with the aid of communication. Our relationships at home, work, and play affect our state of well-being".* Chapter 9 reported that the Internet facilitated a high degree of information flow which had a positive impact on the well-being of expatriates as a result of an increased

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control over their environment, increased social presence and increased exchange of information. This is emphasised by the emotions that expatriates reported when the Internet was not available: isolation, homesickness, depression, anger, annoyance, frustration, hamstrung and cut-off. The Internet played a major role in positively influencing the expatriates' psychological well-being in this study. According to Social Capital Theory, one benefit/ risk of the social capital process is an expressive-focused outcome, such as mental health. (Liu & Shaffer, 2004) Therefore as an outcome of the increased social capital, as discussed in the previous section, the mental health of expatriates improved.

Internet users motivated by the need to communicate with friends and family had lower depression scores than individuals motivated to use the Internet to meet new people and chat online (Hoffman, 2009). This study, in line with that of Hoffman's (2009), indicated that expatriates who find the Internet indispensable in their daily lives are motivated to build and maintain online social capital and with that store of online social capital, experience positive outcomes related to mental health and physical well-being.

10.4.3 Social Well-being

Human needs that fall in the field of social well-being and that demand satisfaction are the needs for safety/ security, for material resources, for social integration, for social support, for affection, and for belongingness (Panagiotopoulou, Gari, & Christakopoulou, 2009). This corresponded to the core concerns/ needs of expatriates in the KSA as identified in this study, which were: (a) physical safety, (b) the ability to communicate with family and friends quickly and frequently, (c) information from the "real" world, (d) quality of education, (e) availability of medical resources, (f) lack of entertainment, (g) the ability to buy/ obtain home country products and (h) the ability to integrate with the local community.

Informal and formal social networks within local areas provide access to resources, to social and emotional support and to practical help for coping with personal, economic and social problems (Wang & Nayir, 2006). Expatriates derived social acceptance, social contribution, social coherence, social integration and social actualisation, which are the five components of social well-being (Keyes, 2007 cited in Mitchell, Vella-Brodrick, & Klein, 2010) through sense of community. Chapter 9 reported on the sense of community of expatriates in the KSA and how it is used to understand the extent of

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their experience of isolation. It also reported on the impact of the Internet on their sense of community. It was shown that the Internet played a key role in making expatriates more aware of social gatherings among the expatriate community [Interviewees 1,7,8,9,12,13,15,16,17,18,19,20 and 22], the benevolent communities outside of the KSA [Interviewees 9, 18, 20] and the world in general [Interviewees 1,2,3,4,5,8]. Furthermore, the Internet allowed expatriates to gain an increased social presence within their benevolent communities. This held true for both accompanied and unaccompanied expatriates. The role of the Internet for the latter group should be considered for further research as will be reported in section 11.5.3.

The mediating effect of the Internet therefore increases the social well-being of expatriates which is experienced both as being a tool (prosthesis, conduit and container) and consequently being a place where expatriates can create a sense of presence with others.

10.5 Summary

The chapter proposed three conceptualisations of adjustment grounded in the data of the study: (1) adjustment as a process, (2) adjustment as a state, and (3) adjustment as an expression of expatriate well-being. It was shown that the Internet played a supporting role in the process of adjustment of expatriates as expatriates also reported that forming new relationships with other expatriates and being in the KSA for a very long time helped them with the process of adjustment. The Internet was used as a tool which allowed them to address their challenges, such as the ability to communicate "instantaneously" when feeling isolated from family and friends.

It was further shown that not all of the expatriates reached the state of adjustment. Rather they reported feeling *"tolerant", "barely adjusted" and "content".* However, one interviewee indicated that being content is not the same as being "*happy*".

It was argued that expatriate adjustment as an expression of well-being was mediated by the Internet and positively influenced expatriates' subjective, psychological and social well-being.

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CHAPTER 11: THE THEORETICAL MODEL AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to understand the role that the Internet played in expatriate adjustment in the KSA. Additionally, the study aimed to contribute to the IS body of knowledge by producing a theory that could be applied in practice. The study commenced with the research situation being formulated as a high level non-committal research question: "*How do expatriates in the KSA use the Internet to adjust to life in the KSA?*" This was answered through the development of a substantive theory of expatriates' use of the Internet in the KSA context that explains major influences and core patterns in the expatriates' actions. This chapter discusses key conclusions and implications arising from meeting the study's aims.

Due to the uniqueness of the situation of expatriates in the KSA, and their use of the Internet as a consequence, the best way to make a significant contribution was by presenting a substantive theory, grounded in issues experienced by expatriates. This approach enabled the researcher to take full advantage of the availability of the rich data offered which was supplemented by her own experiences of being an expatriate in the KSA.

The researcher's aim was to make sense of the reality of life in the KSA which is heavily influenced by the culturally restrictive environment from which expatriates are "sheltered" by living in Westernised compounds.
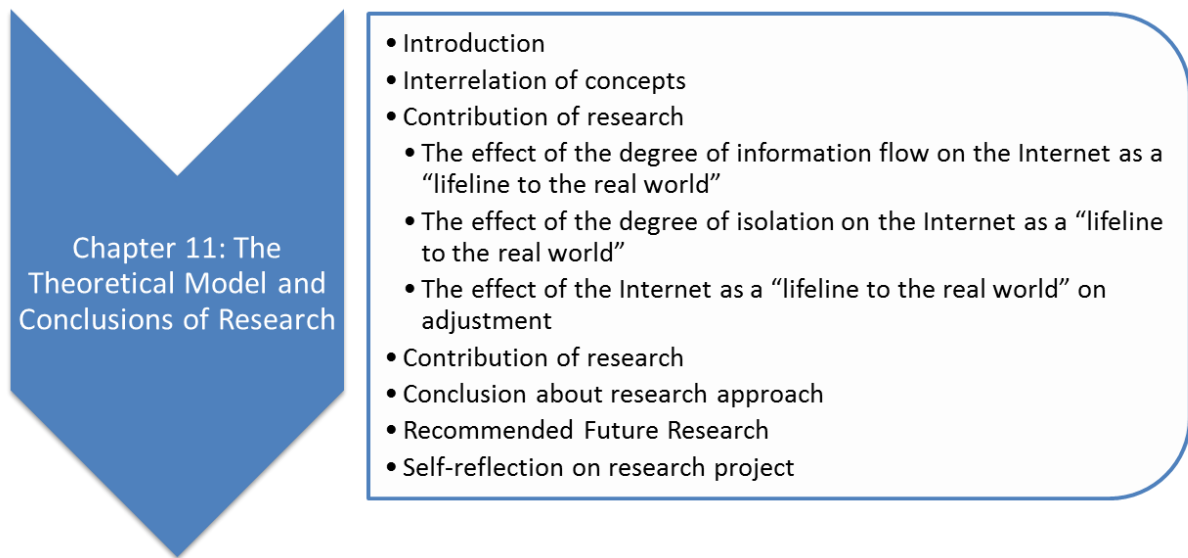
Figure 46: Outline of Chapter 11

This study concerned itself with gaining a better understanding of the role that the Internet plays in the life of expatriates in the context of adjusting to the KSA. Given the lack of theory in expatriate research generally, but more specifically in the case of expatriates in the KSA, the aim of the study was to develop a substantive theory that would explain key aspects of the Internet and how it could be utilised to aid expatriates in the KSA. Twenty-three participants took part in electronic interviews and the data was analysed until a point of theoretical saturation was reached, leading to the emergence of the substantive theory Negotiating Adjustment in KSA: Internet a lifeline to the "real" world. This theory captured the psychosocial and physical processes that the expatriates engaged in, in order to resolve their core concern, Negotiating Adjustment in the KSA, which refers to expatriates' need to utilise the Internet as a modern tool in order to establish affordable communication with the world outside of the KSA. Figure 46 above outlines the structure of the chapter.

