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LESSONS FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES IN ADAPTING TO LOCAL CULTURES: A CASE STUDY OF EDS IN BAHRAIN

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on American companies operating in Bahrain, employing Bahrainis whose national culture governs their daily routine. Making EDS a case study, this research explores the conflicts that arise at the work place when organisational culture encounters national culture and customs. Even with extensive globalization, particularly in the Middle East, there is a lack of research exploring the influence of national culture on the local employees, the impact of national culture of host countries on the operations of multinational companies or guidelines for American companies to follow while venturing to set up business in Bahrain.

This research follows a social constructionist paradigm, utilizing reflexive qualitative interviews conducted with EDS managers and EDS local employees, analysed through template analysis, to explain complex social processes which govern the national culture and the conflicts created when organisational culture is imposed upon the local employees. The findings of this research offer a holistic picture of the previously unrecognized alienation and resentment that arises when organisational culture is imposed on the local work force in Bahrain, without understanding the cultural influences that define them. The study discovered that American companies should create an awareness and understanding in their expatriate managers about the national culture and the impact of organisational culture on the local workforce already governed by their own national culture. The thesis offers guidelines to the local government policy makers to develop practice based training for local employees to meet the challenges of working in a multinational company. The research bridges the gap in perceptions between the local employees and American companies, thus paving the way to mutually beneficial working relationships. Finally the thesis develops a practice based framework by integrating influencing factors into policy making process, thus providing a practical guide to American companies setting out to do business in the Middle East, as well as to local governments in the Middle East.

DECLARATION

I acknowledge that the work presented herein has not been submitted for any other degree, other than as stipulated for my training during my DBA studies at Newcastle Business School of Northumbria University of Newcastle. I have duly completed the required research training and milestones required for the degree. The work is the result of my individual work.

Name: JASSIM HAJI HUSSAIN

Signature:

Date:

TO MY MOTHER

AND

THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

<u>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</u>

In writing this thesis I have had help and support from many people. This thesis would not have been possible without them.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"*Intelligent peoples must benefit from their experiences so that they do not repeat their mistakes, and I am confident that the people of Bahrain are one of those people*" His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa –The King of Bahrain

"*We have to adapt to the demands of our age and understand our differences*" Her Highness Shaikha Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa –Wife of His Majesty the King of Bahrain, President of the Supreme Council for Women.

1.1   Introduction

This opening chapter provides an overview of how this research has been conducted as a whole process of answering the question, ''What lessons in avoiding cultural conflicts while setting out to do business in a local cultural environment, can an American company learn from the experience of the EDS corporation in Bahrain?" Here, the research background is introduced. This covers a review of existing research on multinational and multicultural mergers which then leads to the research questions and aims. Research methodology and methods adopted in this study are also briefly described. The research question, data collection, analysis and the logical sequence of this thesis are outlined at the end of this chapter. This will provide readers with a comprehensive picture of the study and guide them through the rest of the research path.

1.2   <u>Background to the Research</u>

During the last two decades the world has seen a sharp increase in the number of multinational companies. The 21st century has seen 'Internationalisation' become the primary strategy for companies which intend to expand their business from one nation to another (Bennett, 1999, p.47). Maddox (1993, p.2) states "According to a recent 'Business Week' article, Chief Executive Officers are being driven by a simple truth: 'to survive is to be global' (Holstein et al. 1989,p.18)". Globalization has brought in an influx of cultural identities at the workplace. The influence of national culture impacts the workplace but global companies have generally ignored the nuances of national culture and its significance to an individual's behavior. Instead they have employed policies which aim at urging high performance from their employees while the existence of intercultural misunderstandings has been an impediment to such performance.

DuPraw and Axner (1997, p. 1) argue "As people from different cultural groups take on the exciting challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. We can misunderstand each other, and react in ways that can hinder what are otherwise promising partnerships. Oftentimes, we aren't aware that culture is acting upon us. Sometimes, we are not even aware that we have cultural values or assumptions that are different from others!" This conflict of culture has been confirmed by Hofstede et al (2002, p. 42) who state, "When people are interacting with each other across cultures, their cultural values could make them say or do things that are misperceived as intentional".

The cultural problems associated with cultural diversities at the workplace can also be associated with a divergence between the employees' local national culture and the company's 'alien' corporate culture. Thus, in different environments, employees strive to carry out their duties within the guidelines of the companies' corporate cultures which have originated in specific environments while they are under the influence of their own unique national cultures. Kroeber (1963, p.61) notes that the average individual is influenced by their national culture in which they have been so moulded by growing up and adjusting to it.

The problems which are associated with the cross-cultural interaction at the workplace demands understanding of the aspects of relevant cultures by respective top company management so that constructive measures can be taken in order to address the cultural issues. One of the companies that this applies to is EDS–Bahrain which is the first IT outsourcer company in Bahrain. This company can be characterized as a company that operates in accordance with its own western organisational culture while it employs a vast majority of employees whose national local culture is at odds with that. The company operates in Bahrain, where a literature review conducted revealed that there have not been any research projects that discuss the relationship between the local cultures of this country and western corporate culture in general, or EDS corporate culture in particular. The company's literature which is also available on EDS website shows evidence that the company has policies which talk about valuing different 'skills, backgrounds, experience and perspective throughout our

global communities and acknowledge these qualities as a competitive differentiator in the market place' (www/eds.com). But the local employee may perceive that management does not comprehend the relevant aspects of Bahraini local culture. EDS also possesses the "Culture Wizard" on its website which includes details of culture in Bahrain, but it does not filter down to the foreign managers posted to Bahrain. The literature also lacks information necessary to indicate that the significance of the local employees' own national culture and its influence on their work routine have been given satisfactory attention and consideration by EDS-Bahrain.

The differences between the western corporate culture and national culture are part of the wider phenomenon of divergence which exists between the Western organisational culture and the non-Western cultures which exist in various parts of the world. The lack of relevant databases and statistics to support the development of corporate policies and functional administration strategies in an alien cultural environment hampers the integration of an American company into the local culture. When the sensibilities and influences that govern a local culture are not taken into account the company tends to alienate its local work force from its corporate culture. Indeed Maddox (1993, p.35) comments "The world is changing politically, economically, technologically, and socially at a previously unthinkable rate. Both new and experienced multinational firms are stumbling and committing blunders as they confront the newly emerging environmental forces". As a consequence, multinational companies demonstrate weaknesses in

implementing policies that adequately consider the significance of the cross-cultural issue. According to James (2005, p. 24), in the world of international business, Asian and American companies in particular fail to focus adequate attention on the areas of cross-cultural and language training.

Until the role that national culture plays in the lives of employees and how that affects the employees' approach to work is understood and corporate policies are put in place in accordance with it, an American company will undoubtedly struggle to get maximum commitment and productivity from its local workforce.

First we have to understand the terms organizational or corporate culture and local national culture. Organizational culture is essentially the personality of an organisation. Culture is comprised of the assumptions, values, norms, and tangible signs (artifacts) of organization members and their behaviors (Martin, 2002). Members of an organisation soon come to sense the particular culture of that organisation. Culture is one of those terms that are difficult to express distinctly, but everyone knows it when they sense it (Martin, 2002.p3). You can tell the culture of an organisation by looking at the arrangement of furniture, what dominates their conversations, what employees wear, etc. -- similar to what you can use to get a feeling about someone's personality (Martin, 1992a, p.109).

Corporate culture can be looked at as a system. Inputs include feedback from, for example, society, professions, laws, stories, heroes, values on competition or service, etc. The process is based on our assumptions, values, and norms, e.g.,

our values on money, time, facilities, space and people. Outputs or effects of our culture are, for example organisational behaviors, technologies, strategies, image, products, services, appearance, etc (Geertz, 1973, p.25).

The concept of organizational culture is particularly important when attempting to manage organisation-wide change. Practitioners are coming to realize that, despite the best-laid plans, organisational change must include not only changing structures and processes, but changing the corporate culture as well (Deal and Kennedy,1982).

There has been a great deal of research generated over the past decade about the concept of organisational culture, particularly in regard to learning how to change organisational culture. Organisational change efforts are rumoured to fail the vast majority of the time. Usually, this failure is credited to a lack of understanding about the strong role of organizational culture and the role it plays in organisations. That is one of the reasons why a number of strategic planners now place as much emphasis on identifying strategic values as they do mission and vision.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco, 2002) describes national local culture as "... regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". In 1952, Alfred Kroeber and

Clyde Kluckhohn (2003) compiled a list of 164 definitions of culture in "Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and definitions''. These definitions, and many others, provide a catalogue of the elements of culture. So religion, marriage, laws, tools etc. form a symbol of national or local culture. Theorists such as Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) or the Leavisites regard national local culture as simply the result of "the best that has been thought and said in the world". Arnold contrasted mass/popular culture with social chaos or anarchy. On this account, culture links closely with social cultivation: the progressive refinement of human behavior.

Arnold consistently uses the word this way: "... culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (1880, p. 30). It is clear then that in any society people regard their culture as what is best for them in the environment they live in. Modern cultural theory considers the possibility that culture itself is a product of stabilization tendencies inherent in evolutionary pressures toward self-similarity and self-cognition of societies as wholes.

However the influence of local culture and its impact at the work place where an organisational or corporate culture is already in place has been largely ignored by companies venturing into the internationalization of their business. This critical factor which plays an important role in the firm's international performance and expansion is largely overlooked. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this important issue extensive empirical research and theory development have been

carried out by many international business researchers (e.g. Anderson and Gatignon, 1986, Buckley, 1998, Ghauri and George, 2005 et al). Limited research has been done in the area of an American corporate organization establishing itself into the Middle Eastern Arab culture and successfully integrating and expanding their business. When the oil industry emerged, oil companies solely ran the business until such a time when they handed it over to locals and withdrew totally. Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) in Bahrain is an example of this. But today the scenario is that an American company, due to its own global expansion needs, must employ locals and thus is forced into an exposure to the local culture and ways.

A number of influencing factors that govern the entry of an American corporate into other cultures such as the firm size, its international experiences and differences in national culture, have been investigated intensively in previous research (Schein, 1999, Buckley, 1998, Ghauri and George, 2005 et al). Statistical surveys restricting the field to economic factors may easily lead to wrong or inconsistent conclusions. Moreover the studies were not focused on the influence of the employee's national culture has in shaping his perceptions and values at the workplace and thus impacting his productivity. The results of sample based surveys depend on sample quality, which is difficult to control (Zhao and Decker 2004). Consequently this issue encouraged the author to explore the role that an employee's national culture played in the work place narrowing down the sample to an American company, EDS, in Bahrain.

Moreover as the researcher is part of EDS in his capacity as an employee, he has an insider's view from the manager's side as well as the employee's side. The greater advantage being that since the researcher is from the local Bahraini culture it helps him understand and interpret the cultural nuances that are important to the local employee. At the same time being trained in the corporate culture of EDS, the researcher also understands the corporate policies put in place for the smooth running of the company.

