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Host country nationals characteristics and willingness to help self-initiated expatriates in the UAE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of host country nationals' (HCNs) motivation to offer role information and social support in adjustment experience of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). We draw on social identity theory and its variant, social categorization theory, to examine the determinants of support provided by HNCs to SEIs through survey data collected from 543 HCNs. The results of our study show that HCNs have a tendency to categorize SIEs based on certain salient characteristics, namely ethnocentrism and collectivism, whilst providing necessary role information and social support to the SIEs.

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Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs); host country nationals; social identity theory; social categorization theory; United Arab Emirates

1. Introduction

The landscape of global staffing has altered significantly over recent decades. As organizations globally continue to meet their talent needs (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2018) they must turn to new pools of talent to meet their staffing needs. One pool of talent that has become increasingly prevalent in the global talent marketplace are Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). SIEs are different from conventional corporate expatriates in that they seek employment on their own initiative abroad and are recruited as local hires in the host country (Crowley-Henry, 2007). On the one hand, SIEs tend to display higher levels of global competences than other employees because they have experiences living and working in multiple cultural environments (Bozionelos & Singh, 2017; Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance, 2015). On the other hand, SIEs are susceptible to the adjustment challenges that in turn calls for the employing

organizations to have appropriate and relevant human resource systems and processes to deal with such scenarios (McDonnell & Scullion, 2013) along with support and role-related information from their host country national (HCN) supervisors. In contrast to corporate expatriates who receive support from their multinational enterprise and often benefit from well-established support systems at the subsidiary level, SIEs lack such support. This underscores the importance of support provided by their supervisors who are often HCNs. We point to the key role of HCN supervisors in helping the SIEs socialize by being their cultural interpreter, communications manager, information resource broker and internal change agent (Andersen, Vaiman, & Gale, 2014) as a central focus of the current study. Several studies suggest for a proactive role of the employing organizations to have policies and practices in place to take care of the adjustment challenges faced by the SIEs (McDonnell & Scullion, 2013; Vaiman et al., 2015). Thus, if SIEs fail to cope with adjustment challenges, it results in negative individual and organizational outcomes and in extreme cases, it could lead to SIE turnover (Vaiman et al., 2015).

Studies on SIEs are on the rise. However, limited focus has been given to the support provided by their employing organizations through HCNs (Vaiman et al., 2015). In this study, we examine the adjustment experience of SIEs through the lens of HCNs' willingness to offer role information and social support to the SIEs. We selected the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a context of the study wherein expatriates constitute 89.65% of the total workforce in the UAE (Rutledge, 2009). Given the international composure of the UAE labour market, HCNs have extensive experience in interacting with SIEs from different cultures. Moreover, given the fact that SIEs outnumber HCNs in most private sector organizations, HCNs supervisors have learnt to appreciate the importance of the former and as a result a culture of support and tolerance of differences has been developed within the UAE corporate culture.

Context matters in research dealing with cross cultural issues (Teagarden, Von Glinow, & Mellahi, 2018). We contextualize our study on Indian origin SIEs in the UAE who outnumber the HCNs for a number of reasons including strong trade between India and the UAE (Achkhaniyan, 2017), HCNs preference of public sector jobs (Waxin, Lindsay, Belkhodja, & Zhao, 2018), and pull factors such as higher and tax-free salaries (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017). Furthermore, the rapid economic expansion in the UAE led to a shortage of local talent and that resulted in filling the talent gap by recruiting expatriate employees (Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011). Like all HCN supervisors, UAE HCNs

draw on their UAE's sociocultural lens characterized to be high on group-orientation, hierarchical structures, and collectivism (Branine & Pollard, 2010; Budhwar, Pereira, Mellahi, & Singh, 2018; Mellahi & Budhwar, 2006). Such characteristics influence how HNCs interacts with SIEs. We draw on social categorization theory (SCT) (Turner, 1981, 1985) to examine and explain HCNs' social categorization of Indian origin SIEs while offering role information and providing social support to the later. The findings of this study have implications for theory and practice. In particular, our study contributes to the evolution of the expatriate management literature in the Gulf region wherein the majority of the workforce is SIEs who largely report to their HCN supervisors.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. Defining SIEs

The concept of SIEs is still an issue of debate. While, a thorough review of this literature is beyond the scope of the current paper, we provide a summary review of the debate here. SIEs are generally differentiated based on assignment or corporate expatriates, or those sent by an MNC on temporary relocation to a site in another country on a temporary basis. The former are supported by the MNC through the relocation for their assignments (Andresen, Biemann, & Pattie, 2015; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). In contrast, SIEs often fund their own relocation (Andresen et al., 2015; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Moreover, as compared to corporate expatriates, the drivers for SIEs to go abroad is because of higher salaries and or poor employment opportunities in their home country (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). McNulty and Brewster (2017) consider both the assignment expatriates and the SIEs as business expatriates as they meet their prototype boundary conditions namely, are organizationally employed and as originally planned their stay to be temporary. That said, as of yet, there is no standard definition of the SIE (Doherty, 2013; Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013; Vaiman et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, we define SIEs as those who on their own seek employment abroad (Crowley-Henry, 2007), fund their own relocation (Andresen et al., 2015; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009), and the length of time that they plan to spend working abroad is indefinite (McNulty & Brewster, 2017).