11.2 Interrelation of Concepts

The premise of this theory is that adjustment is largely subjective, as posited through the substantive categories "degree of isolation" and "degree of information flow". Theory building involved the identification of categories and their associated properties. The final outcome reflects the amalgamation of a number of categories which formed mature categories and the propositions about the relationships between the categories. The expatriates in the KSA were concerned with adjusting to life in the

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KSA where there are a number of emotional and physical challenges that expatriates experience before they reach a steady state of contentment. This led to the development of the core category, which was conceptualised as "negotiating adjustment in the KSA". As the theory matured, it became clear that the expatriates in this study resolved their core concern by maintaining a link to the "real" world mediated through the Internet. Therefore, theoretical sampling in later interviews specifically explored the processes that they employed to move beyond this core concern and the role that the Internet played in this. "Internet a lifeline to the 'real' world" has emerged as the core category. A core category refers to a category that recurs constantly in the data and has explanatory power that integrates all other categories, thereby providing an explanatory whole to the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992).

The emerging theory can be explained by using a theoretical model that presents a high level of generalisation of the interrelated substantive categories that will explain the substantive theory of the Internet in the lives of expatriates in the KSA. Figure 47 below depicts the interrelated relationships between the core category and the other substantive categories. The proposed theoretical model explains that adjustment in the KSA is achieved by using the Internet as a lifeline to negotiate the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates which is influenced by the degree of information flow between the expatriate and the "real" world.
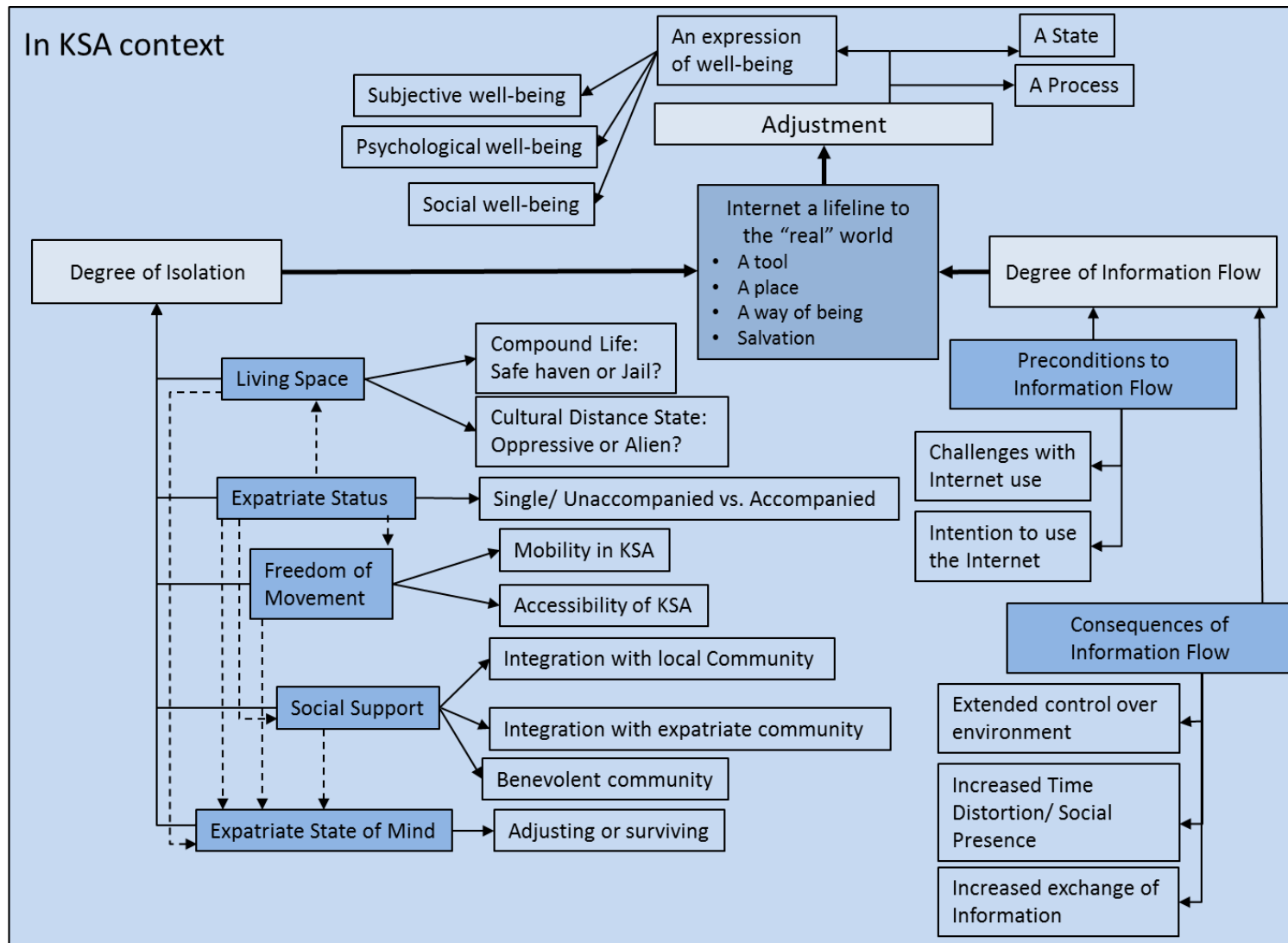
Figure 47: Proposed Model of Negotiating adjustment in the KSA by using Internet as Lifeline to Real World

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The preceding chapters explained Figure 47 above by providing theoretical and contextual definitions of the core category and the other substantive categories. The following section will elaborate on the interrelation of the concepts identified in the study.

The preceding chapters, 7 to 10, introduced and discussed the substantive categories and core category that emerged in this study in support of the substantive theory. Figure 48 below depicts the interrelated relationships between the substantive categories and the core category.
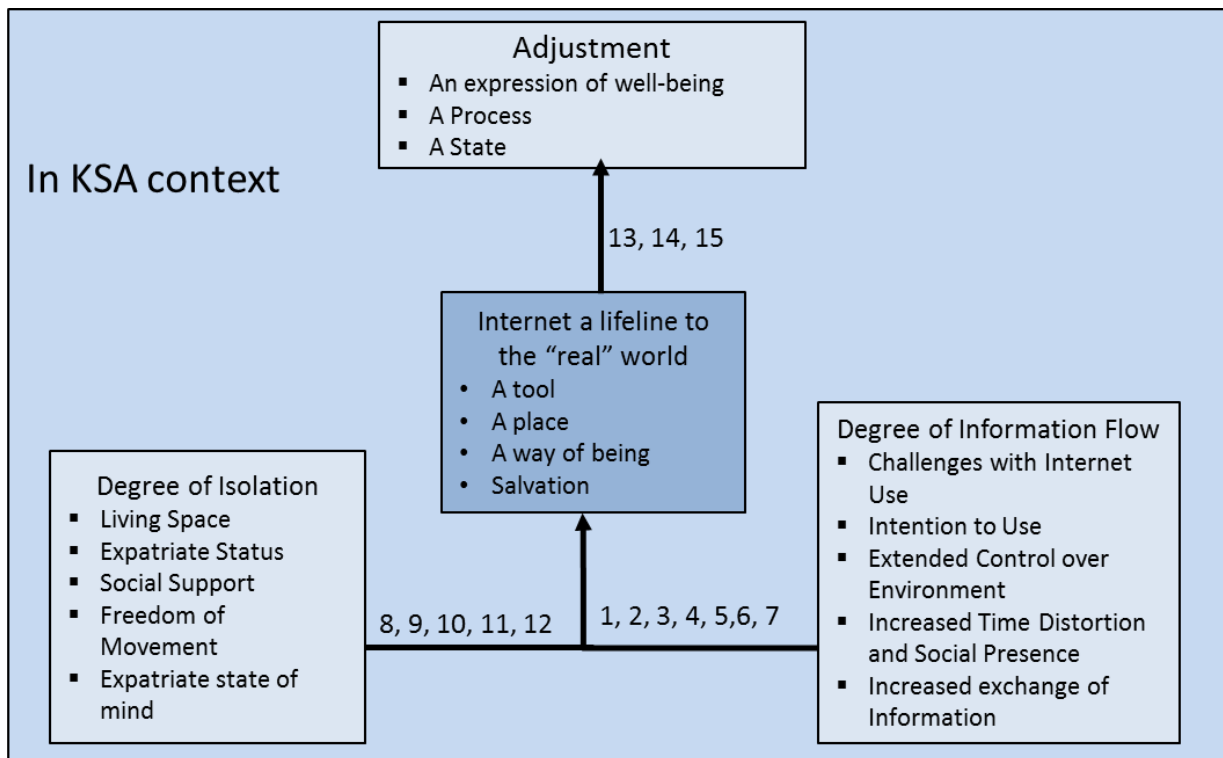
Figure 48: Interrelated concepts of the proposed theoretical model with substantive concepts and categories