The Researcher

The primary motivation for commencing this study stems from the researcher's observation of the problems associated with the cultural diversity at EDS, which is his own workplace in Bahrain where he has been an employee since 2001. As a local employee educated in the West his position in the company was unique. He was able to gain the trust of the EDS managers and was seen as ''one of them''. The locals looked upon him as someone who grew up in Bahrain and knew all the customs and the influences that played a major role in their lives. Being in this vantage point he could see the conflict and understand it from both sides. These problems are linked to the divergence between the national culture of the local employees who constitute the majority of the total workforce, and the company's American corporate culture. Both the local employee as well as EDS managers felt that they could talk to the researcher and their viewpoint understood. It was observed that the lack of awareness of the influence culture played in the lives of the local employees created conflict and misconceptions at

the work place. The dissemination of corporate policies to the local employees also created a sense of alienation and suspicion amongst the local employees.

Corporate policies are structured to be implemented at the work place. However no empirical research has been conducted to understand the factors that EDS policy makers should pay attention to when setting down policies for a particular work environment. What are those factors and what is their impact on local employees? These issues stimulated the researcher to explore further.

1.2.1 Critical view on the differences in culture between EDS and Bahrain

The differences between the two cultures are part of the wider phenomena of divergence which exist between the American culture and the non-American national cultures which are inherent in various non-American parts of the world.

These phenomena pose a challenge to EDS in Bahrain. Brooks and Rotman (1998, p. 1) argue:

"The new challenge that has recently appeared on managements' horizon is the complication provided by having to deal with diverse, rather than homogeneous cultures within North American operations, and more particularly, cultures different than their home or parent culture when they operate in foreign markets".

However, considering the personal experiences of the author and the experiences of other employees as well as literature review, it became evident that EDS has been demonstrating a weakness in implementing policies that adequately address the significance of the cross-cultural issue in Bahrain.

1.3   Research Question and Objectives

The main research question is": What Lessons can American Companies Learn in Adapting to Local Cultures? : A Case Study of EDS in Bahrain"

To answer this question the following questions have been considered during this research:

- What are Bahraini local culture and the organizational EDS culture?

- Were any specific policies drawn up to approach and assimilate the local culture?

- What influences shape and mould the local employee?

- What is it that EDS could have done better in integrating a local employee into its corporate culture?

- What are the key factors that EDS should have taken into account while venturing to do business in Bahrain?

On the basis of the above questions the primary objectives of this research are:

- To identify patterns of assumptions when expanding business into alien cultures and influences which are key factors to success in that environment.

- To critically review existing literature of the mainstream theories on culture and modes of establishing business by American companies in the Middle East.

- Design an appropriate research methodology and methods to explore the research question.

- Finally to develop a framework that can be adapted by any American company venturing to do business in the Middle East thereby providing an original contribution to knowledge and practice in the area of corporate and national culture.

1.4   **Research Methodology**

The philosophical framework of the research is based on national culture that focuses on attempting to discover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in forming their perceived realities through social influences. (Crotty, 1998, Schwedt, 2000). As meaningful realities are socially constructed, people understand change through the filters provided by their own cultural experiences. (Crotty, 1998). This research is focused on looking at ways in which an American company can create an environment conducive to growth of the business as well as the employee in the strategic market that it is venturing into. Since socially constructed reality is an ongoing and dynamic process it is believed that mainstream corporate cultures may be adapted to suit the new cultural environment it strives to be a part of. To understand how this can be done the policies of the company as well as the perceptions of employees must be

interpreted. This will lead to a theoretical perspective and a framework for functioning in an alien culture which may be useful to American companies venturing into the Middle East.

Guided by the philosophical and intangible nature of data considered, the qualitative research methodology has been found most suitable for this study. As is suited to qualitative research semi –structured interviews were conducted to get substantial data to attain the research objective. 5 Bahraini and 5 expatriate employees from various departments and from middle to upper management were interviewed. The researcher himself is part of the research since he belongs to the local culture and is employed by EDS, and is therefore able to offer his insights of his total experience. Hence reflexivity is a major tool in the analysis of data. Miles and Huberman (2003) and Strauss and Corbin's (1998) evaluation frame work of trust worthiness and relevance criterion is employed to evaluate this qualitative research.

1.5   Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is constructed into six chapters. **Chapter One** provides an introductory overview of the thesis. By presenting the background to the research and briefly reviewing the issues of the current literature it addresses the research question and the research objectives. Then the overview of research methodology is applied to this research. Finally the structure of the thesis is outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Two details the theoretical foundation this research is based on. It involves a detailed review of the relevant literature research conducted in the past. This chapter examines critically the existing theories of cultural integration when organizational culture has to co-exist with local cultures. Most of such premises have evolved from corporate cultures having to cope with national cultures of western developed countries. Here the cultural integration of the research issues with a national non-western culture are highlighted and research gaps identified.

Chapter Three describes the methodology which was built on the philosophical paradigm used for this study. In this chapter epistemological and philosophical issues are reviewed and arguments are established which determine the research methodology from a theoretical perspective. Justifications of methodologies and methods used for data collection and analysis in this research are outlined in detail. Limitations of the research methods and ethical issues are explored at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Four studies the performance of EDS in Bahrain. Once the research portfolio is established, the findings of the study are presented in relation to EDS' experience in Bahrain. The findings are then compared and integrated with the existing theories and modes that are discussed in literature review chapter.

Chapter Five investigates and details the complete structure of the findings within the main frame of knowledge in relation to the experience of EDS in the local culture and the integration difficulties it faces with its clear lack of understanding of the nuances and influences of the local culture. The conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings and discussions provided in the previous chapters are outlined here. The researcher's role as a participant during this research journey is also identified. The researcher outlines his personal and professional growth enhanced by the experiences of this intellectual journey as a DBA student.

Chapter Six is a summary of the whole research. A contribution to theory and practice put forth to act as a guideline for American companies to use and implement when setting out to do business in local cultures. The author offers his epistemological reflexivity and methodological reflexivity in this chapter.

1.6   Chapter Summary

This chapter is the foundation of this thesis to explain how the research has evolved, how it has developed and been designed and conducted. By introducing the background as to what stimulated the research question this chapter provides an overview of the contents of each chapter. This helps the researcher as well as future students to review this as a whole process and understand the various steps taken and methodology used to understand this topic. With this as foundation, the following chapters have been presented in detail.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study of corporate culture became an integral part of management research in the 1980s. The growth of Japanese industry and the decline in American industry caused grave concerns as to the state of American industry faced with competition from outside. In a global competitive environment, the managers started realizing that the competitive edge went beyond technology, finance and marketing (Bernstein, 1988). Though the studies were extensive there still emerged contradictions. Some of the influencing factors related to corporate culture, especially the experience of American corporations conducting business in local cultures have produced inconclusive results. Therefore it has been suggested that more empirical studies should be conducted in this area (Zhao and Decker, 2004; Cannon, 1993).

To build a theoretical foundation on which to base this research and to justify and then further clarify the research question of this study, a literature review in detail is provided in this chapter on the influence of corporate culture on employees belonging to the local culture with main focus on the experience of EDS in Bahrain.

Since corporate culture varies from organisation to organisation it is essential to define what the term corporate culture means exactly in different contexts. The

term national local culture or national culture is then explored as it varies from country to country concentrating on Bahrain and its national culture. Since Bahrain is in the Middle East, largely the Arab culture is predominant mixed with influences of Indian, Persian cultures as well. So a review of Arab culture is also included in this literature review. An overview of American culture is also included in this chapter. The distinct features of corporate as well as national culture are discussed along with the motives for the internationalization of American companies. The advantages as well as disadvantages are examined referring to previous studies that may further strengthen the frame work of this study. The different aspects of each culture and the effect they have on the employees are explored. Factors that impact the success of the venture as well as the work environment are studied, followed by a critique on the need for more relevant data regarding American corporations doing business in local cultures.

Reviewing all the gathered data, the factors that need to be looked into before venturing to do business in local cultures by American companies is highlighted and explored from different perspectives. The aim of the research is to evolve a mutually beneficial practice that will not only help EDS succeed in Bahrain overall but also set out a practice that American companies setting out to establish business in Bahrain can follow. A review of relevant theories and concepts that support the analysis conducted in the following chapters are explored in this chapter.

2.2 <u>Culture</u>

Literature shows that there have been difficulties in defining culture. Schein (1992, p. XI) argues, "The concept (culture) is hard to define, hard to analyze and measure". Schein, (1992, p. 7) also elucidates, *"Most people have a connotative sense of what culture is but have difficulty defining it abstractly".*

However, it can equally be argued that many sociologists share similar views when defining culture. Martin, (2002, p. 91) explains, *"Many culture researchers define culture in approximately the same way – in terms of cultural manifestations that are shared by most cultural members.* In an interview carried out by Psychology Today, May-June, (1994, p. 1) John Kotter of Harvard University defined culture as: "Shared values and behavior norms. Shared values are basic preferences about good and bad that most people in a group share in common". Authors agree that culture is a trait possessed by the human species and a majority of writers, view that people from different cultural backgrounds have differing perspectives, manifested in their values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. In order to further narrow the definition of culture, it is important to discuss how culture comes into being. Anthony, (1994, p. 98) writes that, *"Culture emerges from history, is rooted in practice, sustained by structures and becomes habitual – and therefore unconscious and unthinking – as the result of routines of repeated behaviour".* Additionally Kroeber, (1963, p. 61) defines culture as *"That which the human species has and other social species lack… That, in short, is what we learn from other men and women, from our elders or the past, plus what*

may add to it". Moran and Harris (1982) view culture along similar lines and say that ideas, habits, attitudes, customs, and traditions become accepted and somewhat standardized in a particular group. Kluckhohn summarizes that culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting which are acquired and transmitted by symbols; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.

The author of this thesis maintains the use of Hofstede's (2001) definition of culture for the purposes of this piece of research. Under this definition, culture becomes a product of ones mental programming which in turn begs the assumption that human behaviour is predictable. Human beings share certain aspects of their mental programming which they tend to derive from their established social systems. Hofstede (2001) distinguishes three levels of mental programming that are highlighted in Table 2.1 (below).
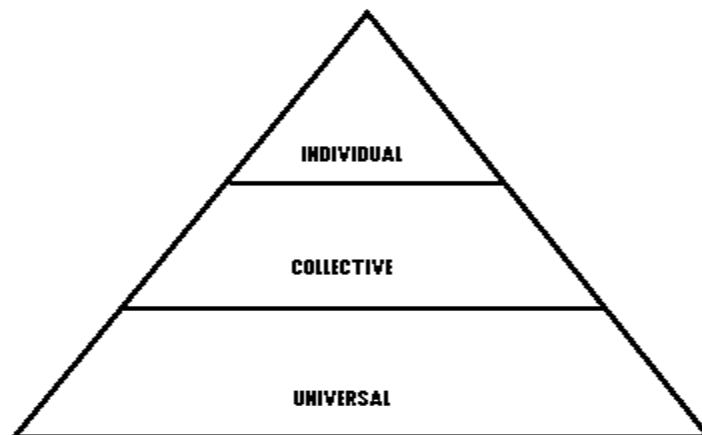
Table 2.1 Levels of Mental Programming. (Hofstede, 2001, p.3)

The universal level of mental programming (found at the base of the triangle) refers to a common type of programming that almost all of us share. The second level (namely the level that is most pertinent to this thesis), refers to mental programming that is shared by some but not all people. Specifically Hofstede (2001) defines it as being, "…common to people belonging to a certain group or category, but different from people belonging to other groups or categories" and it is within this realm that subjective human culture belongs (Hofstede, 2001, p. 2).