2.2. The social categorization of SIEs

SCT (Turner, 1981, 1985) helps explain how HCNs offer social support and provide role information to the SIEs. SCT, a variant of social identity theory (SIT), provides a social psychological framework to examine

and understand HCNs' attitudes and behaviors towards their SIEs subordinates in an organization (e.g. Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010; Leonardelli & Toh, 2011; Toh, Varma & DeNisi, 2004). According to SCT's predictions, given their different social and cultural backgrounds, HCNs' categorize SIEs into different social groups, and such categorization is likely to influence HCNs' attitudes and behaviors toward SIEs (Leonardelli & Toh, 2011; Pichler, Varma, & Budhwar, 2012; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Turner, 1981, 1985). Specifically, drawing on SCT, we posit that HCNs categorize themselves and SIEs into in-groups and out-groups, and as such this social categorization guides HCNs behaviours towards their SIE subordinates (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Leonardelli & Toh, 2011; Pichler et al., 2012). Social identity research suggests that when a differentiating category, such as perceived values similarity, and ethnocentrism, becomes salient (Pichler et al., 2012), differential treatment of SIEs are often based on whether HCNs bracket them as 'in-group' and 'out-group' (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

We argue that HCN supervisors are likely to use demographic and social categorization proxies such as race, gender, national origin (McGarty, 2006), job levels (Toh & DeNisi, 2003; Varma et al., 2011), and beliefs and value similarities (e.g. Laleman, Pereira, & Malik, 2015; Malik & Pereira, 2016; Pereira, & Malik, 2015a, 2015b; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016) when categorizing SIEs as 'in-group' and or 'out-group'. Specifically, and not surprisingly, we postulate that HCN supervisors are likely to provide support and role information to the SIEs, if the latter is perceived to belong to 'inner-group' than 'outer-group' (Leonardelli & Toh, 2011; Pichler et al., 2012). Overall, the aforementioned studies point to the critical role that HCNs play when it comes to providing social support and role related information to SIEs' and their influence on adjustment in their personal and professional lives and overall successes in the organization. From the SIEs perspective, one can argue that the more the SIEs interact, connect and relate well with their HCN supervisors the better is the social-cultural adjustment and workplace productivity and performance of the former (Takeuchi, 2010; Toh & DeNisi, 2005, 2007).

2.3. Ethnocentrism

Drawing on SCT theory, Palmonari, Pombeni, and Kirchler (1991) argue that when actors engage in categorizing individuals into inner and outer groups, they are likely to be influenced by their level of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism refers to the self-centeredness of the ethnic group (Bizumic & Duckitt, 2007). High levels of ethnocentrism often leads to increased in-group identification and less interaction with out-group

(Perreault & Bourhis, 1999) resulting in social categorization and less interaction with members of out-groups (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006; Varma et al., 2011; Zeira, 1979).

We posit that HCNs scoring high on ethnocentrism are likely to categorize SIEs as outgroup and draw clearer boundaries between themselves and SIEs (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2011). We further argue that the HCNs ethnocentric view point is reinforced when SIEs are not able to integrate socially in the host country (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1a: Ethnocentrism is positively related to categorization as out-group.

Hypothesis 1b: Ethnocentrism is negatively related to role information.

Hypothesis 1c: Ethnocentrism is negatively related to social support.

2.4. Perceived value similarity

Cultural values are important in guiding a person's behaviour (Schwartz, 1992). It is but natural that people from different cultures may engage in two different behaviours as they follow two different value systems (Schwartz, 1992). We argue that the perceived value similarity between HCNs and SIEs will increase prosocial behaviours amongst them. We further argue that HCN supervisors use value similarity as a salient attribute to categorize SIEs and that in turn influences the former to provide role information and social support to the latter in the organization (e.g. Varma, Pichler, Budhwar, & Biswas, 2009; Varma, Pichler, Budhwar, & Kupferer, 2012).

Moreover, we posit that greater the cultural distance between the HCN and the SIE, it will result in social categorization (e.g. Toh & DeNisi, 2003) and this subsequently influences extra-role behaviours such as providing role information and social support to the SIEs (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Toh et al., 2004). As such, we predict that:

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived value similarity is negatively related to categorization as out-group.