The interrelated relationship implies that an entity influences and is influenced by the other entities. The relationship between the substantive categories and the core category is complex and will be discussed in the sections below.

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11.2.1 Propositions related to the effect of the degree of information flow, mediated by the Internet, on expatriate adjustment

Chapter 9 indicated that information flow, and the extent to which expatriates experience it is influenced by a number of factors. Derived from interview data, an information flow model was developed which indicated that in order to experience information flow there are preconditions which need to be met. The combined effect was a positive influence on the overall well-being of expatriates.

Proposition 1: The challenges experienced by expatriates with regards to using the Internet have a negative influence on the degree of information flow experienced by expatriates in the KSA.

Expatriates have reported that the low quality and content filtering of the Internet, evoke negative feelings such as anger, frustration and annoyance.   Although the high cost (relative to their home countries) of the Internet also evokes these feelings, it is endured by expatriates because of the importance of the Internet in their lives. However, even though the relatively high prices of Internet connection do not inhibit information flow the low quality definitely does. Low quality connections amplify the physical distance between expatriates and their family and friends, and increase the feeling of isolation and homesickness.

Proposition 2: The expatriate's intention to use the Internet is dependent on his/ her need for informational or affective support. The mediating effect of the Internet on the support needs of expatriates has a positive correlation with viewing the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

During the study, it emerged that expatriates in the KSA developed a dependency on the Internet as a means to accomplish a number of everyday activities regardless of where they were situated. Interviewee 21 indicated: "*I am forced to use the Internet for shopping here as the products are not available elsewhere*". Expatriates in this study had different needs which included: (a) physical safety, (b) the ability to communicate with family and friends quickly and frequently, (c) information from the "real" world, (d) quality of education, (e) availability of medical resources, (f) lack of entertainment,   (g) the ability to buy/ obtain home country products and (h) the ability to integrate with the local community. This classification of needs was derived from interview data. As a result of the dual role that the Internet plays - that of a modern

tool and an emotionally indispensable tool - expatriates became dependent on the Internet in order to meet their needs. This results in a higher degree of information flow but consequently increases their dependence on the Internet giving rise to a situation where the thought of not having the Internet elicits an emotional response. This dependence results in expatriates' perception of the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world". In the "real world" expatriates would not be dependent on the Internet to meet their needs; it would be their choice to use the Internet to meet some or all of their needs.

Proposition 3: The expatriate's intention to use and consequential dependence on the Internet as "a lifeline to the real world" is influenced by his/ her personality.

With the exception of Interviewee 3 who described her husband as an *"Internet widower"* because she spends so much time using it, expatriates' dependence on the Internet could not be classified as an addiction. Their dependence on the Internet had to do with how reliant they were on it to *"cope"* [Interviewee 10] while living in the KSA. The extent to which expatriates can cope without the Internet is related to, among other things, their personality. As indicated in Chapter 8, personality is one of the individual factors that researchers consider important in achieving optimal expatriate performance (Shaffer et al., 2006; Zhang, 2010). Expatriates demonstrated that when they had an outgoing personality [Interviewees 9 and 15] they were less dependent on the Internet as a lifeline for making new social connections. However, Interviewee 8 indicated that she has come to rely on the Internet, not because she has an introverted personality, but rather because of the cultural difficulties associated with being a woman in Saudi culture.

Proposition 4: The expatriate's intention to use the Internet is influenced by his/ her expatriate status (accompanied or unaccompanied/ single). Unaccompanied/ single expatriates have a higher dependence on the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

This study indicated that expatriates' status influences how they use or perceive the Internet as a lifeline. Unaccompanied expatriates demonstrated that they experience isolation to a greater degree than their accompanied/ single counterparts. The unaccompanied expatriate's need to use the Internet was greater as they were

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physically removed from their immediate family such as their wives or children. The unaccompanied expatriates [Interviewees 6, 7, 9 (initially), 12 and 17] described how difficult it was to live away from their wives and fiancée during their expatriate episode and were therefore dependent on the Internet to maintain/ continue that relationship. Interviewee 9 indicated the he used Skype with a web camera to see his family and that it "*[made] his time easier*". Interviewee 6 indicated *that "Every day apart from my wife is agony and all I can do to get through to the next day is to dream of how great life will be when we can simply be together again".* He also said that he would not be able to live in the KSA without the Internet because: *"[t]he Internet is my lifeline to life back in the real world. Without the Internet, I would be on my way home tonight".* Furthermore, unaccompanied/ single expatriates relied heavily on the Internet for entertainment because of the unavailability of entertainment facilities [Interviewee 6, 7, 9 (initially) 18] and the rules against mingling with unrelated men/ women in public [Interviewee 12]. Unaccompanied expatriates, like Interviewee 17 had "*busy lives at household*", but without his wife and four children he found life in the KSA "*lonely and quiet*". Interviewee 9 indicated that whilst he was unaccompanied he did not know how he would pass the time without his family and so opted to speak to them every day via Skype and/ or Facebook.

Proposition 5: Expatriates extend their control over their environment by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

The Internet assisted the expatriates by providing the tools to access a number of "everyday things". This gave them extended control over their restrictive (due to cultural distance) environment. This included online shopping for products/ services that were unavailable in the KSA or accessing information that they could not find in the KSA such as newspapers and libraries. Furthermore, the Internet gave them the ability to communicate with people of their choosing through advances in social networking such as Skype and Facebook. The Internet therefore, had a positive impact on the adjustment processes of expatriates by improving their overall sense of well-being.

Proposition 6: Expatriates experience an increased social presence in their benevolent communities by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

The Internet was proven invaluable, especially through the use of social networking site Skype, in increasing the social presence of expatriates in the lives of their benevolent communities. Interviewee 13 indicated that: "*video/ Skype calls ha[ve] enhanced communication especially with kids being able to see grandparents, cousins etc.*" Furthermore, Interviewee 8 confirmed this by saying that: "*Skype is much cheaper than phone calls, so it saves us money on calls, and means we can see our friends and family; without it, we wouldn't be in contact as often, and wouldn't be able to see nieces and nephews growing up*". Interviewee 17, an unaccompanied expatriate used to "*keep [his] kids busy*" by playing online games with them. Interviewee 6 also used the Internet to increase his social presence with his wife, by continuing to help her with all of the activities that he was responsible for such as managing finances, setting the thermostat, and helping her navigate when she got lost. He further exploited the online services to increase his social presence by regularly sending her flowers or booking spa appointments. The Internet therefore had a positive impact on the adjustment processes of expatriates by improving their overall sense of well-being.