The final level is the individual level which refers to the fact that none of us are programmed in the exact same manner and it is here that we are able to account for a wide range of behaviours within the same collective culture (Hofstede, 2001, p.2). As mentioned previously, for the purposes of this thesis, the collective level is the most effective definition of culture. Hofstede (2001) points out that, "The word culture is usually reserved for societies (operationalised as nations or as ethnic or regional groups within or across nations). Basically, the word can be applied to any human collectivity or category: an organisation, a profession, an age group, an entire gender, or a family." (Hofstede, 2001, p.10). Or, as in the case of this research, it can be applied to certain sections of workers within an organization who can be differentiated by their nationality. The Bahraini employees are defined by a collective level of programming which makes them Bahrainis but within their work environment this collective level of programming differentiates them from other employees. If we view Hofstede's universal level to represent Bahraini society as a whole, the collective level can represent the

programming of local employees within EDS and the individual level will refer to the unique programming of each individual employee. We are not only discussing the corporate culture of EDS as a whole but also the meeting of two different cultures within the EDS environment.

Since the main aim of this research is to explore the impact of national culture on EDS corporate culture in Bahrain, it is important to explain the basic elements of culture. The culture in question here is the Bahrain national culture whose impact on EDS local employees needs to be explored. According to Hofstede (2001), language is the most clearly recognisable part of culture and our thinking is affected by the categories and words available in our own language (Hofstede, 2001, p. 21). It can also be noted that observers are not led by the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar or can in some way be calibrated (Whorf, 1956). Language reflects the nature and values of the culture. This element constitutes part of the research problem which relates to two main cultures of two very different countries. Hofstede et al (2002, p. 43) observe that, "Every language has evolved along with the society using it, so language differences between countries usually point to differences in culture".

Ali (1995, p. 10) states, "Arabic is a vehicle for the continuing transmission of information'' in Arab countries. Language not only ensures the continuity of national thoughts but also maintains and reinforces cultural identity". What is often referred to as a language barrier can be more deeply understood as a cultural difference. If we have sufficient knowledge of another language, we may

be able to communicate with people of a different culture but this does not imply that we truly understand their culture. As discussed previously, culture requires shared values and beliefs that are passed on through long periods of time.

2.3   Corporate Culture

Having defined 'culture' in detail, we now have a sound foundation to discuss corporate culture. The study of corporate culture became popular in the west when foreign competition started affecting profitability of the firms in the west (Feldman, 1986). The rise of the Japanese industry coinciding with the decline in American industry sent alarm bells ringing in the corporate climate. The success of Japanese industry was attributed to the Japanese culture with its unique values and belief systems which in turn contributed to increased organisational effectiveness (Ouchi, 1981). Apart from this corporate culture also evolved out of a need to look at the quality of working life and the growing need of employees for something more than just material rewards (Frost, 1985).It is in this context that the word ''culture'' itself came under scrutiny and there was an attempt to conceptualize and understand it. At the same time on an academic level the interest in the concept of organisational culture also reflected a greater interest in qualitative research and analyses based upon the ''meaning'' of work for employees and managers. With the publication of works ''In Search of Excellence'' by Peters and Waterman (1982), 'Images of Organisations'' by Morgan (1998) the concept of corporate culture was marketed. Several authors (Schien, 1999, Morgan, 1998, Peters and Waterman, 1982) claimed that

symbolic meanings are inherent in all organisations, and managers in order to succeed needed to have a deeper understanding of them. It brought about a belief amongst managers that a company with a distinctive corporate culture projected a progressive image.

The weakening of western societal values, the diminishing importance of the protestant work ethic, class differences, religion, patriarchal work systems all contributed to the growth of organisational culture. Such volatile conditions within the society decentralized the management systems and new forms of control mechanisms were required. The concept that corporate culture may help management to be in control was behind the conceptualization of corporate culture in the late 1980s.

Corporate culture was defined by Denison as ''the set of values, beliefs, and behaviour patterns that forms the core identity of an organisation (1984, p.5). The measurement of corporate culture was based on ''individual perceptions of organisational practices and conditions; these perceptions were used to characterize the culture of each organisation (Denison, 1984, p.8).

Corporate culture is a kind of image for the company which top management would like to project. Its concept became popular in the last quarter of the 20th century. According to Deal and Kennedy, (1999, p. 40) ''the idea of culture has been legitimized in the 1980s and 1990s." Mooji, (2004, p.1) shares a similar

view as he believes "Interest in corporate culture is a late 20th century phenomenon", but he contends "So far corporate culture has been of sole interest to business scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and management consultants".

One of the areas which the corporate culture literature review discusses is the relationship between corporate culture, companies, and their employees. It shows that the strengths and weaknesses of companies are linked to the companies' corporate culture as there is a strong link between employees' performance and the corporate culture they work within.

Thompson (2003, p. 1) stated "Corporate culture refers to a company's values, beliefs, business principles, traditions, ways of operating, and internal work environment". Similarly, Deal (1998) wrote that these elements make up a company. This indicates that corporate culture greatly affects companies' performance and that the degree of business performance depends on the strength of the culture. This view is supported by Deal and Kennedy (1999) that the major exponents of corporate culture present a strong culture as a key factor in enhancing competitive performance through greater employee commitment and flexibility. They also explained that employees in strong cultures know what is expected of them, but staff in weak cultures waste time trying to discover what is required. Employees identify with strong cultures and take pride in their organisation. Mooji, (2004, p.1) agrees with this view as he links the strengths

and weaknesses of a company to its corporate culture "Corporate culture is one of the key factors underlying a company's success".

Articles in journals and popular business culture have reflected the interest in corporate culture as they regarded culture as a significant player in enhancing performance and in bringing success to businesses. Sorensen (2002, p. 1) states "Much popular and scholarly attention has been focused on the hypothesis that strong cultures enhance firm performance. This hypothesis is based on the intuitively powerful idea that organisations benefit from having highly motivated employees dedicated to common goals (e.g., Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Quantitative analyses have shown that firms with strong cultures outperform firms with weak cultures (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Gordon and Di Tomaso, 1992; Burt et al., 1994)".

An organisation's culture is socially created by attempting to change norms, values and attitudes in order for them to make ''correct'' contribution to enhance organisational effectiveness. The conflict arises in this approach in assuming that an individual and a group share the same value systems and beliefs. In a study conducted by Grey and Gelford (1990) on American and Canadian corporate systems they found that the reward systems, performance emphasis and corporate image were the main advantages of the system. But the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. The lack of strategic clarity and direction affected decision making which led to conservative goal setting, poor job challenge, and

limited opportunities for career advancement. This inhibited corporate vitality and management drive. It made the corporation relatively static and bureaucratic.

Despite emphasis on personal accountability in achieving goals and performance, employees could not relate their own efforts to the overall performance of the corporation. Grey and Gelford (1990) recommended that Canadian and American organisations should invest in education and training.

DeFrank, Matteson, Schweiger and Ivancevich (1985) conducted an empirical and objective study on the impact of national culture on the management practices of Japanese and American CEOs. The Japanese like the Arabs believe that collectivist or group based society is critical for survival. While for the Japanese this evolves from their feudal system, vulnerability to natural disasters and enemies as an island nation, the Arabs feel the same in their harsh desert terrain with scarce natural resources and severe climatic conditions. This contrasts with the American Judeo – Christian ethics, Protestant Reformation and industrial revolution which emphasizes the right of the individual to his identity and progress. This brings about an opposing attitude to work. The history of shorter national evolution of the Americans with sudden national growth is no comparison to the centuries of history and struggle for national, economical, and political evolution by other nations. The results indicated that national culture had a significant influence on management practices and work attitudes.

2.4   American Culture

America is a culturally diverse society. The metaphor often used to describe this is the ''melting pot''. People from various cultures around the world bring their cultures here and throw them into the American pot. However there is also a dominant culture and immigrants become a part of this culture by giving up their differences so that they can become a part of the mainstream American society.

A more historically accurate metaphor is that the US has had a cultural cookie cutter with a white Anglo Saxon, Protestant, male mould or shape (Greeley, 1993, p.39). Religion has an important role in American culture. Those immigrants who had the most dramatic impact on American culture were the Calvinists from Europe who went to America because of religious persecution (Weaver, 2001, p.4). Americans expect their leaders to value religion. The US President ends his speech with ''God Bless America'' and ''one nation under God'' is printed on the dollar bill. While religion is a strong cultural value it is also a personal value (Weaver, 2001, p.4). The value of hard work and the belief it would be rewarded as it was for the immigrants who came to a country rich in natural resources is still a cultural value that prevails in America (Weaver,2001,p.6). Status is earned by an individual by what he does. Success is respected when it is individual success based on hard work and action. Free enterprise, market capitalism and political liberalism were built on assumptions of individual achievements (Greely, 1993, p67). Adam Smiths ''Wealth of Nations'' published in 1776 is still a treatise that defines business and cultural values of America. Americans consider themselves as men of action; self reliant

independent individualists who survived without any help from anyone (Weaver, 2001, p.7). The worst offence to an American is to suggest that he relies or depends on others for anything. Hence even families are nuclear in nature.

Americans identify themselves in terms of what they do rather than like people in other cultures as who they are (Weaver, 2001, p.8).

These values also affect the way in which Americans conduct business meetings. They tend to 'get down to business' in a meeting much more quickly than in cultures in which relationships are important (Weaver, 2001, p.9). In many traditional cultures time must be allowed to get acquainted with others and determine their status before beginning to discuss business (Weaver, 2001, p.9). The values that shape this culture are listed below (Seymour Martin Lipset, 1996, pp.18, 63-64)

Values	Description
Individuality	U.S. Americans are encouraged at an early age to be independent and to develop their own goals in life. They are encouraged to not depend (too much) on others including their friends, teachers and parents. They are rewarded when they try harder to reach their goals.
Privacy	U.S. Americans like their privacy and enjoy spending time alone. Foreign visitors will find U.S. American homes and offices open, but what is inside the American mind is considered to be private. To ask the question "What is on your mind?" may be considered by some to be intrusive.

Equality	U.S. Americans uphold the ideal that everyone "is created equal" and has the same rights. This includes women as well as men of all ethnic and cultural groups living in the U.S. There are even laws that protect this "right to equality" in its various forms. The general lack of deference to people in authority is one example of equality. Titles, such as "sir" and "madam" are seldom used. Managers, directors, presidents and even university instructors are often addressed by their first or given name.
Time	U.S. Americans take pride in making the best use of their time. In the business world, "time is money". Being "on time" for class, an appointment, or for dinner with your host family is important. U.S. Americans apologize if they are late. Some instructors give demerits to students who are late to class, and students at most universities have institutional permission to leave the classroom if their instructor is 10 or 15 minutes late.