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived value similarity is positively related to role information.

Hypothesis 2c: Perceived value similarity is positively related to social support.

2.5. Collectivism

Subordination of one's own goals to the larger organizational goals reflects a significant characteristic of a collectivist society (Hofstede,

1984). The GLOBE cross-national study positions the UAE in the Arabic cluster (Gupta, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), which is categorized within a collectivist culture (Yousef, 2003) wherein cultural and religious values are very much interwoven (de Waal & Frijns, 2016). People belonging to a collectivist society believe that they can depend upon their in-group members whenever the need arises and in turn help and support those members whom they have categorized as in-group (Varma et al., 2011). Overall, collectivistic societies possess a powerful sense of group membership and they distinguish between in-group and outgroup members (Hofstede, 2001). Drawing on social identity research, we assume that when collectivism becomes a salient attribute of the HCN supervisor, SIEs are likely to be categorized as out-group (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, we predict that:

Hypothesis 3a: Collectivism is positively related to in-group categorization of SIEs.

Hypothesis 3b: Collectivism (as in-group) is positively related to role information.

Hypothesis 3c: Collectivism (as in-group) is positively related to social support.

2.6. Social categorization

The extant literature on intergroup relations suggest that social categorization of people results in intergroup conflict (e.g. Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010). Therefore, several expatriate management researchers suggest for increased local-expatriate interactions to minimize intergroup boundaries at workplace (Olsen & Martins, 2009; Toh & DeNisi, 2007) and that in turn results in HCNs' to provide role information and social supports to the expatriates in the organization. HCNs' categorization of SIEs categorization are not hidden in the organization and maintained for several macro and micro level reasons (Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010). We argue that as the national identity becomes prominent, there is an increased tendency on the part of HCNs not to provide sufficient role information and social support to SIEs as the latter is bracketed as outgroup (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Therefore, we predict:

Hypothesis 4a: Social categorization (as out-group) is negatively related to role information.

Hypothesis 4b: Social categorization (as out-group) is negatively related to social support.

2.7. The mediating role of social categorization

As argued above, cultural distance between HCNs and the SIEs is an important factor in social categorization (e.g. Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2009). Studies using SIT suggest that HCNs tend to categorize themselves and SIEs into in-groups and out-groups, and this social categorization process influences HCNs behaviour with SIEs (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Varma et al., 2009). Several studies indicate that when HCNs categorize the SIEs as out-group, it limits their interactions with SIEs (e.g. Reynolds, Turner, & Haslam, 2000; Varma et al., 2009). Therefore, we posit that highly ethnocentric HCNs have tendencies to draw clearer boundaries between themselves and SIEs (e.g. Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2011). Therefore, we predict that:

Hypothesis 5a: Social categorization mediates the influence of ethnocentrism on role information.

Hypothesis 5b: Social categorization mediates the influence of ethnocentrism on social support.

Previous studies suggest that perceived value similarity between HCNs and the SIEs results in increased interaction between them and vice versa (e.g. Schneider, 2004; Varma et al., 2009, 2012). HCN supervisors can help socialize SIEs by being their cultural interpreter, communications manager, information resource broker and internal change agent (Vance et al., 2014). Using social identity literature, we thus posit that HCN supervisors will have a tendency to use value similarity as a prominent attribute to categorize SIEs into in-group and out-group (e.g. Reynolds et al., 2000; Tajfel, 1981; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). As such, this categorization of SIEs into in-group and out-group will guide HCNs when they engage in providing role information and offering social support to the SIEs in the organization (e.g. Varma et al., 2009, 2012). As such, we propose:

Hypothesis 6a: Social categorization mediates the influence of perceived value similarity on role information.

Hypothesis 6b: Social categorization mediates the influence of perceived value similarity on social support.

We further argue that people belonging to a collectivist society depend upon and also provide support to the 'in-group' rather than the 'out-group' members whenever the need arises. However, this depends on whom they have categorized as in-group (Varma et al., 2011). We posit that if the HCN supervisors belong to the collectivist society, they will exhibit higher support to the in-group members than to out-group

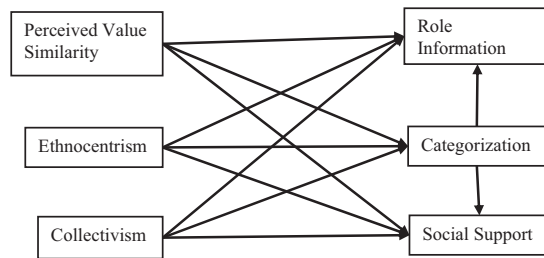


Figure 1. Proposed research model.

members (e.g. de Waal & Frijns, 2016; Varma et al., 2009). Therefore, we predict:

Hypothesis 7a: Social categorization mediates the influence of collectivism on role information.