Proposition 7: Expatriates experience an increased exchange of information between themselves and their benevolent communities and entities outside of the KSA in general by using the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

The Internet has revolutionised the way data is being captured and manipulated as well as how information is exchanged. This study has shown that aside from the obvious benefits of increased information, the expatriates were dependent on the Internet to increase awareness and empower them amongst the various communities that they were part of. Interviewee 6 indicated that prior to the availability of the Internet, on his previous expatriate experience, he felt isolated and wrote home every day. The increased exchange of information, mediated by the Internet, allows for the expatriates to create a "*feeling of connection*", which according to Interviewee 1 is very important. This assisted in the process of adjustment for expatriates by making them feel less isolated and cut-off from their home countries (which they labelled as the "real world") and still feel part of their benevolent communities.

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11.2.2   Propositions related to the effect of the degree of isolation, mediated by the Internet, on expatriate adjustment

Isolation is a multifaceted concept. It is influenced by how expatriates perceive life in terms of living space, status, obtaining social support, their freedom of movement and state of mind. The Internet played an important role in managing the degree of isolation that expatriates experienced.

Proposition 8: The greater the degree of isolation experienced by expatriates, the higher the expatriates' dependence on the Internet as a "lifeline to the real world".

The absence of the Internet or the idea of not having the Internet evoked feelings of isolation from expatriates [Interviewees 1, 3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 22]. As indicated in Chapter 6 and explained above, a number of factors influenced the degree to which expatriates experienced isolation. By using the Internet as a tool to re-arm themselves with skills and supporting mechanisms that decrease those factors that increased their isolation in the KSA, expatriates' adjustment processes were improved.

Proposition 9: *The Internet has expanded the sense of community that expatriates experienced whilst in the KSA.*

The study showed that the Internet increased the membership to various communities that expatriates were involved it. This is not unique to expatriates, but it has more meaning for expatriates because of the restrictions placed on visitors to the KSA. Chapter 9 illustrated that the Internet had a positive overall impact on the sense of community that expatriates experienced. Firstly, the Internet allowed expatriates to actively maintain membership to various communities, both local and dispersed, consisting of family, friends, former colleagues and "interest" communities in general. Secondly, the Internet extended the expatriates' influence and increased their power to influence the communities that they were involved in. Tables 19, 20 and 21 illustrated this by representing the roles and responsibilities that expatriates had in their communities. Finally, the Internet had a positive impact on the extent to which expatriates experienced a shared emotional connection with their communities. This was accomplished by creating a "*feeling of connection with home*" [Interviewee 1], which was essential. Communication with family and friends was also the top, and most important activity that expatriates used the Internet for. This expanded sense of

community experienced by expatriates had a positive impact on their adjustment process which in turn had a positive impact on their overall sense of well-being.

Proposition 10: *The social support from benevolent and other expatriate communities mediated by the Internet, decreases the degree of isolation experienced.*

The Interviewees reported that they used the Internet to extend and enhance the communication and interaction with other expatriates and their benevolent communities. The enhanced communication and interaction with both of these communities made them feel less isolated because they derived a form of social support which had a positive impact on their adjustment processes as it improved their overall sense of well-being.

Proposition 11: *The mediating role of the Internet on overcoming the restrictions placed on the freedom of movement in the KSA, decreases the degree of isolation experienced in the KSA and therefore positively influences the adjustment processes of expatriates.*

The restrictions placed on expatriates in terms of their ability to receive visitors (apart from immediate family) and on freedom of movement - particularly in the case of women - in the KSA, made them feel very isolated. Expatriates therefore used the Internet as a means to decrease the isolation experienced as a result. The ability to compensate for or overcome some of these restrictions had a positive impact on their adjustment processes by improving their overall sense of well-being.

Proposition 12: *The mediating role of the Internet on the expatriate state of mind positively influences their ability to reduce the degree of isolation experienced whilst in the KSA.*

The expatriate state of mind influences the degree of isolation experienced, which in turn influences their ability operate effectively in a foreign country like the KSA. The ability to deal with psychological stress, to communicate effectively and to form interpersonal relationships influenced how open they were to the new culture of the KSA. It was shown that the Internet, in addition to personal motivation and living in a compound, helped expatriates reduce the psychological stresses experienced.

11.2.3 The effect of the Internet as a lifeline to the "real" world on adjustment

Hassenzahl (2013, p. 1) said "*While things (i.e. technologies) play a crucial role in creating and shaping meaningful, positive experiences, their true value lies only in the resulting experiences. It is about what we can do and experience with a thing, about the stories unfolding through using a technology, not about its styling, material, or impressive list of features. In private, it is about staying connected with a loved one, being stimulated, when bored, achieving things, one couldn't do without a mobile companion is more important than colour, screen resolution and operating system*". This describes the essence of the role of the Internet in the lives of expatriates in the KSA. The Internet is more than just a tool, it is a mediating artefact between expatriates and their objectives that will influence the extent of their adjustment in the KSA.

Proposition 13: The Internet mediated tools provided expatriates with an increased sense of well-being which positively influences expatriate adjustment.

Research into expatriate adjustment suggests that a distinction can be made between psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Searle and Ward, 1990 cited in Selmer, 2006). The former involves the *"subjective well-being or mood states"* of an expatriate; the latter, his or her *"ability to fit in"* or *"negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture as measured by the amount of difficulty experienced in the management of everyday situations in the host culture"* (Ward and Kennedy, 1996 cited in Selmer, 2006, p. 5). Psychological and socio-cultural adjustment are, therefore, interrelated: the socio-cultural process necessarily involves the psychological state.

Increased mental health is an outcome of social capital corresponding with expatriate adjustment, which is often defined in terms of psychological comfort (Liu & Shaffer, 2004). Psychological adjustment deals with a person's subjective well-being: moods and attitudes during the adjustment process (Ward et al. 1998; Ward and Kennedy 1996; Ward and Searle 1991). Findings also indicate that better adjustment to work and general environment right from the beginning will probably enhance the overall well-being and performance of an expatriate due to a spill-over effect. Psychological well-being was viewed as being a very important component in this adjustment process. By having strong personal networks, the expatriate can facilitate this process

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since the networks themselves will provide the expatriate with both emotional and informational support (Wang & Kanungo, 2004).

Proposition 14: The Internet as a "lifeline to the real world" has a positive impact on the expatriate's process of adjustment.

The expatriate develops adjustment abilities by using the Internet as a tool to re-arm him/ herself with skills and supporting mechanisms in order to reach their objective of adjustment, which encompasses making everyday life more real.

Proposition 15: The Internet as a "lifeline to the real world" has a positive impact on the expatriate's state of adjustment.

The mediating role of the Internet increased the degree of information flow experienced by expatriates and therefore decreased the extent of isolation and homesickness experienced whilst in the KSA. Furthermore, the increased degree of information flow allowed for the increased exchange of information between expatriates and the communities that they were members of, which gave them increased control over their environment and increased social presence with their benevolent communities. This is positively associated with the adjustment processes of expatriates in the KSA.

The reduction in psychological stress had a positive influence on the adjustment processes of expatriates by positively influencing their overall sense of well-being.

11.3 Contribution of Research

The main contribution of this study to the field of Informatics is the examination of the role of technology in mediating expatriate adjustment. Expatriate adjustment is a complex area comprised of several multifaceted elements. This study aimed to contribute to the understanding of this complex area by offering a substantive theory that could help explain the key areas for consideration. Expatriate researchers can adapt these recommendations to their particular environments and needs.

According to Glaser (1998) the GTM provides two useful contributions to conceptual problems: (1) concepts appropriate to the real actual activities and challenges experienced by the participants in the research situation, and (2) the integration of existing concepts to broaden the view of the conceptual problem identified. This study

presented these two contributions in the form of a substantive theoretical model that explains the mediating effect of the Internet on expatriate adjustment by influencing the degree of isolation and information flow experienced by expatriates.