Informality	The U.S. American lifestyle is generally casual. You will see students going to class in shorts and t-shirts. Male instructors seldom wear a tie and some may even wear blue jeans. Female instructors often wear slacks along with comfortable walking shoes. Greetings and farewells are usually short, informal and friendly. Students may greet each other with "hi", "how are you"? and "what's up"? The farewell can be as brief as: "See you", "take it easy", or, "come by some time" (although they generally don't really mean it). Friendships are also casual, as Americans seem to easily develop and end friendships.
Achievement & hard work/play	The foreign visitor is often impressed at how achievement oriented Americans are and how hard they both work and play. A competitive spirit is often the motivating factor to work harder. Americans often compete with themselves as well as others. They feel good when they "beat their own record" in an athletic event or other types of competition. Americans seem to always be "on the go", because sitting quietly doing nothing seems like a waste of time.
Direct & assertive	U.S. Americans try to work out their differences face-to-face and without a mediator. They are encouraged to speak up and give their opinions. Students are often invited to challenge or disagree with certain points in the lecture. This manner of direct speaking is often interpreted by foreign visitors as rude.

| Looking to the future and to change | Children are often asked what they want to be "when they grow up"; college students are asked what they will do when they graduate; and professors plan what they will do when they retire. |

Table 2.2 American Values

The willingness of an individual to take risks is a basic aspect of American culture even today. Change is often equated with progress and holding on to traditions seems to imply old and outdated ways. Even though Americans are recycling more than before, many purchased products are designed to have a short life and then be thrown away.

2.5   Arab Culture

As this paper is largely concerned with the national culture in Bahrain, the importance of this section stems from the fact that the Bahraini societal culture is almost the same culture which exists in the Middle East. As Bahrain is part of the Arab world where this world, according to Weir (2001), stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean, and enjoys the benefits and drawbacks of a common religion and common language.

The literature review has shown some views of various writers on the elements of culture which characterize Middle Eastern societies. These elements need to be taken into account by multinational companies as they employ individuals who

possess these elements of culture. Kamrava (1998, p. 79) views *"The informality of life that characterizes Middle Eastern societies is manifested most clearly in its various social institutions. By far the most resonant of them have proven to be the family, the tribe and its derivative ethnicity, and religion …… The extended family has retained its strength and vitality despite the onslaught of social change and its attendant consequences, such as the emergence of the nuclear family and the generation gap. Likewise, religion remains deeply embedded in people's emotions and psyches, its hold seldom affected by fads and political nuances".*

Moran and Harris, (1982, p. 240) view *"The Arabs possess a common culture that has united them by religious and historical factors. Their life is interdependent and many of its elements are inseparable and each aspect of life depends on another".*

Concerning the power in the Arab States, Weir (2001, p. 1) explains *"The Arab States typically score highly on the power/distance index. Societies of this kind are characterized as those in which skill, wealth, power and status go together and are reinforced by a cultural view that they should go together. Power is based on family, friends, charisma and the ability to use force".* He adds, *"Arab societies, according to Hofstede (1991), are moderately masculine, but there are strong sex role distinctions and the role of women is clearly identified as lying within the family domain".*

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''It is important for a foreigner to be aware of these cultural patterns, to distinguish them from individual traits'' (Nydell, 1988, p.15).In order to understand any group of people it is ''useful to begin by identifying their most basic beliefs and values'' (Nydell, 1988, p.13). Westerners tend to believe that individual is the focal point of social existence and that laws apply to all equally. Arabs believe that most things in life are controlled by fate, everyone loves children, wisdom comes with age and inherent personalities of men and women are vastly different. These beliefs play a powerful role in understanding the nature of Arabs.

The Arabs spread over the Middle East and North Africa and have vastly different food habits, manner of dressing, architectural styles and decorative arts and political values as well. Yet the Arab world is more homogenous than a westerner may be aware. Their religion Islam and a history of the glory of the Muslim empire bind them all into a common identity of Arabs. Since all their values and beliefs are influenced by Islam there is a strong bond of brotherhood and common destiny amongst them. In business relationships personal contacts are valued and quickly established. 'A good personal relationship is the most important single factor in doing business with Arabs'' (Nydell, 1988, p.22).

Usually Arabs set aside a few minutes to before commencing a meeting for enquiring about each other's health and recent activities. Arabs place great value on hospitality and sharing food with everyone around them. While working with Arabs it is important to praise them for the work that they are doing. It reassures

them as to their role and position in office. 'In the Arab way of thinking people are clearly divided into friends and strangers'' (Nydell.1988, p. 26). The politeness and generosity offered to a friend may not be offered to a stranger, making the Arabs appear uncouth and ill mannered.

2.6   National Culture of Bahrain

Hofstede, et al, (2002) describes culture as it applies to a group of people; this description could be applied to the citizens of Bahrain as a whole as they are a group of people. They explain that the way in which a group of people resolves the issues of identity, hierarchy, gender, truth and virtue is called culture. Brooks and Rotman, (1998, p. 1) have a similar conception concerning culture "Culture refers to the customs and civilization of a society or group". Kottak (2002, p. 1) defines national culture as "cultural experiences, beliefs, learned behaviour patterns, and values shared by citizens of the same nation".

Cultures, especially national cultures are extremely stable over time. This stability can be explained by the reinforcement of culture patterns by the institutions that themselves are products of the dominant cultural value systems (Hofstede, 2001, p.34). Any change occurs through trade, conquest, economical or political dominance and technological breakthroughs.

Strong national cultures have important effects in societies, Ali, (1995) sees that a strong national culture leads to the flourishing of institutional arrangements and customs and views that members of a society have a clear direction in life and an

identified set of goals when they are familiar with particular value systems and are committed to them. The significance of Islam as a social and organizing principle emphasizes collaboration and mutual humility and respect, an employer's obligation and duty of care and employees long term commitment to the organisation (Metcalfe, 2007). Employer-employee relations are based on consensus and unity (itihad), balance or equilibrium (adl); and high trust exchanges facilitated through extended family networks (naseeb) which are quite unlike the management environments in many European and US corporations (Metcalfe, 2007).

The elements of culture which have been stated by the academic writers apply to the national culture of Bahrain. Metcalfe (2007) says ''A focus on Bahrain is significant since it has embraced on an ambitious programme of economic and political reform entitled the Bahrain National Charter and is perceived as one of the most progressive Gulf States. The Charter declares a commitment to Arab-Islam and Sharia law as a guiding principle (Kingdom of Bahrain, 2001)''.

Accordingly, characterization of the Bahraini national culture is shown by Al Tooblani (1992, p. 30) *"This culture is characterized by traditions of the extended family influence, which is reflected both in its institutions and the interpersonal. Thus, traditionally, status still depends more upon family than acquired wealth, upon position rather than education, and upon age more than skill or profession. The society in Bahrain is shaped on the basis of family, neighborhood, friendships, regional, and religious affiliation rather than profession".*

The literature review showed that there is a lack of research conducted by non-Bahraini researchers regarding national culture in Bahrain; however some guides have been published by non-Bahraini authors regarding some of the important aspects of the national culture in Bahrain and the region. One of these guides was written by Jeremy Williams in 1988 and is called: Don't they know it's Friday? The guide provides general knowledge and information about the general customs in the Gulf Arab states but does not focus on the link between corporate culture and national culture.

2.7   Corporate Culture of EDS

The literature review on EDS' corporate culture showed that there is no research that has been conducted on EDS corporate culture. However, there is some literature on the company's website from which some relevant information on EDS can be obtained. Company leaders and managers can also be an appropriate source of information.

EDS publicly claims that it is adopting policies and management practices which meet its employees' needs while in practice, by contrast, it does not honour its announced values.

Thus, while EDS's Melinda Lockhart as quoted by Tucker (2002, p. 79) declares "We have an open door policy that any employee anywhere can go to any leader in the company that they feel would best address their issue", Barlow and

Stewart (2004, p. 126) state "A recent claim was brought by the New Zealand Employment Relations Authority against EDS, the giant information technology outsourcing company, for unfairly laying off staff. The authority criticized EDS for 'its gross failure to honour its own values system'. Including 'value and respect for the individual' and "keep[ing] lines of communication open". This undoubtedly contradicts another statement by EDS's Melinda Lockhart as quoted by Tucker (2002, p. 79) "Our culture was, you take care of your people and you take care of your P& L and you nurture and be kind and we'll reward and recognize you".

EDS corporate culture is mainly influenced by the western culture and hence it would not be wrong to associate some inferences, statements, views, and facts about the Western culture to it. Metcalfe (2007) citing Heran et al.(2006) highlights that ''international diversity policies of western multinational corporations when implemented in developing regions have not promoted equality as an organizing principle, rather; they have perpetuated and reproduced gender and social inequalities'' The literature review clearly shows that the west as a whole and American and European businesses in particular, place little or no importance on non-western cultures and specifically the Arab culture of which Bahraini culture is an integral part. Weir (2005) found that for many, the USA clearly was the world. Additionally, referring to the Arab world, Weir (2005, p. 4) states "This is a part of the world that we clearly do not inform ourselves about or teach our students about". Weir (2001) views that scholars of management in the West and in continental Europe are quite ignorant about the

Arab World. Weir (2005, p. 6) states "We propose that a new Orientalism has emerged in which the Arab is perceived atavistic, primitive and irrational". A similar view was shown in an article published in the Washington Post (1999) "In the West, images of Islam and Arab culture can be equally harsh".

2.8 <u>Influence of Corporate and National Culture at Workplace</u>

The role and influence of corporate and national cultures at the workplace are significant. According to Deal and Kennedy (1999), corporate culture is the most significant force behind the excellence in business performance, and it was what lay underneath the rational-technical veneer of business. The Bahraini national culture which is inherent in the Arab culture is of a similar significance, in terms of the role and influence, to corporate culture. Weir (2005, p. 1) views "Arab culture is a major influence within this region", while the Bahraini national culture itself is mainly influenced by religion. Metcalfe (2005, p. 4) cites "The strength of religious values in shaping social values and norms is prevalent within Middle East and Islamic studies (Ahmed, 1998; Pipes, 2004)", and there is no research project within the theoretical framework that discusses:

The relationship between the local culture in Bahrain and the Western corporate cultures in general, or

The relationship between the local culture in Bahrain and EDS corporate culture in particular.

One of the reasons for this can be linked to the fact that, traditionally, the Western World has not been emphasizing ethical and moral issues in its relationship with the Arab World. Moran and Harris (1982, p. 240) view *"The Western World has been cognizant of the Arab World for centuries, but the Arabs have often been approached with suspicion. Equally, trust, mutual respect, and admiration have not been characteristics of the relationship".* Another reason is that the issue of the relationship between business and culture in the Arab World has been relatively insufficiently addressed. Weir (2005, p. 3) cites *"The study of the cultures and behavior of management and business in the contemporary Arab World, as of the impact of Islam on business and management, is a relatively recent occurrence (Weir, 2001)".*

While there are potential benefits to businesses in adopting the advantages of other cultures as indicated by Hamm (2003, p. 1) who is a Western writer "There are grains of truth in all cultural perspectives and we must seek to find those truths and adopt them into our own ways of thinking and acting", and while the national culture plays a significant role in people's life in Bahrain, and despite the fact that the vast majority of employees of EDS, Bahrain belong to this country, the company's literature shows no evidence that the significance of the local employees' own national culture and its great influence on the business have been given sufficient and appropriate attention and consideration by EDS Bahrain, thus, there is no evidence that the relevant elements of their national culture are incorporated into the company's corporate culture for the purpose of

forming part of it. The reason for the existence of this phenomenon can be understood by knowing that EDS–Bahrain is a recent business outsourcer in Bahrain and its corporate culture is tied to the Western culture as EDS is based in the United States.