Hypothesis 7b: Social categorization mediates the influence of collectivism on social support.

Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized research framework of this study.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and procedures

We collected data from 543 UAE HCN supervisors for opinion towards their immediate subordinates – i.e. Indian origin SIEs. The measurement items (see Appendix 1) for perceived value similarity, ethnocentrism, collectivism, role information and social support were rated by the HCNs on 7-point rating scale (where 1 = low and 7 = high). The data collection consisted of three steps. First, we conducted pilot study on 10 experienced academics and 73 middle management HCNs supervisors across different organizations in the UAE to test for ambiguity, if any, in items of the measuring instruments. The pilot study suggested that there was no ambiguity as such in any of the items of the measuring instruments.

Next, we approached the HR departments of 21 organizations across different industry sectors. Eighteen organizations accepted our request to provide a list of HCNs in the middle management position along with their postal addresses. Thereafter, we mailed packet containing: (a) the survey questionnaire; (b) a request letter explaining the purpose of the study and explaining the confidentiality of their responses; and (c) a stamped self-addressed envelope with the postal address of one of the researchers to 770 HCNs in supervisory role who had three to five Indian origin SIE subordinates reporting to them. This data collection took place from 15 March 2017 to 20 June 2017. We received 568

Table 1. Sample details

Variables	Sample (n = 543)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	268	49.36
Female	275	50.64
Age		
≤30 years	234	43.1
31–40 years	255	47.0
41–50 years	43	7.9
51 years and above	11	2.0
Education		
High school	74	13.6
Bachelor degree	328	60.4
Master degree	130	24.0
Ph.D. degree	11	2.0
Work experience		
≤3 years	82	15.2
4–7 years	174	32.0
8–11 years	152	28.0
≥12 years	135	24.8

questionnaires from the HCN supervisors. Five hundred and forty-three returned questionnaires found valid for the purpose of our study.

Table 1 shows that the UAE HCNs consisted of 49.36% female and 50.64% of male across 12 different public sector organizations in the UAE. The HCN supervisors differed in terms of their educational qualifications, as 13.6% were educated to high school level, 60.4% held a bachelor degree, 24% held a master degree and 2% held a doctorate. It is also noteworthy here that 30.1% of the sample had less than 5 years of work experience, 39.1% had 5.0–10.0 years of work experience and the remaining 30% of the sample had over 10 years of work experience.

3.2. Measures

We used measuring instruments (see Appendix 1) from the past studies and the response scale for all items (in Appendix 1) ranged from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree') on a Likert scale.

3.2.1. Perceived value similarity

Our measure was adapted from Orbe (1998) and had four items. The sample items included the HCNs and the SIEs to have 'similar work values', 'similar family values', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.839.

3.2.2. Ethnocentrism

Our measure had five items adapted from Zeira's (1979). The sample items included that the SLEs 'should be familiar with HCN culture', 'should be aware of HCNs' social characteristics', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.738.

3.2.3. Collectivism

Our measure consisted of four items adapted from Clugston, Howell, and Dorfman (2000) and by Varma et al. (2011). The sample items included 'welfare of group than individual employee is important', 'group loyalty should have been promoted at the workplace even if individual's goals differ', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.734.

3.2.4. Categorization

We measured with five items adapted from Greenland and Brown (1999). The sample items included that the HCN is aware of her/his... 'culture and that of SIEs when HCN is in contact with SIE', 'nationality and that of SIEs when HCN is in contact with SIE', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.745.

3.2.5. Role information

Our measure had five items adapted from Morrison (1993). The sample items included that the HCN supervisor to provide SIE subordinates ... 'role information on what is expected of him/her in the job', 'role information on how appropriate his/her social behaviour at work is', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.810.

3.2.6. Social support

Our measure was adapted from Caplan et al. (1980) and had four items. The sample items included that as HCN supervisor ... 'I am considerate towards work-life of Indian origin SIE subordinates', 'I listen to personal problems of Indian origin SIE subordinates, if he/she approaches me', etc. The Cronbach coefficient α was 0.759.

3.2.7. Control variables

Based on the previous studies, we controlled for age (e.g. Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Peng, 2013), gender (e.g. Hershcovis et al., 2007; Peng, 2013) wherein female and male was coded for 0 & 1, respectively of the HCN supervisor.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Common method bias

A Harmon one-factor test on the six conceptually crucial variables was conducted (Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinic, & Babin, 2016). In a questionnaire-based survey, common method bias arises in cases where one

respondent is answering all sections of the self-reported questionnaire based on multiple constructs (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, in prior anticipation of this potential problem, procedural remedies as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003) were taken, such as informing respondents about data confidentiality and anonymity in order to prompt them to answer as honestly as possible, and pre-testing and pilot testing of the survey to improve content validity and to ensure that the questionnaire was easily understood. To check for common method bias after data collection, Harman's one factor test, using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), is one of the most widely-used techniques, in which all items are loaded onto one construct (factor) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). If the single factor solution does not explain more than 50% of the total variance, then a common method bias does not exist. The results as depicted in [Appendix 2](#) show that the six factors were present and the most covariance explained by one factor is 24.05%. Therefore, it suggests that the common method bias is not likely to affect the results.