Furthermore, based on the discussions in Chapter 7 it is important to realise that "reality is in the eyes of the beholder" and that there exists an important distinction between "real world" and "everyday life". Existing sociological research has already made the distinction between real world vs. everyday life. However, this distinction usually refers to virtual life vs. reality. In the case of this study it was highlighted that both "worlds" exist in "real time" but that, everyday life, due to the challenges experienced by expatriates, may feel like a "non-real" experience.

Due to the location of the researcher, the study presented an opportunity to access the private, culturally complex environment of the KSA. The study gave insight into the lives, emotions and habits of expatriates which will contribute to existing literature on Western expatriates in the Middle East and the KSA specifically.

An important contribution of this study is to the field of positive technology. The study has highlighted and provided an understanding of the important role that the Internet plays in the lives of expatriates, particularly expatriates who found themselves in a culturally different country such as the KSA. This follows research done on expatriates in Indonesia where e-mail was described as their lifeline.

This study further contributed to the field of expatriate adjustment literature by firstly, highlighting the more prominent role that technology, specifically the Internet, plays in expatriate adjustment which is lacking in current theories. Secondly, it confirmed the importance of the support of sense of community, which was extended with the use of the Internet.

11.4 Conclusion about research approach

The research approach chosen for this study was the Classic GTM. The choice of research method was made after much deliberation and review of existing theories that may have been used as a lens through which to understand the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment in the KSA. The research method allowed the researcher to concentrate on discovering what was going on in the research area rather than imposing preconceived theories.

Initially, the idea of using GTM was daunting and the researcher did question her decision, due to the underestimation of the amount of work involved in generating a theory grounded in data that would fit the situation of the current study. However, it was an appropriate decision despite being time consuming, as the researcher grappled with the methodology as well as conducting the research. Initially the researcher spent too much time trying to justify the chosen methodology instead of *"just do[ing] it"* (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 10). The researcher advocates any prospective Grounded Theory researcher, and/ or PhD student to publish papers on their work as soon as possible which aids the research in two ways; firstly, by getting independent feedback from peers and secondly, by focusing and motivating the researchers' efforts as it is very easy to "drift". The latter was particularly easy in the researcher's case because she was living in the KSA where she experienced the challenges outlined in the previous chapters. Therefore, based on the researcher's experience during this study, interest in what one is doing is a critical element when conducting research demanding intense personal involvement and long-term commitment.

11.5 Recommended Future Research

A number of areas were highlighted during the course of this study which could warrant further research. As these fell outside of the scope of the current study the following recommendations for future research have been made.

11.5.1 The role of the Internet in the education of expatriate children

The expatriates in this study indicated that the education of their children was one of the core concerns, ranking 5th among other concerns. Section 5.7.5 provided an overview of the education options available to the children of expatriates in the KSA. It emphasised that the options available are limited. A number of Interviewees indicated that due to the lack of facilities, such as public libraries [Interviewees 1, 2, 5] they were heavily reliant on the Internet for their children's education commitments. They used the Internet extensively to supplement the limited resources they received in the KSA and also as a means to communicate with the schools. Interviewee 9 indicated that:

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"I am concerned for the education of my children when they come here; I am concerned that it may not be up to the standard we expect" [Interviewee 9].

"Proper literature for children's educations also lacks in KSA. Internet helps not only to visit educational sites but also allows you to purchase it for local use" [Interviewee 15].

Future research can therefore concentrate on the impact of children's education on expatriate success and/ or adjustment and what role the Internet plays in it.

11.5.2   The role of the Internet in the lives of expatriate's families at home

By making use of the Internet, expatriates have continued to have an influence on the lives of their family members who "stayed behind". Their lives, as well as that of the expatriates', have been influenced by their continued interaction during the expatriate episode. Interviewee 6 indicated that: *"During my first overseas unaccompanied tour in the early 1990's before widespread Internet, I felt very isolated from my family … my wife is also an estranged outsider back home, because, for example, she is the only "single parent" in my daughter's volleyball group. So not only is she feeling the same sort of ostracizing and exile that I am, but it also adds to my level of guilt because of what she is going through emotionally during this separation"* [Interviewee 6].

The spouse/ partner who stays behind in the case of unaccompanied expatriates is beyond the scope of this study, but will make an interesting topic for future exploration. Existing literature on the topic includes a study by Dowling et al.(2008, p. 128) which indicated that "*the couple works out ways to maintain the relationship with the help of the firm*". Gupta et al. (2012) indicated that in their study of twenty-six expatriate spouses, seven reported not accompanying his/ her wife/ husband or coming back midway through the stay. As a result, the expatriate manager had to quit his/ her assignment. Four other participants in the study came back midway through the assignment. The researcher feels that a contribution can be made to these existing studies by attempting to provide an understanding of spouse/ partner needs and how they use the Internet to accomplish these.

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11.5.3 The role of the Internet in the lives of unaccompanied/ single expatriates

As indicated in section 5.6 an expatriate's ability to be accompanied by his family depends on his/ her type of job and contract, which is based on whether the expatriate holds suitable academic or professional qualifications (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011). In some cases expatriates make the choice for the family to remain in their home country (Dowling et al. 2008). A review of literature on single/ unaccompanied expatriates has indicated that there is a lack of literature that examines how their adjustment processes and practices differ from accompanied expatriates. For example, in terms of the proposed theoretical model (Figure 48) an unaccompanied expatriate has reported a greater need to keep in contact with their spouse, thereby creating a greater dependence on the Internet. Furthermore, due to their status, they may feel like *"outsiders"* [Interviewee 6] when socialising with accompanied expatriates. This results in the experience of a greater degree of isolation, which influences how they use the Internet.

This study makes a contribution to the adjustment processes and practices of single/ unaccompanied expatriates, as discussed in section 11.3, and indicates that more research is needed on the subject.

11.5.4 Applying the theory in other expatriate contexts

Although the researcher believes that this theory has been successful in terms of the GTM criteria of fit, work, relevance and modifiability, there is more scope to apply the proposed theory in different environments. This will not only provide support for the findings of the theory, but it will also provide deeper understanding of expatriate adjustment in different contexts and the role that the Internet plays in this. The following three environments are proposed: applying the theory in another country with a smaller cultural distance than can be found in the KSA, applying the theory in another country with a larger cultural distance than can be found in the KSA, and in each case applying the theory to children (that meet the study criteria). The latter application is recommended because the theory is grounded on data received from adults. Weeks, Weeks and Willis-Muller (2010) reported that research on the children of expatriates

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is limited, a recent study developed a model based on interviews that indicated that teenagers of expatriates experience different factors that influence their adjustment when compared to expatriates and spouses; these factors included friends at school and school adjustment. Both of these will likely be aided with access to online social networks. These studies are proposed as separate or as a combined study, with the aim being to validate the theory and compare the results.

11.5.5 The role of the Internet in the U-curve Theory of adjustment

Following the understanding that the researcher has obtained from this grounded study and the role that the Internet plays in the adjustment processes of expatriates, it is proposed to conduct a study following the methodology of the U-curve theories of adjustment. Section 10.3 reported on how the Internet provided expatriates with a skill set with which they could mediate the adjustment challenges imposed by the culturally different environment. By following the methodology of Lysgaard (1995 cited in Pires et al., 2005) the researcher is interested in finding out if there is a change to the "curve" of adjustment processes as a result of the role of the Internet.

11.5.6 Applying the theory to domestic adjustment in a social context

As discussed in section 3.3, Black et al.'s (1991) framework for cross-cultural adjustment is based on domestic adjustment literature in the context of adjusting to a new organisation. The researcher could not find any literature on the domestic adjustment in the social context - such as moving from one city to another city – for various reasons. This highlighted a research area where the researcher felt that her theory could make a contribution towards understanding the role that the Internet plays in the adjustment of these domestic migrants.