The second part of the author's literature review was aimed at learning about other projects which could be compared to the research. This contributed towards becoming familiar with writers and studies in the field to which this thesis could be related, and hence could gain a good level of validity and reliability.

Easterby-Smith et al, (2002, p. 9) state *"It is normally expected that dissertations will include some original data. But it is also important to demonstrate that research builds on ideas developed by others, and a good grasp of the field in question is a prerequisite for good empirical research".* Thus, the social science theoretical framework affords, amongst other related but less relevant projects, a study that was carried out by Mahmood Al Tooblani at the University of Bahrain in 1992. The study is titled 'The Cultural Dimension of Organisational Performance: An Empirical Study on Executives' Perceptions in the Bahrain Public Sector'. After comparing Tooblani's study with this thesis, it is evident that both projects address the issue of culture and organisation; however there are a number of different aspects in both researches which show that they diverge, and before embarking on discussing the differences between the two projects, here is an outline of the aspects which both studies have in common: Both projects recognize the importance of the role of culture and its influence in the success of

organisations, and both projects, integrate, within the course of the research, the task of exploring the main particulars of the Bahraini culture and their impact on the organisational performance. Al Tooblani (1992, p.32) showed that Bahraini national culture *"is characterized by traditions of the extended family influence, which is reflected both in its institutions and the interpersonal. Thus, traditionally, status still depends more upon family than acquired wealth, upon position rather than education, and upon age more than skill or profession. The society in Bahrain is shaped on the basis of family, neighborhood, friendships, regional and religious affiliation rather than profession".* However, Al Tooblani confines the discussion of the Bahraini national culture to its impact on the performance of local managers in the public sector which has been structured according to the Bahraini national culture. The author of this research proposes to build on and expand on this to study the impact of Bahraini national culture in a multinational environment with an organisational culture different to that of the national culture. Hence Al Tooblanis's (1992) discussion forms only a small part of this research. But this research will discuss the national culture more broadly, including its link to all levels of employees.

These are the aspects which both projects have in common. However, there are three other significant aspects which place Al Tooblani's (1992) quantitative research at odds with this qualitative social science research.

They are as follows:

- The organisational setting of Al Tooblani's (1992) is different to that of this study. This is demonstrated within the context of the following outline of the second and third aspects of his research.

- The purpose and objectives of Al Tooblani's research. According to Al Tooblani (1992,p.1) "The purpose of this study is to identify the cultural features that would prevail in the Bahrain Public Sector, and the main objectives of the study are to achieve a conceptual understanding of the organisational culture and its bearing on managerial performance, to identify the prevailing organisational culture factors in the Bahrain Public Sector, and to investigate the main particulars to Bahraini culture and their impact on the organisational performance".

- The author identifies the third aspect different from the phenomenon the author is proposing to study is the hypotheses of Al Tooblani's research. Strategic planning in the Bahraini Public Sector organisations is not common. There is a lack of periodic review and performance evaluation of social and theory system dimensions in the Bahraini Public Sector, which poses a barrier to effectiveness at the workplace. Leadership style in the Bahraini Public Sector uses personalized and informal methods, and conforms to community norms and expectations.

These aspects diverge with the circumstances of this social science qualitative research.

2.9   National and Corporate Culture – A Comparison

Having discussed the different aspects of culture which are relevant to my research, I conclude this section by outlining the basic difference between national and corporate culture.

National and corporate cultures have two basic similarities as both cultures relate to people's characteristics such as beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours.

Concerning national culture, Kottak (2002) views that its elements are shared by citizens of the same nation. According to the latest study (http://www.ais.msstate.edu,2004, p. 1) "Culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of their society", while the elements of corporate culture as viewed by Thompson (2003) belong to a company and they additionally include business principles, ways of operating, and internal work environment. Deal (1998) views that these elements make up a company. As much as national culture has its own rituals corporate culture is also bound by rituals, conventions and conditioning. Values are an integral part of both. National and corporate culture. Kluckhohn (1951/1967, p.395) defines ''A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of actions'' In the national culture it is the principle that one actively pursues as goals. These are important as the order in which one places them actually determines the degree to which one ascertains their significance.

Rokeach (1973, p.159-169) also defines values 'to say that a person 'has a value' is to say that he has an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or

end state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end- states of existence.'' These definitions make it clear that the word value is used to define mental patterns that can be activated for different situations. In national culture values are instilled early in peoples' lives and is non rational. For example our values will appear rational to us and values of other cultures as non rational.' Values are ends, not means, and their desirability is either non-consciously taken or for granted…or seen as a direct derivation from ones experience or from some external authority'' (Bern, 1977, p.16). People tend to hold several values simultaneously. Yet it is an interdisciplinary term and functions as the centre point of any culture. In corporate culture values are at the core of a company's philosophy for achieving success. Values provide a guideline and a common direction to all employees in their every day work environment. When employees identify and incorporate these values into their work life companies have known to succeed as an organisation. One cannot compare values with strategies and policies as they may never be written down. Whereas, in national cultures values are incorporated in its literature and folklore. Organisational cultural values gain strength from shared beliefs whereas in national culture a value is strong even if an individual stands up for it. While it gives identity in the former, it gives moral strength in the latter.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the motives of internationalisation by Western companies and how they tend to operate in local cultures. Existing literature

implies that Western corporations evolve an organisational culture which helps in motivating its employees to give peak productivity and commitment. It involves various individual and organisational behaviors influenced by different elements in key stages. Intensive research has been carried out to explore the factors that influence successful entry into markets influenced by western culture. But a comprehensive study has not been attempted to look into the operational style of American companies setting up business in local cultures especially that of the Arab world with a particular focus on Bahrain. Does a conflict arise due to cultural differences? If so, "what are the factors influencing it" was the gap in the concerned research.

This literature is generated from empirical studies and does not give great attention to the Arab world which caught the attention of the world only after oil was discovered in this region. A context and a method design have not been applied so far to study this. Hence to fill this void a meticulously designed research method will be applied to the research context and the findings scrutinized to check for reliability and dependability and relevance. This research as mentioned in chapter one will be focused on the lessons American companies can learn while setting up business in Bahrain from the experience of EDS in Bahrain. It is expected that contextual research outcomes will be achieved with new influencing factors surfacing. Towards this purpose the next chapter provides the details of the research approach and design method used to achieve the research objectives set out for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

''In our profession there is a lack of awareness even today that, in searching for truth, the student, like all human beings, whatever they try to accomplish, is influenced by tradition, by his environment, and by his personality. Further, there is an irrational taboo against discussing this lack of awareness. It is astonishing that this taboo is commonly respected leaving the social scientist in naiveté about what he is doing.''(Myrdal, 1969, p.4).

3.1   Introduction

The methodology arrived at and applied to this research is outlined in this chapter. The research design and the approach to the development of interview questions are also discussed. In addition, the reflexivity applied as an underlying thread of connection while collecting and analyzing data is also detailed in this chapter. My role as a researcher in the research process has also been included.

The chapter has been divided to clearly define the various processes of methodology but first an overview of the research approach is outlined as part of the introduction. This is followed by a discussion of theoretical perspectives and philosophical paradigms that influenced this research. Research design and the steps taken to emphasize rigour have also been detailed. The process of analysis is described in the conclusion to this chapter.

3.1.1 Overview of Research Approach

The research goal was to identify lessons American companies can learn while adapting to local cultures from the experience of EDS in Bahrain. In order to arrive at that goal national culture and organisational culture were studied. Then Bahraini national culture and organisational culture of EDS were studied. This led to the research question 'What lessons can American Companies Learn in Adapting to Local Cultures? : A Case Study of EDS in Bahrain"

From this evolved objectives which are:

- To identify patterns of assumptions when expanding business into alien cultures and influences which are key factors to success in that environment.

- To critically review existing literature of the mainstream theories on culture and modes of establishing business by American companies in the Middle East.

- Design an appropriate research methodology and methods to explore the research question.

- Finally to develop a framework that can be adapted by any American company venturing to do business in the Middle East thereby providing an original contribution to knowledge and practice in the area of corporate and national culture.

After examining the existing literature on organisational cultures and local cultures, the influence of local culture at the workplace has been reviewed. Building on the research gaps identified, research questions for this study were

formulated. This chapter discusses the most suitable way to conduct research, and discusses methodology and methods adopted for this piece of work. Based on Crotty's (1998) epistemological paradigm, the philosophical debates and the position underpinning this research are looked into in the beginning. Citing social constructionism and interpretivism as epistemological and philosophical stances, the researcher's decision to opt for qualitative methodology and semi-structured interview research method for this study will be discussed. Discussion of ethical considerations and the limitations of the research will follow. The focus of this chapter thus is on the accuracy of the way the author has collected appropriate data to explore the research questions.

A number of pilot interviews were conducted by the researcher to improve his interviewing skills (detailed in 3.10.2). Before going into actual interviews advice from experts was sought to reassure that his method of interviewing would help him collect the data required for this research.

3.2   Ontology and Epistemology

Social ontology is concerned with 'what is' within 'the nature of existence' (Crotty, 1998: 10). Philosophers have declared this as social scientists' assumptions about reality (Durant, 1953; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2006). Epistemological assumptions explain how a researcher begins to understand the world and communicate this as knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). It is influenced by assumptions of ontology about the way the

world operates (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2006; Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and provides a philosophical framework for researchers to decide whether that knowledge is adequate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994). It helps researchers to justify research methodology used for the research and clarify the research design. According to Crotty (1998), there are 3 main epistemologies: objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism. Social constructionism is the epistemology the author holds for this research.

As suggested by Crotty (1998, p.23) and Marshall (1994, p.43), social constructionists insist that society is produced by human beings. The social world is an interpretive net woven by individual and groups. From this viewpoint, the social phenomena exist not just 'out there' but in the minds of people who construct meanings and knowledge through an on-going dynamic social process between individuals (Gergen, 1985, p.65). Moreover, Crotty (1998, p.46) emphasizes that a social constructionism shapes the way in which people look at the world holding their culture on them. In this research my strong belief in my culture and religion, my experience in working in multinational organisations and my ambition to grow in my career at EDS influences the analysis. Crotty (1998, p. 54) noted that "we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed upon us by our culture. Our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning". People, either individual or groups, depend on culture to direct their behaviours and organize their experiences. Social reality is a function of shared

meaning (Marshall, 1994). However, function does not exist without culture. It can be seen that humans do not create the natural world but make sense of 'the world' through their culture that is already embedded. These socially constructed meanings can be explored in different ways. Various theories such as Cognitive Flexibility theory, Generative Learning theory and Social Cultural theory were studied along with Social constructionism theory. However the theory of Social constructionism was found the most suitable for this research.