4.2. Measurement validation

We conducted multilevel confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 24 with maximum-likelihood estimation procedures to observe factor structure of focal variables. We found expected six-factor solution (perceived value similarity, ethnocentrism, collectivism, role information and social support) displayed adequate fit with the data ($\chi^2/df = 1.768$, $p < .001$; TLI = 0.981; CFI = 0.986; SRMR = 0.041; RMSEA = 0.044, $p < .262$). [Appendix 3](#) depicts that the factor loadings ranged from 0.771 to 0.878 for the perceived value similarity items, 0.721–0.831 for the ethnocentrism items, 0.718–0.755 for collectivism items, 0.730–0.782 for categorization items, 0.727–0.814 for role information items and 0.706–0.752 for social support items. Therefore, the results suggest that these six constructs measure unique constructs.

We used EFA on to the observed items of the six constructs of the study with the objective to access the information about the latent factors. From the initial EFA findings, we found that value of EFA fit indices represents sufficient factor loadings, with six latent factors ([Appendix 3](#)). We used standard methods as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) to calculate convergent and discriminant validity. Therefore, the Items load on the intended constructs with standardized loadings should be >0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher, the scale's composite reliability (SCR) >0.7 and the average variance extracted (AVE) >0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). [Appendix 2](#) depicts that the measurement scales had strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2006;

Table 2. Hypotheses testing for direct impact.

Relationships	Standardized direct effect	Standard error	t value	Sig. level	Hypothesis testing
ETHNO →CATEG	.508	.091	5.709	$p < .002$	H1a is supported
ETHNO →RINFO	-.082	.249	-.360	$p < .818$	H1b is not supported
ETHNO →SOSUP	.575	.085	4.244	$p < .008$	H1c is supported
PVS →CATEG	.123	.042	1.848	$p < .124$	H2a is not supported
PVS →RINFO	-.123	.054	-1.524	$p < .204$	H2b is not supported
PVS →SOSUP	.119	.028	1.653	$p < .180$	H2c is not supported
COLLEC →CATEG	.310	.078	3.903	$p < .002$	H3a is supported
COLLEC →RINFO	.133	.149	.940	$p < .520$	H3b is not supported
COLLEC →SOSSUP	.322	.060	3.265	$p < .017$	H3c is supported
COLLEC →RINFO	.133	.149	.940	$p < .520$	H4a is not supported
CATEG →SOSUP	.182	.078	1.426	$p < .256$	H4b is not supported

Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as the item load on the intended construct had a standardized loading of ≥ 0.717 , the SCR was ≥ 0.822 and the AVE was ≥ 0.536 . Composite reliability is the most robust measure of a construct's internal consistency because it prioritizes items by their reliability in estimating the measurement model (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011) and relatively higher AVEs indicate that the observed items explain more variance than the error terms and adequately reflect upon the unidimensionality (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) of the measurement scale. Furthermore, as per the recommendation of Fawcett, Wallin, Allred, and Magnan (2009), the measuring instruments have discriminant validity as the item load on the intended construct has standardized loading of ≥ 0.717 (Appendix 3).

4.3. Structural model

4.3.1. Testing for direct effect

Table 2 depicts results of testing for direct effects. The H1a [ETHNO→CATEG]; H1b [ETHNO→RINFO] and H1c [ETHNO→SOSUP] are ($\beta = .508$; $t = 5.709$, $p < .002$), ($\beta = -.082$; $t = -.360$, $p < .818$), and ($\beta = .575$; $t = 4.244$, $p < .008$), respectively. Therefore, H1a and H1c have been supported whereas H1b has not been supported in our study. Whereas, H2a [PVS→CATEG]; H2b [PVS→RINFO] and H2c [PVS→SOSUP] were not supported ($\beta = .123$; $t = 1.848$, $p < .124$); ($\beta = -.123$; $t = -1.524$, $p < .204$); and ($\beta = .119$; $t = 1.653$, $p < .180$), respectively. On the other hand, H3a [COLLEC→CATEG] and H3c [COLLEC→SOSUP] were ($\beta = .310$; $t = 3.903$, $p < .002$); ($\beta = .322$; $t = 3.265$, $p < .017$), respectively, were supported. As for the H3b [COLLEC→RINFO], it was not supported ($\beta = .133$; $t = .940$, $p < .520$). Finally, H4a [CATEG→RINFO] and H4b [CATEG→SOSUP] were not supported ($\beta = -.178$; $t = 1.329$, $p < .239$) and ($\beta = .182$; $t = 1.426$, $p < .256$), respectively.