11.6 Self-Evaluation of the proposed theory

This section will evaluate the substantive theory developed as part of the research process. Glaser (1978, pp. 4-5) stated that a well-constructed theory will satisfy four essential criteria: fit, work, relevance and modifiability. His reasoning is that when a theory fits the data, it will work and be relevant within the research situation and can be easily modified. However, in the researcher's opinion, using these criteria to evaluate the proposed theory is limiting. Another framework that was considered for

use in evaluating the theory was the Seven Principles for Conducting and Evaluating Interpretive Field Studies in Information Systems by Klein and Myers (1999). The researcher felt that these seven principles were more a review of the Grounded Theory method rather than the proposed theory. The researcher therefore chose the evaluation criteria proposed by Introna (1992, p. 5 and 30) to self-reflect on the proposed theory. Introna considered the work of Lakatos and Feyerabend and compiled a list of questions that can be used to evaluate a theory.

(1)   Does the theory raise problems previously not perceived, such as problems of an increasing depth, and does it display an ever increasing fertility in suggesting new problems?

The substantive theory was developed as an attempt to close the literature gap, identified by the researcher, that exists between IS literature and expatriate adjustment literature. In doing so, the researcher proposed a unique theory positioning the Internet in a central role that assists with the adjustment processes of expatriates in the KSA. Furthermore, the study uncovered other areas for further research, as discussed in section 11.5 above, that would expand the understanding of the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment.

(2)   Does the theory anticipate novel facts and auxiliary theories?

The theory proposed that the Internet plays a central role in expatriate adjustment. It has highlighted that expatriates, as individuals, are complex and should be understood as such. This study answer's Haslberger's (2005) call that underlined the complex nature of expatriate adjustment research. The complexity of expatriates as individuals influences how they position themselves when using the Internet. The research project did not only produce a theoretical model, but the researcher also showed how the grounded work undertaken related to some of the extant literature in the field of expatriate adjustment research and the role of the Internet in society. The outcome of the latter activities was the development of the EIFM.

(3)   Is the theory more precise in its assertions and in the facts it explains than previous theories?

Yes, this theory has drawn on existing social theories and theories available in expatriate literature to develop a unique theory that explains the underlying social patterns when expatriates use the Internet to solve their concerns and challenges

induced by the environment when adjusting to the KSA. The following assertions can be made about the proposed theory when compared to previous theories:

- The proposed theory differs from existing theoretical models in that the expatriate's Internet usage is central to expatriate adjustment. The study showed that the Internet is a mediator between the expatriate and his/ her adjustment to the KSA.

- Limited theories are available that consider adjustment as a complex problem such as Black et al.'s (1991) model, which was found unsuitable for the existing study as discussed in section 3.3.1. The proposed theory accounts for the complexity of adjustment processes by considering the context in which expatriate adjustment needs to take place, and also accounts for their individual needs and the role that the Internet plays in adjustment.

- The proposed theory questions the premise of the "process of adjustment" as given by the U-curve theories in the sense that it is possible for expatriates to remain for a period of time in the KSA (more than 12 months) before leaving and never attain the state of "adjustment". Furthermore, the definition of the process of adjustment as conceptualised through the proposed model is different to that defined through the U-curve theories (Pires et al., 2006) in the sense that it indicates that there was a change in the expatriate's overall sense of well-being as a result of their use of the Internet. The study has shown that a transition took place from expatriates finding the environment harsh and isolating to being in control and feeling connected.

- The proposed theory contextualises work that was previously undertaken, but which emerged during the course of the research, as potential explanations of some of the phenomena that were encountered as part of the development of the framework. As discussed in section 3.4, the SNT, Social Capital Theory and the SOC Theory have all been used in literature to explain the presence of the Internet in expatriate adjustment. However, these theories are based on predefined concepts associated with expatriates' adjustment, for example social networking, social capital and sense of community which are presented in the proposed theory in a holistic manner.

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(4) **Has the theory unified or connected various hitherto unrelated problems, or concepts?**

The theory has identified new concepts related to expatriate literature and connected these with new concepts identified in IS literature, such as the proposed EIFM. It presented these new concepts in a unified manner in the theoretical model which is a high level abstraction of the codes and concepts generated from the interview data.

(5) **Does the theory have positive and negative heuristic power?**

Negative heuristic power explains variables and models that should be discounted by researchers because their assumptions are not focused on the crux of the theory. From the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3, negative heuristic power suggests the following:

- Expatriate adjustment is much more than work related adjustment and greater emphasis should be placed on social adjustment. Interview data suggested, if job performance was not an issue, especially in the case of expatriates who voluntarily came on the assignment, that expatriates were motivated by financial security and that the social adjustment to the expatriate environment is the determining factor.

- Although empirically supported by numerous studies, the U-curve theories and Black et al.'s model of cross-cultural adjustment are based on preconceived assumptions. Furthermore, as discussed in section 3.3.1 the subjects of the study, the boundaries of the study, the chosen research approach and finally the lack of empirical research, based on this model, that considers the role of the Internet prompted the researcher to discount existing expatriate adjustment theories as an appropriate theoretical lens for the study, opting instead for the GTM.

- All expatriates are not the same. This study indicated that distinctions should be made between duration in-country and experience (as indicated by prior studies) but should also consider the expatriate's status (whether he/ she is single/ unaccompanied/ accompanied), the gender (and not just in terms of job performance as indicated by previous studies), motivation and expatriate's

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state of mind. Depending on these individual concepts, expatriate's Internet dependence and usage differ.

- The context in which expatriates use the Internet has a major influence on their dependence on the Internet. As explained in section 7.2, culture was an important concept which was central to the development and understanding of the proposed theory. The large cultural distance experienced between the expatriates' culture and that of the KSA greatly influenced the role that the Internet played in their lives.

- It is possible, due to some of the expatriates' dependence on the Internet, that expatriates isolate themselves from social interaction possibilities.

Positive heuristic power suggests that the researcher should anticipate the types of corrections and changes that would prepare the proposed model to handle likely contradictions and variances. The positive heuristic power of the theory suggests the following:

- A qualitative interpretive study was needed in order to understand the context in which expatriates use the Internet. This supports the proposed strategies offered by Haslberger (2005a) (as discussed in section 2.4) to improve expatriate adjustment research. These strategies were aimed at positioning the researcher in a subjective role, therefore moving towards the interpretive paradigm when viewing the world. This justified the researcher's choice of an interpretive approach for the current research project.

- Only through a Grounded Theory study could the researcher make sense of the problems and challenges experienced by expatriates and understand the mediating role of the Internet in addressing these problems.

(6) Has the theory produced a new perspective on existing problems and thus created a new understanding of these existing problems?

Yes, the proposed theory put forward a unique perspective on existing expatriate adjustment literature by clarifying the important and central role that the Internet plays in their adjustment processes. This new perspective enhances current understanding

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of expatriate adjustment challenges by considering how these can be resolved by using the Internet, which is portrayed as a modern tool with salvation properties.

(7)   Has the theory produced unconventional ideas, ideas that radically challenge current preconceptions?

From the outset it was stated that when doing a Grounded Theory study, there will always be something new – a contribution. In that sense the proposed theory will produce a few unconventional ideas which include:

- The Internet use of expatriates (or individuals in general) should be considered in terms of the environment and the culture in which it is used.

- Expatriates as individuals experience changes in their environment differently and they have different coping mechanisms. The availability and the use of the Internet is one of such mechanisms, and the importance of the Internet should not be underestimated.