3.3   Theoretical Perspectives

Social science focuses on the social life of human beings; hence there is a definite relationship between philosophy and social science. Unlike natural science, research in social science is based on people's perception of their world and how best they understand it. (Bryman, 2001; 2004). These perceptions help researchers in developing their research strategy and identify research methods (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Kumar, 1999; Crotty,1998, p.18). The research philosophy adopted by the researcher has key assumptions about the way in which he or she reviews the world (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2006; Luckman and Zerger,1967). The knowledge and how it is developed is an important issue in social sciences. A fresh look at fieldwork in social sciences and the inadequacies of quantitative research led to a restructuring of research theories and techniques currently in use in anthropology and social sciences. This resulted in Qualitative research finding its ''intellectual place in the academy'' (Schwandt 2003, p.293).

Since the aim of research is to develop knowledge as defined by Caelli, Ray and Mill (2003, p.190) this needs to be ''rigorous, demanding and meticulous'', these processes run throughout the entire research. This ensures that the ''knowledge that is developed is not flawed and therefore of little use to the discipline it purports to inform''. Keeping this in mind the philosophical underpinnings are outlined below. This will establish my role as the researcher clearly, define the interrelations between methodology and method, the rigour and the analytical lens will be explained and how the researcher has interpreted data will be clear.

The goal therefore is to prove the consistency between the research question, the method, data collection, and analysis techniques which indicates as per Morse and Richards (2002) a benchmark of good qualitative research.

3.4 Philosophical Paradigm of this Research

Different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world (Crotty, 1998, p.76). Based on the belief that reality is socially constructed by individuals and determined by the way in which researchers interpret and understand it, the researcher has adapted the social constructionist position to guide the research design and methodology throughout this study. As suggested by Crotty (1998, p.90), individuals construct meanings in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. Reviewing the existing cultural integration theories and concepts, meanings are mainly created on the basis of Western organisational culture and its experience. It is questioned whether the knowledge

socially constructed through a Western cultural lens would be valid in a local culture which is influenced by religion.

Cohering with the social constructionist viewpoint, the interpretive paradigm is adopted for this research to study lessons American companies can learn from the EDS experience in Bahrain. It is important to explore if EDS has taken any measures to know the extent of the alienation the local work force and foreign managers perceived. The subjective experience of the local employees and foreign managers enables me, the researcher, to define their meanings and to help understand their world in relation to the phenomenon this research investigated.

3.5   **Qualitative Research**

Research methodology is a strategy or plan of action that shapes the choices of particular research methods. It must enable researchers to achieve the desired outcomes (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005; Mason, 2002; Crotty, 1998, p.89). The term 'qualitative research' means any type of research that produces findings which are not arrived at by statistical procedure or other means of quantification.

Qualitative researchers are interested in social interactions and the meanings of these interactions (Dey, 1993; Wolcott, 2001; Holliday, 2002; Flick, 2002; Marris, 2000). In other words, a piece of qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people (Marshall and Rossman, 1999;

Gill and Johnson, 1997; Oakeshott, 1998). Qualitative researchers attempt to capture meaning in its natural data setting (Bryman, 2001; Robson and Foster, 1989; Black and Champion, 1976). This research adopts social constructionism with the purpose of exploring how corporate culture or organisational culture impacts people from local cultures into integrating themselves into the company, and how individual decision-making without a guideline and awareness of the nuances of the local culture affects the the corporation. The researcher is a part of the "lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.11) of the local employees at the same time moving ahead in the hierarchy of the company by his sheer determination to integrate without losing his identity. In effect it becomes an explorative study with the focus on the personal experiences of the foreign managers of EDS and the local employees. This naturally makes qualitative methodology the ideal choice because it enables the researcher to study in depth the embedded influences that culture wields in the minds, habits and routine of people in a local culture. The local employees interpret their social world from a different perspective than the result oriented organisational culture.

3.6   Social Constructionism

An interpretive approach looks for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world (Crotty, 1998, p. 67)". From an interpretive point of view, to understand a particular social action, meaning in an action must be found and interpreted, and constructed afterwards (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003;

Crotty, 1998; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). Social researchers adopting an interpretative stance face "a double interpretation: the researcher is providing an interpretation of others' interpretations" (Bryman, 2004, p.15).

In summary, the aim of social research is to produce insights (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005; Chalmers, 1999; Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Hollis, 1994; Silverman, 1993). These insights, to be accounted as knowledge, must be justified as a 'true' belief. In the act of justifying, all research is based on researchers' own assumptions about how the world is perceived and how people can best understand it (Burrell and Morgan, 1989; Crotty, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

In Constructivism/Interpretivism the following happens to the researcher:

- Learners build personal interpretation of the world based on experiences and interactions.

- Knowledge is embedded in the context in which it is used (authentic tasks in meaningful realistic settings).

- Create novel and situation-specific understanding by "assembling" knowledge from diverse sources appropriate to the problem at hand (flexible use of knowledge).

- Believes that there are many ways (multiple perspectives) of structuring the world and its entities.

- Believes that meaning is imposed by the individual rather than existing in the world independently.

3.6.1 Theoretical position

The experience of EDS in Bahrain in adapting to the local culture whilst conducting its business practice and how its corporate policies affected the local employees is the main focus of this research. An interpretive social constructionivist approach has been adopted since it helps to focus on the perspectives from both sides. The cultural differences that exist and the pre conceived perceptions that come into play in any interaction between two groups of people is the analytic lens through which the researcher has conducted his study.

As the researcher my role in the research positions me in the interpretive paradigm. Since I am an EDS employee I am part of the continuous day to day experiences in the local employees' context. In qualitative research the interpretive methodologies are based on the "lived in" experiences of people whereas the critical research paradigm is based on the social and historical construction of thinking in order to achieve social changes. In interpretative methodology the aim is to understand why conflicts of perceptions occur and what can be done to change it and use the conclusion as a practice.

3.6.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

''Qualitative research is a non mathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme.'' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.11).

It is designed as an explorative study with a focus on personal experiences of EDS' foreign managers as well as local employees. This consequently leads to the choice of qualitative methodology which enables the author to probe the EDS managers' unique international experiences and the difference in organisational and local culture.

3.7   Research Methods

Though a number of methodological critiques are issued by international business researchers (e.g. Moffat and Wood, 1995; Nakos, Brouther and Moussetis, 2002; Siu and Kirby, 1999; and Shi, Ho and Sui, 2001) without exception, previous empirical studies in this area were based on a sample survey (Dunning, 1988; Anderson and Gatignon, 1986; Erramilli and Rao, 1990 etc.).

When a survey research method is adopted, researchers are often limited by influencing factors which are based on previous hypothesis. However, restriction to selected factors may easily lead to wrong or inconsistent conclusions and make it difficult to gain deeper insight into cultural integration. The quality of the sample for the survey is difficult to control (Zhao and Decker, 2004). Most empirical research in prior studies sets out to test cause and effect relationships by using quantitative hypotheses. However the questionnaire survey method adopted in the past studies cannot provide a richness and depth of understanding of religion as part of a culture and its dominating effect. A more holistic philosophical approach and methodology are employed for this study.

Taking all factors into account a quantitative survey based upon positivist approach is not suitable for this research because the detection of influence of culture in the daily routine of local employees is not easy to achieve through survey data. The approach to work of a local employee involves many social factors and needs in-depth exploration that cannot be achieved by a statistical survey. To explore cultural integration issues rich data is necessary and essential. Considering this research is exploratory in nature, being consistent with social constructionism and interpretivism, a qualitative research method is appropriate to answer the research questions of this study.

There are numerous qualitative research methods but semi-structured interviews were found most suitable for data collection technique in this research. There are different types of interviews in qualitative research. The most recognized categories of interview are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Bryman, 2001; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005; Saunders et al, 2002; Wengraf, 2001). Different purposes of research questions lead to different types of interviews. Interviews are a relatively informal style that involves at least two or more people in a conversation or discussion (Kahn and Cannell, 1957). Beyond a 'question-answer' format, qualitative interviews are more active and increase interaction between researchers and informants and thus makes it the best means for the collection of qualitative data (Bryman, 2001; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005; Manson, 2002; Saunders et al, 2000). A semi-structured interview format was selected instead of structured interview and unstructured

interviews. The structured interview technique is not suitable for this study because it does not give the researcher opportunities to probe deeply in discovering new clues (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) whereas an unstructured interview gives interviewees the opportunity to talk freely about the events. However, many social researchers (e.g. Bryman, 2001; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005; Johnson, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; King, 2004 etc.) claim that an unstructured interview is very complex and hard to control. As a new qualitative researcher, it is risky to adopt this technique and control the interview effectively. In fact, Mason (2002, p.62) argues that the term 'unstructured' interviewing is a 'misnomer' because "no research can be completely lacking in some form of structure". Subsequently it was decided that the semi-structured interview format is the most suitable research method to gain insights into the perceptions that drive EDS managers and local employees.

3.7.1 Methods of data collection and analysis

This research employs empirical data collection techniques to gather data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data gathering techniques aim at exploring in great depth the nature and origins of employees' viewpoints and at gaining the sort of insight into people and situations required. Van Maanen (1983, p. 9) defines qualitative techniques as, "An array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world".

Data collection processes are associated with and followed by data analyses. Consistent with the views of Thorne (2000), the research employs qualitative data analysis methods which rely on inductive reasoning processes to interpret and structure the meanings that can be derived from data, as these processes use the data to generate ideas or conclusions. Silverman (2001, p. 32) views "The methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data".

The collection and analysis of data, in this paper, are carried out through the use of subjective research methods which are associated with the social constructionism paradigm. According to Easterby-Smith et al (2002), within these methods there is no clear separation between the three stages of research process which are:

- The collection of data.

- The analysis of data.

- The writing up process of the research.

Considering my interpretative philosophical orientation, the extent of the resources that are available, the goals of the research, the nature and content of the problem, I understand that the epistemological perspective steers me towards adopting a narrative analysis strategy in conducting my qualitative research. Thorne (2000, p. 1) views "Narrative analysis is a strategy that recognizes the extent to which the stories we tell provide insights about our lived experiences". The narrative analysis strategy is also appropriate since the

analysis is interspersed between the initial data I obtained and the final story which I will write up to my audience. Being a social constructionist, and based on my awareness of reflexivity I interpret reality and thereby construct it, and will therefore make explicit the researchers perspectives in the research.

The following sub-sections contain methods of data collection employed in this research.

3.7.2 Interviews

Qualitative interviews are used as part of the data gathering methods. The rationale behind this is the need to unfold the meaning of employees' experiences, uncover their lived world and to understand the work environment from their viewpoints. Interviews provide opportunities for these insights to be learned. Easterby-Smith et al (2002, p. 87) cite Jones (1985, p.45):

"The main reason for conducting qualitative interviews is to understand how individuals construct the reality of their situation formed from the complex personal framework of beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives in order to help explain and predict events in their world".

Interviews also help gain knowledge about participants' interpretation in regards to the phenomena under research. Cassell and Symon (2004, p. 11) cite "Kvale defines the qualitative research interview as; 'an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale, 1983, p. 174)".

Consistent with the social constructionism approach, narrative interviews are used in this research. Accordingly, unstructured and semi structured interview techniques were tried and semi structured interview was found most suitable to this research.