Table 3. Hypotheses testing for mediating effect.

Relationships	Standardized mediated effect	Mediation (yes/no)	Hypothesis testing
ETHNO →CATEG →RINFO	.477 ($p < .033$)	Full mediation	H5a is supported
ETHNO →CATEG →SOSUP	.093 ($p < .256$)	No mediation	H5b is not supported
PVS →CATEG →RINFO	.098 ($p < .215$)	No mediation	H6a is not supported
PVS →CATEG →SOSUP	.022 ($p < .300$)	No mediation	H6b is not supported
COLLEC →CATEG →RINFO	.266 ($p < .046$)	Full mediation	H7a is supported
COLLEC →CATEG →SOSUP	.057 ($p < .256$)	No mediation	H7b is not supported

4.3.2. Testing for mediating effects

We performed bootstrapping as suggested by Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) to examine for the mediation effect and Table 3 depicts results for it. The H5a [ETHNO→CATEG→RINFO] is supported ($\beta=.477$, $p < .033$), whereas the H5b [ETHNO→CATEG→SOSUP] is not supported ($\beta =.093$, $p < .256$). The results in Table 3 suggest that the H6a [PVS →CATEG→RINFO] and the H6b [PVS →CATEG→SS] are not supported ($\beta =.098$, $p < .215$) and ($\beta =.022$, $p < .300$), respectively. Finally, H7a [COLLEC→CATEG→RINFO] is supported ($\beta =.266$, $p < .046$), whereas, H7b [COLLEC→CATEG→SOSUP] is not supported ($\beta =.057$, $p < .256$) in this study.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Drawing on SIT (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and SCT (Turner, 1981, 1985), we argue that HCN supervisors play an important role in the adjustment of SIEs in organizations. Our study focused on UAE HNCs support for Indian origin SIEs. Research on the adjustment issues of the expatriates SIEs in an Asian context has received much emphasis in the last decade (e.g. Pichler et al., 2012, Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2006, 2011, 2012). We thus contributed to the present literature by using these previous studies as a springboard in exploring the role of HCNs willingness to offer role information and social support in the adjustment experience of SIEs. We discuss our findings and results in relation to the hypotheses and existing literature below and draw relevant implications, conclusions and future research directions.

We had posited that the extra-organizational role played by the HCNs supervisors in terms of providing role information and offering social support to the Indian origin SIEs make the latter adjust better at work and that in turn would enhance their job performance (e.g. Varma et al., 2009, 2012). In line with the extant literature we suggested that high level of ethnocentrism lead to increased in-group identification (e.g. Perreault & Bourhis, 1999), and less interaction with members of out-groups (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006) and a strong social categorization (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2011). Using SIT, we argued that HCN

supervisors' behaviour are influenced by levels of ethnocentrism, value similarity, and collectivism as salient when categorizing SIEs and providing role information and social support (de Waal & Frijns, 2016; Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2009, 2012). We had posited that when ethnocentrism and collectivism are salient HCNs associate more with in-than out-group members. Our overall results suggest that the UAE HCNs' ethnocentrism positively influences SIEs' categorization as out-group members and that results in HCNs favouring in-groups more than out-groups when it comes to offer social support to SIEs as and when they ask for. These findings of our study is in line with previous research (de Waal & Frijns, 2016; Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2009, 2012).

5.1. Implications on and contributions to literature

Our study makes three key contributions towards the literature on management of the SIEs in the broader domain of international human resource management.

First, the extant literature suggests that ethnocentric values and beliefs result in self-centeredness, in-group identification, and distance with out-group (e.g. Bizumic & Duckitt, 2007; Hammond & Axelrod, 2006; Perreault & Bourhis, 1999). In comparison to past research, our findings suggest that UAE HCN supervisors perceive their Indian origin SIE subordinates as culturally and ethnically similar; and that this in turn results in the former providing social support to the latter. In other words, the HCN supervisors believe their Indian SIE subordinates to be familiar with UAE history, culture, etiquettes, and overall social characteristics. This is perhaps based on the historical experience of HCNs in interacting with SIEs from different countries and the competences they develop in interacting with individuals from different culture. Further, Indian SIEs familiarity with UAE culture because of the deep historical ties between the two countries could be a major driver and reason. Furthermore, our study suggests that HCNs in supervisory roles show tendency to fall back on social categorization of SIE subordinates as 'in-group' and 'out-group' and relate with them through ethnic prisms than display of pro-social job behaviours to help SIEs adjust with the job and the organization.