From the above discussions, it is evident that the research presented in this thesis has met the evaluation criteria laid down by Introna (1992) and consequently denotes scientific progress. The proposed theory does represent progress towards a theory explaining the role of the Internet in expatriate adjustment.

11.7 The Researcher's situation

The researcher's situation, living as an expatriate in a Westernised compound, might have had a limiting effect on the research outcome. In order to remain as objective as possible in a subjective qualitative study, the researcher declared her thoughts and ideas in memos as described in section 6.3. However, from a personal perspective the researcher's situation as one of the subjects does not appear to have limited the study or the outcome for several reasons. Firstly, it gave her access to a community of people that would not have been easily accessible. Secondly, it made her sensitive to the experiences of the subjects of the study as described in sections 4.4 and 6.3.

The researcher has a naturally positive demeanour and her military background made it easier for her to adapt to new circumstances, such as living in the KSA. She acknowledges that on some days she did feel more isolated than on others, especially

when the Internet was down, but for the most part she was positive and kept herself busy with various projects. Although she did not rely on the Internet for communication with home (her family did not have reliable access to Skype and rarely e-mailed) it was part of her daily routine to read the news both local (South Africa) and International as she liked to keep herself informed of changes in the world. That was her lifeline. The inability to keep herself informed about current events invoked similar feelings to those reported by subjects who did not have access to the Internet, although these feelings were never as extreme as some of those experienced by interviewees

She further acknowledges that living in a compound made a difference. The freedoms afforded there simulated "real life". She derived great support from her continued friendships with other South Africans who would later become fellow expatriates.

The researcher's state of mind was also important in her approach to life in the KSA. She and her husband along with their three children always knew that their journey to the KSA was temporary although they did stay for five years. They had always planned to go home to South Africa as soon as they had reached their (financial) goals. Because they had a plan, they knew that the challenges experienced were temporary. However, the greatest challenge posed for the researcher was the ban on women driving (and a husband that did not like going to town).

11.8 Research Conclusion

The aim of the study was to understand how expatriates in the KSA use the Internet in order to clarify the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment. The research was guided by two key research objectives: firstly, to add theoretical content to the understanding of the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment, and secondly, to contribute to the IS body of knowledge by producing a theory that could be applied in practice.

In meeting the first objective, the thesis presented a substantive theoretical model that serves to explain the need to credit the Internet as an integral factor in the adjustment of expatriates in the KSA. This study suggests that the Internet is a mediating artefact between the environment with its associated challenges and their adjustment to that environment. The theory was evaluated in section 11.6 above and it was demonstrated

that progress has been made in terms of the contribution that this theory makes towards understanding the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment.

The study met its second objective by offering up grounded concepts that not only explain the role that the Internet plays in the lives of expatriates, but by also highlighting the importance of those concepts to expatriate adjustment in general. The study has shown that although the Internet can mediate a number of activities that will positively influence adjustment, it is not a mediating factor all of the time.

The theoretical model also highlighted a number of future research areas that will contribute and extend the understanding of the proposed model. This thesis only presents the first phase towards understanding the role that the Internet plays in expatriate adjustment.

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Appendix A: INTERVIEWEE PROFILES

ID	Age	Nationality	Religion (derived from interview data)	Computer Literate	Marital Status	Expatriate Status	Spouse Status	Children	Previous Expatriate Experience	Expatriate Episode duration	Mood (derived from interview data)
1	40+	Canadian		Yes	Married	Spouse	Part-Time Work	Yes	Yes	2.7 years	Happy
2	40+	Canadian		Yes	Married	Accompanied		Yes	Yes	3 years	Anxiously awaiting the rest of his life after Saudi
3	40+	British		Yes	Married	Spouse	Working Spouse	No	Yes	3 years	Neutral (neither happy nor sad/ melancholy)
4	30+	British	Muslim	Yes	Married	Accompanied		Yes	Yes (extensive)	7 years	Happy
5	50+	Indian	Muslim	Yes	Married	Accompanied		Yes	No	25 years	Happy
6	40+	American		Yes	Married	Unaccompanied		Yes	Yes	1.5 years	Miserable
7	30+	British		Yes	Engaged	Unaccompanied		No	Yes	3 months	Happy
8	40+	British	Christian	Yes	Married	Spouse	Nonworking	Yes	Yes	2 years	Content but not happy
9	30+	British	Muslim	Yes	Married	Unaccompanied		Yes	No	4 months	Fairly content
10	40+	Lebanese		Yes	Married	Spouse	Working	Yes (In Lebanon)	No	25 years	Happy (satisfied)
11	30+	Jordanian	Muslim	Yes	Single		Working	No	No	20 years	Happy
12	20+	British		Yes	Single			No	No	2 years	Content

13	40+	Australian		Yes	Married	Spouse	Nonworking with previous working experience as single independent expatriate	Yes	Yes	4.5 years	Happy
14	40+	Australian		Yes	Married	Accompanied		Yes	Yes	12 years	Happy
15	30+	South African	Christian	Yes	Married	Accompanied		Yes	Yes	7 years	Happy
16	30+	South African	Christian	Yes	Married	Spouse	Nonworking	Yes	No	3 years	Happy
17	40+	British	Not known	Yes	Married	Unaccompanied		Yes	Yes	1.5 years	Content
18	40+	British	Not known	Yes	Married	Spouse	Working	Yes	No	2 years	Content
19	50+	British	Christian	Yes	Married	Spouse	Working	Yes	Yes	2 years	Content
20	30+	British	Christian	Yes	Married	Spouse	Working	Yes	No	3 years	Content
21	20+	British	Christian	Yes	Married	Accompanied	Working	Yes	No	3 years	Happy
22	30+	South African	Christian	Yes	Married	Spouse	Nonworking	Yes	No	9 years	Happy

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Appendix B: LIST OF OPEN CODES AND QUOTES

Accessibility - difficult visa process	Internet a way of being - "I check what is going on in the free world"
Accessibility - friends are unable to visit	Internet a way of being - "share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly despite not being face-to-face"
Accessibility - Restricted visitors	Internet a way of being - Internet widower
accustomed to rules	Internet a way of being - maintain contact with relatives/ friends
Benevolent community - can still feel part of family	Internet a way of being - my ability to stay connected to my family and help manage our household while being employed 9 000 miles away is 100% dependent on the Internet"
Benevolent community - communicate via e-mail Skype Facebook	Internet as a place - [School] communication system
Benevolent community - Feeling of connection to home crucial	Internet as a place - Skype
Benevolent community - keeping abreast of events/ new at home	Internet as a place -[company] website
CD - no female driving	Internet as a place -"window into the world wide community in my home nation and also gives me an insight into modern day international trends and cultures"
CD - business close for prayer time	Internet as a place -embassy website
CD - different alphabet	Internet as a place -entertainment
CD - different language	Internet as a place -Facebook
CD - dress code for men	Internet as a place -get travel ideas