3. 7.2.1 Semi Structured Interviews

Based on my experience in conducting three interviews, I have chosen to conduct semi-structured interviews for the purpose of obtaining the required answers from people who are specialized in areas that I have little or no knowledge about and for the purpose of gaining insight into the views these people hold. Devault (1990) advocates that interviewing be conducted so as to allow interviewer and interviewee to cooperate in a search for topics that are meaningful to both. A good interviewer needs to consider that interviewees may not be able to discuss the subject according to the interviewer's terms. So the interviewer may have to alter his frame of reference and system in order to reconstruct a shared understanding (Holstein& Gubrium 1995, p. 56). The questions are aimed at answering the main research question. Some of these questions relate to the company's policies and its views on its corporate culture.

A semi-structured interview allows the use of a schedule of questions very much like a questionnaire, but doesn't restrict it to rigid questions which follow a pattern. Depending on the reply of an interviewee semi structured interviews allow the researcher to explore new avenues which may further the research and illuminate the research question further. It gives the freedom to prepare the

required specific questions as a series of open ended questions, for the purpose of providing an appropriate atmosphere in which the interviewees have the opportunity to expand on their responses so that more information may be derived from their accounts. In order to successfully conduct semi-structured interviews and obtain the best possible results, thorough preparation is required and there should be a clear aim of what should be the outcome. Hancock (2005, p. 14) states "Semi-structured interviews should not be seen as a soft option requiring little forethought. Good quality qualitative interviews are the result of rigorous preparation". The expertise required is to steer an interviewee through the labyrinth of his own thought processes and bring out the perceptions and conclusions embedded deep within.

3.7.3 Preliminary Research

Gathering of secondary sources of data that relate to the research question; an important empirical data collection technique is also used in my research. The sources include; newspaper articles, published documents, including reports and statistics, company publications, such as code of conduct, employees handbooks, HR policies, and security awareness. Company consent is sought before engaging in collecting information from company publications. The data are collected from websites, EDS, documents from public and university libraries, bookshops, and independent sources of related reports such as Gartner reports.

3.7.4 Review Interviews

A real sense of focus was felt with extensive literature review, collection of secondary sources of data (including data from EDS publications) and through the interviews with EDS staff in Bahrain. The primary or pilot interviews were conducted in accordance with a combination of unstructured and semi structured reflexive interview techniques. The interviewees were local employees; a Bahrain based expatriate executive and a Human Resources Manager. The selection of these respondents was based on their respective level of education, the position they hold in the company, and their experience at work. Through the interviews I gathered substantial information regarding:

- The views of the EDS managers and their perceptions of the local employees.
- The true feelings of the local employee working for EDS.
- The challenges in recognizing the national culture by the company, and EDS American corporate culture by local employees.

The relevant aspects of these interviews are contained in Chapter Four. An awareness of the techniques of conducting interviews became clear from the pilot interviews. To ask open ended questions to make people express their opinions and feelings unhesitatingly was a lesson well learnt from this experience. People tend to talk about things not related to the topic in hand but sometimes a perception reveals itself which adds to the value of this research. It helped the researcher to identify the new information emerging and hence

expand his questions to gain knowledge as well as to gently steer the interview back to its original aim.

The information gained contributed towards developing plans for the main interview stage, including the sample selection criteria. These plans are discussed in sections below, and as the findings have shown there are serious cultural challenges facing EDS in Bahrain. This understanding has helped the researcher in developing and formulating the main research question.

3.7.5 Evolution of research topic

My observations and experiences of the significant cultural conflicts during the years of my tenure at EDS in Bahrain have motivated me towards carrying out my research. Thus at different stages, the research topic itself has undergone changes, until it settled on the current research topic. Initially, the research was conducted in accordance with the following research topic: Integrating Relevant Elements of the Local Culture into EDS Corporate Culture in Bahrain. As I progressed in my taught programme, and as a result of my continuous review of the academic literature, I realized that I did not have the power to integrate elements of a culture into another. Accordingly, my research topic has evolved to the following: Exploring the Impact of the Elements of National Culture on EDS Corporate Culture in Bahrain and Understanding the Benefits of Recognizing these Elements to EDS and its Employees. Subsequently, I realised that the focus of the study needs to be narrowed down. Only then can a conclusion which

can be used in practice evolve out of my research. Therefore I modified the research question to what it now appears as:

"**What Lessons can American Companies Learn in Adapting to Local Cultures: A Case Study of EDS in Bahrain**"

3.8 <u>Rigour</u>

'Without rigour research is worthless, becomes fiction and loses utility'' noted Morse et al. (2002). Reliability and validity are the key factors needed to ensure that there is rigour in the research. Though these terms are more applicable to quantitative research and become a cause of problems in qualitative research they still argue that reliability and validity should ''remain the qualitative researcher's goal''. They emphasize the need for the following:

- Adequate preparation by the researcher

- In depth literature review

- Qualitative thought process

- Good research design

- Precise sampling technique

- Alertness to methods that are not functioning

- Pacing of the research

- Reliability of coding(ibid, p. 168-175)

Reliability determines whether the process under study is consistent or reasonably stable over time and across research methods. Kirk and Miller (1986)

differentiated between "dia-chronic" reliability which is stability of observation over time and "synchronic" reliability which is stability in the same time frame, and pointed to "quixotic" reliability, as in when multiple interviewees give a monolithic party line answer. The queries to be kept in mind in this domain are as follows: The clarity of questions, the role of the researcher, that the findings show meaningful parallelisms, paradigms and analytic constructs specified, accurate data collection, adequate coding, data quality check for deceit, bias etc, convergence of multiple observers accounts and peer review.

Validity is basically truth value. Does the study have any relevance to the people we study and is it an authentic portrait of the phenomenon under study? Kvale (1989b) emphasizes validity as a process of checking, questioning and theorizing, ''Validation becomes the issue of choosing among competing and falsifiable explanation.' Are the data context-rich and convincing, are they well linked to prior or emerging theory, are the findings internally coherent, are areas of uncertainty and negative evidence identified, are rival views and replication tackled, is the conclusion considered to be accurate by original informants and is there an accuracy of predictions, are the key queries that will determine the validity.

The terms reliability and validity can be replaced by trustworthiness and authenticity as recommended by Guba (Guba 1981, p.16). Lincoln and Guba

(Lincoln & Guba 1985, p.29) view trustworthiness being attained through the process of credibility, conformability, dependability and transferability in research. For Caelli et al rigour is implemented by researchers when they ''articulate a knowledgeable, theoretically informed choice regarding to rigour and choose an approach that is philosophically and methodologically congruent with their inquiry''. They point out that ''researchers approaches to these two issues must reflect an understanding that rigour is a deeply theoretical issue, not a technical one''. Morse et al (2002) also have the same view point.

While there maybe differences of opinion regarding the terms used there is complete agreement on the necessity for good research design and processes in qualitative research. So the research here is evaluated against the terms of Guba (1981, p.54), Guba & Lincoln (1985, p.67) and Morse et al (2002) and Morse and Richard (2002). For me as the researcher cultural conflicts and obtaining what one deserves in the workplace resulted in most of the decisions regarding the research methods. These decisions and its applications in this research are clearly defined in Table 3.1.

Elements of Rigour	Condition	Action Taken in Research
Philosophical Stance	Social Constructions	• Reflexivity
Data Gathering	Semi-structured Interviews	• Questions designed to encourage interviewees to talk about their experience. • Questions designed to include researcher reflexivity in the interviews.
Giving Voice	Recording & Transcription	• Authentic transcription of interviews, using their words to explain their experiences.
Comparison	Continuous review of Data	• Constantly questioning the data.
Expert checking	Discussions after critical review by readers	• Consistent - ongoing discussion on the research process & findings.
Comparison of Existing Literature	Searching Data Sources	• Literature on cultural conflicts, organisational culture in the Middle East. • Reports of American Companies in Bahrain.
Replicability	Transparent Methods	• Detailed notes on research decisions.

Table 3.1 Elements of Rigour

3.9   Research Design

Research design is defined by the research strategy. The research strategy should be congruent with the aim of the research. Decisions such as how data are to be collected and analysed in relation to the research questions is required.

The research design is outlined to offer the guidance for the author to conduct this research consistently during the whole research. It focuses to reveal the nuances of human experience and its qualitative nature by looking for the ability to accurately describe such experiences. Keeping this in mind the pilot study and main studies were developed. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 will show the processes involved in this.

<u>Research Design for Pilot Study</u>

No.	Process	Action Taken
1.	Setting Interview Questions	• Preliminary literature review & referring to auto ethnographic, unstructured & semi-structured approaches to interview.
2.	Categorizing Interviewees who can contribute	• Identifying managers from EDS. • Selecting interviewees from local employees.
3.	Interviews	• 3 interviews done as part of pilot study. • Field notes completed after the interviews.
4.	Transcription	• Interview transcribed & reviewed.
5.	Initial Coding	• Initial coding done using numbers.
6.	Peer Consultation on interview questions.	• Discussion with peers, specialist in HR regarding interview questions & techniques.
7.	Approach to Interview & questions modified.	• Reflexive • Re-Interviewed some • Approached people from same field but not from EDS for a neutral view.

Table 3.2

Research Design for Main Study

No.	Process	Action Taken
1.	Selecting Interviewees	• Identifying managers & decision makers from EDS. • Choosing local employees from various departments with experience & exposure with multi nationals.
2.	Contact Procedure	• E-mails inviting selected people to participate in the research. • Time for interviews set-up for positive responses. • Phone calls to check if e-mail received. • Interview time fixed for responses in affirmative. • Met personally & tried to convince people to participate. • Set up interview schedule.
3.	Interviews	• Interviews conducted in comfortable atmosphere. • Some interviews recorded. • Others field notes taken.
4.	Transcription	• All interviews transcribed & checked.
5.	Coding	• Interviews coded by segment with descriptive codes.
6.	Peer Review	• Codes discussed with peers, then refined & reduced in categories.
7.	Endorsements	• Was done post research.

Table 3.3

3.9.1 Research decisions

In practical terms taking a reflexive social constructionism approach meant carefully studying my own experience as a senior IT Infrastructure Specialist in EDS alongside my inherited culture which I share with the local employees. From this vantage point I had the opportunity to observe and interact with EDS managers who have been assigned to head its operations in Bahrain. At the same time, with Arabic being my first language, by following the faith of Islam and by being part of Bahraini culture and tradition I am able to completely understand the importance, culture and religion has in the daily routine of a local employee. I have also had opportunities to be involved in trying to resolve a range of conflicts that arose due to misconceptions about the cultural and religious differences between the local employees and the EDS managers. I have also observed misunderstandings that have arisen due to the different perceptions about the organisational culture of EDS. I was a Bahraini interviewing Bahrainis when I dealt with the local employees and a friend and co worker when I interviewed the EDS managers.