The second contribution of our study is an attempt for us to understand how collectivist values and beliefs influence the relationship between HCN supervisors and their Indian origin SIE subordinates in organizations in the UAE. Findings from our study suggest that HCN supervisors perceive their Indian origin SIE subordinate to have similar beliefs in terms of emphasis on group rather than individual employee's welfare and that in

turn results in HCN supervisors exhibiting pro-social and extra-organizational job behaviours in their relations with SIE subordinates.

The third contribution of our study is to recent research on social categorization of SIEs in organizations. The prevalence of the social categorization phenomenon is dysfunctional to adjustment and performance of the SIEs in particular and the organization in general. However, research using SIT suggest that HCNs tend to categorize themselves and SIEs into in-groups and out-groups, and that HCNs use to decipher for themselves on how they should relate & behave with SIEs in organization (e.g. Hogg & Terry, 2001; Reynolds et al., 2000; Varma et al., 2009). However, we note that the past research as aforementioned have primarily focused on adjustment issues of expatriates through the lens of HCN supervisors, while our study examined how HCNs' social categorization of their SIE subordinate's results workplace adjustment of the later. Therefore, the contextualization of concepts that we examined in this study diverge from past research and certainly contributes to this research on understanding, predicting and controlling HCNs' characteristics and willingness to help SIEs in the UAE context.

5.2. Practical implications

Further, our study offers three key practical implications for employing organizations on how to address and manage adjustment challenges of the SIEs.

First, we suggest that employing organizations should emphasize hiring and promoting HCNs for supervisory roles who possess and display attributes & behaviours that facilitate SIEs' emotional & psychological adjustment and job performance. Second, our study suggests that employing organization need to institutionalize meaningful HCNs–SIEs interactions in a manner that provides satisfying emotional, developmental and adjustment support to SIE's. Such meaningful HCNs–SIEs interactions are possible where the employing organization has policies in place for HCNs to undergo rigorous training in understanding the value of, and means by which, they can offer role information and social support to SIEs. Third, our study suggests that employing organizations should institutionalize practices of shared leadership, group-based reward systems, empowerment, and trusting climate to build congenial HCN–SIE relationships and to arrest leakage of talented SIEs, if any.

5.3. Limitations and direction for future research

Though our study contributes to the expatriate management literature and further provides practical insights about HCNs characteristics and

willingness to provide extra-organizational support to SIEs in adjusting in the employing organizations; there are limitations that needs consideration for future research.

First, our study only surveyed HCN supervisors' to assess the salient attributes that they utilize when they relate with their SIE subordinates and offer support to the latter to adjust in the organizations. Therefore, we suggest that future research should extend our work to examine the model of this study from the viewpoints of the SIEs and their spouses for additional insights into management of their adjustment related issues.

Second, we conducted our study in the UAE that restricts implications of the findings to other Gulf Coordination Council (GCC) countries who together share common socio-cultural characteristics and employ sizeable Indian origin SIEs. Hence, we suggest that future research should extend our work to advance knowledge and contribute to development of theory & practice related to SIEs' adjustment issues in the GCC, especially cross-country comparative studies will bring out rich and new knowledge.

Third, we conducted our study within the UAE public sector organizations. Therefore, we suggest that future research should make a comparative study on public and private sector organizations for additional insights and advance theory and practice of management of SIEs' adjustment issues.

Finally, our study investigated SIE adjustment issues in a dyadic kind of relationship (i.e. HCN–SIE). We suggest that future research should extend our work by including team and organizational level variables to understand, control and predict SIE adjustment related issues.

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Appendix 1. Constructs and survey items.

Constructs	Adapted from	Measuring items
Perceived value similarity (PVS)	Orbe (1998)	My Indian origin SIE subordinate has similar 1. personal values as I have (PVS1) 2. family values as I have (PVS2) 3. social values as I have (PVS3) 4. cultural values as I have (PVS4)
Ethnocentrism (ETHNO)	Zeira (1979)	My Indian origin SIE subordinate 1. is familiar with UAE culture (ETHNO1) 2. adhere to UAE patterns of behavior (ETHNO2) 3. is proficient in the language of UAE (ETHNO3) 4. is knowledgeable about UAE's social characteristics (ETHNO4) 5. familiar with the history of UAE (ETHNO5)
Collectivism (COLLEC)	Clugston et al. (2000) and Varma et al. (2011)	I believe that the group welfare is important 1. than individual rewards (COLLEC1) 2. than individual success (COLLEC2) 3. than individual goals (COLLEC3) 4. and the managers should encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer (COLLEC4)
Categorization (CATEG)	Greenland and Brown (1999)	As supervisor of Indian origin SIE subordinate: 1. I am aware of my UAE nationality (CATEG1) 2. I consider him/her to belong to my own cultural group (CATEG2) 3. I am aware of UAE culture (CATEG3) 4. I consider him/her as 'one of them' whereas UAE locals to be 'one of us' (CATEG4) 5. I consider them more similar to other foreign nationals than UAE locals (CATEG5)
Role information (RINFO)	Morrison (1993)	As supervisor of Indian origin SIE subordinate, I provide them with information on 1. expected job behaviors & attitudes from him,/her (RI1) 2. how to perform specific aspects of his/her job (RI2) 3. what is expected in his/her job (RI3) 4. how well he/she is performing on the job (RI4) 5. how is his/her social behavior at workplace (RI5)
Social support (SOSUP)	Caplan et al. (1980)	I help my Indian origin SIE subordinate 1. to make his/her work life easier on my own accord (SS1) 2. as I am easy to talk to (SS2) 3. when things get tough, without being asked (SS3) 4. on their personal problems, if I am approached (SS4)