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CD - no free speech	Internet as a place -online community
CD - police check points	Internet as a place -online gaming
CD - regulated media	Internet as a place -Youtube
CD - religious interpretation	Internet as a tool - booking and planning holidays
CD - segregation of genders	Internet as a tool - property management
CD - threat of punishment at work for making mistakes	Internet as a tool - sourcing suppliers
CD - witnessing slavery	Internet as a tool - "list is endless"
CD - need a local sponsor	Internet as a tool - book reviews
CD - no religious freedom	Internet as a tool - buy items not available in the KSA
CD - nocturnal lifestyle of locals	Internet as a tool - cheap or free phone calls
Challenges - "my mum's broadband in the UK: her connection is about 20 times faster and a fraction of the price"	Internet as a tool - communication
Challenges - biased news	Internet as a tool - cooking recipes
Challenges - content filtering	Internet as a tool - fantastic learning tool for the children
Challenges - high cost	Internet as a tool - filing tax returns
Challenges - intermittent	Internet as a tool - follow sports
Challenges - low speed	Internet as a tool - greeting cards
Challenges - poor provision of Internet services	Internet as a tool - home country laws for repatriation
Challenges - poor signal	Internet as a tool - keep up to date with home country
Challenges - religious literature	Internet as a tool - listen to Internet radio
Challenges - safety issues	Internet as a tool - manage finances
Challenges - security	Internet as a tool - party planning
Challenges - VPN	Internet as a tool - pre-arrival information

compound - artificial	Internet as a tool - pre-arrival research etiquette and laws of the KSA
compound - basic necessities	Internet as a tool - progress of local rugby union [in home country]
compound - cocooned	Internet as a tool - purchase property
compound - can't meet locals	Internet as a tool - reading news
Compound - convenience	Internet as a tool - research health issues
compound - facilitate life	Internet as a tool - school projects
compound - facilities	Internet as a tool - share photos via Photobucket
compound - fishbowl	Internet as a tool - teaching preparation
compound - freedom	Internet as a tool - [The Internet] assists me
compound - friendly faces	Internet as a tool - *"I use the Internet several times daily and consider it essential to modern life"*
compound - incestuous	Internet as a tool - "Internet provides a means"
compound - isolating	Internet way of being - keeping abreast of home quickly
compound - natural (previous experience)	KSA - it is not attractive to "go down town" as it would in the UK.
compound - normal life	lack of entertainment
compound - not real	lack of interaction with locals
compound - outsider if single	locals - "Allah's Will"
compound - preferable than living in city	locals - aggressive
compound - pretty	locals - cannot learn from people
compound - privacy	locals - eratic driving
compound - restaurant	locals - lack of responsibility
compound - restricted access	locals - language barrier
compound - security	locals - locals can be easily offended but they don't care if they offend us

compound - simulating "home country" life	men barred from shopping malls on "family days"
compound - social events	Mobility - bus/ taxi schedules
compound - sporting events	Mobility - shopping bus
compound - tainted view of customs and culture	Mobility - time wasted waiting for transport
Control over environment - "My children also use the Internet for school projects because of the lack of other resources available in Saudi for Western children"	Mobility - Wasn't used to not having the freedom of going where I wanted by myself
Control over environment - "Although we are considered expats in Saudi we do not lead a normal expat life in terms of mixing with the locals. The Internet has become a replacement for that aspect of life."	Mobility - women not allowed to drive
Control over environment - get travel ideas	online expat - school community
Control over environment - Rely on Internet for information	online expat - access company information
Control over environment - send out important links	online expat - charities
Control over environment - send out invitations	online expat receive embassy information
expat - social activities	online expat- communication with school
expat - friendly	Salvation role of Internet - [without Internet life in the KSA] – more difficult
expat - friends	Salvation role of Internet - "lessens the feeling of isolation and living in a bubble that you can experience out here (life in the KSA is not normal!)"
expat - school community	Salvation role of Internet - assist spouse that remained at home
expat - trust	Salvation role of Internet - [no Internet] "disconnected from the real world"
expat community - Get travel ideas	Salvation role of Internet - "absolutely essential to my life in the KSA"

Expat state of mind - comfort.living in a compound	Salvation role of Internet - "Here I check what is going on in the free world with the Internet"
Expat state of mind - happy	Salvation role of Internet - "I use the Internet to … keep my sanity"
Expat state of mind - normally neutral	*Salvation role of Internet - "Lifeline to normal life feeling of connection to home is crucial the link to the life he used to have"*
Expat state of mind - "I've been in Kingdom for 404 days. I plan to leave in 549 days unless a good job back home is available in which case I would leave immediately".	Salvation role of Internet - "pathetic and cut off from my home country in particular and the rest of the world in general"
Expat state of mind - adjusted to a degree	Salvation role of Internet - "The Internet … is also a way of escaping the harshness of the environment in which I exist"
Expat state of mind - content	Salvation role of Internet - "The Internet has become absolutely essential to my life in the KSA"
Expat state of mind - currently fed-up	Salvation role of Internet - "without [the Internet] I would be on my way home tonight"
Expat state of mind - melancholy	Salvation role of Internet - can still feel part of family
Expat state of mind - tolerant of the culture	Salvation role of Internet - Feeling of connection to home crucial
Expat state of mind - Waiting for the rest of my life after Saudi	single - "I was single and young so the need to stay in contact was not as important"
Increased exchange of info - "We do not have access to newspapers and books like we do at home"	state of mind - adjusted to a degree
Increased exchange of info - Internet allows reliable cheap instantaneous communication	state of mind - Awaiting for the rest of my life after Saudi
Increased exchange of info -"We can share information and find out what is going on at home very quickly"	state of mind - comfortable living in a compound

Increased exchange of info -communication from embassy	state of mind - content
Increased exchange of info -communication from school	state of mind - currently fed-up normally neutral
Increased exchange of info -obtain information from company website	state of mind - happy
Intention to use - "[the Internet] can also contribute to homesickness. Sometimes when we miss a big event at home and read about it on Facebook it can make you feel very far away. But that small negative does not outweigh the positives of the Internet"	state of mind - melancholy
Intention to use - essential to modern life	state of mind - tolerant of the culture
Intention to use - Quality over quantity	strict dress code
Internet - content filtering	strong Internet content filtering
Internet - expensive	Time distortion/ Social presence - "Internet has enabled closer contact with family and friends"
Internet - lack of - isolation	Time distortion/ Social presence - "feel part of the family and keep in touch with what people are up to"
Internet - low quality	Time distortion/ Social presence - *"I am happy that I don't feel that I've missed out on seeing my 1 year old nephew too much during his first year as I have been able to Skype him each week and my sister has been able to Facebook and email me pictures and updates."*
Internet - online banking	Time distortion/ Social presence - "The feeling of connection to home is crucial"
Internet - online news	Time distortion/ Social presence - "The Internet provides a means where we can remain close to family and friends despite not being face-to-face"
Internet - security software	Time distortion/ Social presence - Maintain contact with relatives/ friends via e-mail and Skype

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Internet - social networking (Facebook email Skype LinkedIn)		unaccompanied – bored
Internet – VPN		unaccompanied - feeling like an outsider
Internet a way of being - "Internet is everything to me living in the UK or abroad and I take it for granted but I always appreciate having access to it"		unaccompanied – lonely
Internet a way of being - inconceivable [not having the Internet]		unaccompanied - miserable because missing family
Internet a way of being - [Internet is a means of] killing time		unaccompanied - spouse an outsider at home
Internet a way of being - "[Pre-arrival research] - image and some understanding of where we were moving to"		wearing of an abaya
Internet a way of being - "all the information that is required in one's daily life is available at the fingertips. In fact it is almost becoming a necessity in the present environment where most of the world population is using it" "		women only allowed to do certain jobs
Internet a way of being - "depend almost entirely on the Internet"		

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and
Management Sciences
Department of Informatics

**Informed consent for participation in an academic
research study**

Dept. of Informatics

Title of the study
Understanding the role of the Internet in the Adaptation of Expatriates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Research conducted by:
Ms. M.J. Hattingh (29663394)
Mobile: 054 613 9512

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Marié Hattingh, Doctoral student from the Department of Informatics at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to obtain an understanding of the role of the Internet in expatriate adaptation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Please note the following:
- This study involves <u>anonymous</u> email interviews. Your name will not appear on the interview schedule and the answers you give will be treated as strictly <u>confidential</u>. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Data will be obtained in the form of an emailed interview. Please answer the questions contained in the email as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 60 minutes of your time. I will email questions based on your answer back to you to clarify and obtain a full understanding of the role of the Internet in your life as an expatriate.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, Dr MC Matthee, Machdel.Matthee@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:
- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

_____   _____
Respondent's signature   **Date**

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