Appendix 2. Loadings and cross loadings.

Scale & Cronbach alpha coefficient	Indicators	Standard loading	SCR	AVE
Perceived value similarity (PVS) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.839</i>	PVS1	0.717	0.886	0.668
	PVS2	0.838		
	PVS3	0.878		
	PVS4	0.809		
Ethnocentrism (ETHNO) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.755</i>	ETHNO1	0.730	0.868	0.568
	ETHNO2	0.831		
	ETHNO3	0.728		
	ETHNO4	0.721		
	ETHNO5	0.753		
Collectivism (COLLEC) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.798</i>	COLLEC1	0.718	0.828	0.546
	COLLEC2	0.734		
	COLLEC3	0.747		
	COLLEC4	0.755		
Categorization (CATEG) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.776</i>	CATEG1	0.782	0.868	0.568
	CATEG2	0.739		
	CATEG3	0.730		
	CATEG4	0.774		
	CATEG5	0.742		
Role Information (RINFO) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.810</i>	RINFO1	0.814	0.877	0.587
	RINFO2	0.747		
	RINFO3	0.774		
	RINFO4	0.766		
	RINFO5	0.727		
Social Support (SOSUP) <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.805</i>	SOSUP1	0.723	0.822	0.536
	SOSUP2	0.752		
	SOSUP3	0.706		
	SOSUP4	0.748		

Appendix 3. Convergent and divergent validity of measuring instruments.

	Components					
	RINFO	PVS	SOSUP	COLLEC	ETHNO	CATEG
PVS1	-0.046	0.717	0.154	0.111	-0.008	0.012
PVS2	-0.071	0.838	0.153	0.018	0.086	-0.120
PVS3	0.024	0.878	-0.042	0.138	-0.014	0.058
PVS4	0.064	0.809	-0.027	0.003	-0.045	0.087
ETHNO1	0.113	-0.011	0.342	0.182	0.730	-0.208
ETHNO2	0.484	-0.105	-0.039	0.039	0.831	-0.027
ETHNO3	0.004	-0.014	-0.153	0.033	0.728	0.313
ETHNO4	0.187	-0.024	0.483	0.100	0.721	0.072
ETHNO5	-0.074	0.100	0.298	-0.058	0.753	0.169
COLLEC1	0.184	0.048	0.061	0.718	0.130	-0.153
COLLEC2	0.156	0.028	0.099	0.734	0.047	-0.045
COLLEC3	0.062	0.233	0.096	0.747	-0.138	0.184
COLLEC4	0.312	0.052	-0.091	0.755	0.154	0.297
CATEG1	-0.018	-0.036	0.313	0.308	0.067	0.782
CATEG2	0.167	0.045	0.045	0.275	0.245	0.739
CATEG3	-0.056	0.052	0.443	0.387	0.238	0.730
CATEG4	0.071	-0.051	-0.037	-0.078	0.114	0.774
CATEG5	0.083	0.077	0.021	-0.038	-0.020	0.742
RINFO1	0.814	0.037	0.578	0.286	-0.061	0.111
RINFO2	0.747	-0.047	0.293	0.147	-0.067	0.083
RINFO3	0.774	0.006	0.110	0.148	0.006	0.048
RINFO4	0.766	-0.039	0.123	0.103	0.057	-0.022
RINFO5	0.727	-0.002	0.074	0.128	0.106	0.069
SOSUP1	0.563	0.061	0.723	-0.008	0.155	0.130
SOSUP2	0.237	0.060	0.752	0.334	0.008	-0.160
SOSUP3	0.313	0.121	0.706	-0.049	0.031	0.029
SOSUP4	0.126	0.095	0.748	-0.048	0.211	-0.053
Eigen Value	6.49	4.86	3.97	2.82	1.87	1.18
% of Variance	24.05	18.01	14.70	10.44	6.92	4.33