I realized that, the local employees and I do not interact or approach each other from a level playing field. Those employees that I did interview looked at my western education and the fact that my partner is from the west and felt that I had an advantage to advance my career at EDS. I understood that their perception was that I did not feel the conflict they felt with EDS organisational culture. The EDS executives on the other hand felt that being Bahraini I had the same

perceptions as the other local employees but because of my exposure to western organisational culture I did not consider the influence of culture to be a point of conflict. Both were wrong in their assumptions because when I looked at myself intensely I discovered that while career growth and ambition were strong influences on me, there was an equally strong force or influence that pulled me to align myself with my own culture and religion. Despite this there was a level of trust between the interviewees and myself which resulted in honest introspection on both sides and reciprocity (Reinharz, 1992).

3.9.2 Reflexivity

"Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research." (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999, p. 228).

Willig, (2001, p. 10). '' outlines Reflexivity thus:

"There are two types of reflexivity: personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. 'Personal reflexivity' involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research. It also involves thinking about how the research may have affected and possibly changed us, as people and as

researchers. 'Epistemological reflexivity' requires us to engage with questions such as: How has the research question defined and limited what can be 'found?' How have the design of the study and the method of analysis 'constructed' the data and the findings? How could the research question have been investigated differently? To what extent would this have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation? Thus, epistemological reflexivity encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings." Rather than to attempt to eliminate the effects of the researcher on the phenomenon under investigation the researcher should attempt to understand his effect upon and his role in the research, setting and utilizing this knowledge to elicit data (Gill and Johnson, p.147). ''Once we give up the idea that the social research can't be quantitative then the role of a researcher emerges as an active participant. Behaviour and attitudes are often not stable across contexts, and that the researcher may play an important part in shaping the context becomes central to the analysis'' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.18). Instead of eliminating reactivity its effect should be monitored. By systematically modifying ones role different kinds of data may be collected whose comparisons may greatly enhance interpretations of the social processes under study. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.104).

The researcher should attempt to understand the effects of the field role upon subjects in the research setting. The problem of reactivity is thus converted into a research tool. The researcher attempts to shape aspects of the social context in which interaction takes place by manipulating dimensions of the role to promote controlled types of reactivity.

The kind of reflexivity proposed in this research involves studying the impact of the researcher and the research strategy on the research setting and findings (Hammersley, 1992a, p.64). This includes various field roles adopted during data collection so as to ensure a 'necessary' balance between 'outsider' and 'insider' (Horowitz, 1986) between 'distance' and 'inclusion' (Pollner & Emerson, 1983); between 'detachment' and 'involvement' (Shalin, 1986).

As a researcher belonging to the local culture I understand the perceptions of the local employees and am able to contextualize the importance of culture, religion, and tradition in their daily life. The researcher also has an active role in the EDS management plus an exposure to western organisational culture and can empathize with the foreign managers in their dilemma of not being able to comprehend the behavioral patterns of local employees. Thus reflexive interviews and reflexivity in interpreting data goes hand in hand with the research methodology used. Reflexivity is important to the understanding of what happens in research. It means thinking through what one is doing to encourage insights

about the nature of social science and especially the role language, power, knowledge and social interests play in producing particular accounts.

By being reflexive in the interviews, my own perceptions as a researcher have undergone radical changes. It has allowed me to see how I cannot be separate from the culture that I am part of. It has helped change my work ethic and bring out the best in me at the workplace. It has influenced me in the way I look at people and has made me consider carefully before making judgments.

3.9.3 Sharing of stories – building trust

The sharing of my interest in the topic, my own experience as an employee of EDS and my knowledge of the local culture helped me build relationships which became collaborative in nature. In so many ways the interviewees became ''co-researchers'' (Moustakes 1994, p.15) in my research journey. My own experiences in EDS and my faith in my religion and culture were willingly shared in the reflexive semi structured interviews that I conducted. This helped me to compare experiences and refine my research methods. It also impacted my interpretation, behaviour and views in relation to the interviewees which enhanced my understanding of their experiences and perceptions (Klein 1983).

3.9.4 The Interview process

The interviewees were divided into three categories, the local employees and the EDS executives. The local employees were from different departments like HR,

technical, etc. and all of them had prior exposure to multinationals and their work environments. Since the interviews were semi structured and reflexive the questionnaire did not follow a set pattern. Rather the questions themselves evolved out of the answers given and reduced the restrictions that language barriers created. English was not the first language of 90% of the interviewees. So questions had to be reframed, explained, broken down into subcategories in order to elicit answers relevant the project. Words have different connotations to people in different cultures, for example, the word ''Inshallah '' in Arabic which literally translates as ''God Willing''. It is inherent in the culture and belief that everything that happens is God's will or in reverse only God's will shall prevail. To a westerner it doesn't mean a confirmation that the job will be done and is taken to mean, ''I will try'' and this creates an anxiety as to whether the job will be done. Due to such considerations, the length of the interviews varied in length and time. On average each interview had between 3000-4000 words. The complete set of interviews have around 50,000 words and are rich in data as well as reflecting the reflexive path taken in formulating the questions. The EDS executives are also expats from different countries and hence the definition of work and culture is seen from a different perspective. For example, Bahrainis breaking into Arabic when amongst non-Arab speakers is considered rude. The Englishman's experience in Holland was that people stuck to the common language of English in spite of the national language being Dutch. Whereas for a Bahraini it is considered rude if you speak in a foreign tongue to a fellow Bahraini since culturally they are all interlocked in a common brotherhood. Considering

the importance of rigour, it is imperative that the researcher is successful in giving voice to the interviewee. Thus the researcher is responsible for representing clearly what the interviewee meant (Whiteley, 2002). To me this translated into being utterly faithful to the interviewee's view at all times and taking their words to formulate codes and categories.

3.10 <u>Pilot studies</u>

3.10.1 The Unstructured, Reflexive Interview

As a primary data gathering method, numerous one-to-one interviews were conducted to gain confidence in interviewing methods and to understand employees' experiences and their work environment. It helped to differentiate their lived world from their perspective. In order to recognize what is relevant to the research problem, the interviewees were pre-selected in accordance with variant sets of selection criteria. Being part of the plan to achieve these purposes, I conducted an unstructured auto ethnographic, reflexive and dyadic interview. One of these interviews was conducted in accordance with a combination of unstructured, and auto ethnographic reflexive interview techniques and the other two interviews were conducted in accordance with the semi-structured interview technique. The interviewees were a local employee; a Bahrain based expatriate executive and a Human Resources Manager. The selection of these respondents was based on their respective levels of education,

the position they hold in the company, and their experience at work. The following section presents the details of this interview:

3.10.2 The Interview

Access to the company and its staff was quite feasible due to the following:

1. I have a written authorization from EDS in Bahrain to conduct the research on its premises.

2. I hold an unrestricted access to the company premises as I am a staff member.

3. I am well known to my work colleagues and since we have a good working relationship with each other, there is also mutual trust.

4. In Bahraini society 'who you are and whom you know' is important when it comes to trusting people. 'Wasta' as it is called in Arabic "relates to the recognition that power in society is related to tribal and familial structures, and that working relations in the Arab world are facilitated by recognising how to move within relevant power networks." (Metcalfe ,2007). This is developed through family connections and professional networking over generations. "Wasta involves social networks of interpersonal connections rooted in family and kinship ties and implicating the exercise of power, influence and information sharing through social and politico-business networks. It is intrinsic to the operation of many valuable social processes, central to the transmission of knowledge and the creation of opportunity"

(Hutchings and Weir, 2006, p.143). I could leverage this to gain access to people and request documents that I required. Wasta plays an important role in the Arab society. "Significantly, a number of respondents pointed to the role of Wasta (interpersonal connections) in affecting women's opportunities and argued that such connections can override gender in the workplace i.e. if women are from well-connected, prominent, wealthy families then they may have equal opportunities to their less well-connected male counterparts." (Hutchings, Metcalfe and Cooper, 2010). This applies across the board regardless of gender and depending only upon your connections to those in influential positions. 'Wasta' worked very well for me in gaining access to information and people I needed to contact for the purpose of my study.

The interviewee was selected because of his experience and knowledge as Executive Director which includes twenty years of experience with EDS (mainly in Europe but also in different parts of the world). He has been in Bahrain for four years and reports to the Managing Director of EDS in Bahrain.

Having obtained the Managing Director's consent, I spoke to my interviewee on the phone stating my request and briefly explaining to him why I was conducting the interview. This was followed by a brief meeting to explain the purpose of the interview and to answer any questions he had. In order to avoid any trace of doubt, I made my intent known to the interviewee and explained to him the

potential benefits of the outcome of the research to the company and its employees. He was happy to participate and a date and time for the interview was agreed on. Subsequently the interview was conducted at his house, as he preferred on the 10th of July 2006 and with his consent the interview was recorded.

The interview and the transcript were analyzed from a social constructionist viewpoint in accordance with the narrative analysis, and I used my experience reflexively and looked closely at interactions between myself and my interviewee. Ellis (2004, p. 197) explains "You may simply want to position yourself in your research by telling your story, then move to analyzing the stories of others, which you connect back to your story. Your focus would be on analysis of narrative". It made me realize that in an unstructured interview my lack of expertise in deftly taking control and redirecting the flow of the interview towards the area relevant to my research was a disadvantage. It also resulted in a huge volume of data which had no relevance to the topic of my research. I therefore felt a semi structured interview method should be tried out.

3.10.3 Code of Ethics

A code of ethics provides ethical principles for social research (Bryman, 2004; Robson, 2002). There are quite a number of codes of ethics established by professional committees. The code of ethics followed by the University Ethics Committee at Northumbria University at Newcastle has been strictly adhered to

in this research. Ethics arises at various stages of the research throughout till the culmination of the work. In social research issues like privacy of the interviewee, informed consent, deception etc are involved. (Bryman, 2004; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2000; Zikmund, 2000).

I have devoted a great amount of time and effort to produce a credible and presentable research paper. However, I realize that there are some limitations which offer constraints while carrying out the research. Some of these limitations are associated with conducting the research as an insider in a company where I myself am an employee. The limitations mainly relate to ethical issues that involve different stages of the research process. Kvale (1996) says that ethical decisions arise throughout the entire research process. Some of these ethical issues are interviewee's consent, his/her manager's assent, confidentiality, trust, and accurate recording of the interview. Thus, extra measures have been and will be taken to minimize these limitations which could add constraints to the study and may subsequently undermine the accuracy of the research. Additionally, 'Small power distance' management style exists at EDS. According to Hofstede et al (2002, p. 143), in this culture "Everyone is expected to have a voice in decision making and each person or group has rights and feels free to complain when those rights are violated", Tucker (2002, p. 79) quotes EDS' Melinda Lockhart "We have an open door policy that any employee anywhere can go to any leader in the company that they feel would best address their issue". This 'open door policy' will help me in overcoming staff reservations,

management restrictions, and confidentiality concerns which will arise out of the research process.

I have explained to my interviewees, my research goals and the eventual potential benefits of the same to the employees and the company. I have reassured that all interviews will be kept strictly confidential and no information will be shared with anyone without the prior consent of the interviewee.

According to Northumbria University guidelines on ethics in research (2004, p.11), "Informed consent is required when the research involves gathering personal data about individuals, or human participants". All interviewees have been shown the 'no objection' certificate issued by EDS in obtaining or revealing material pertaining to the company as part of the requirement for conducting the research. This helped build the trust necessary for stating opinions accurately and giving relevant information pertaining to the research objectives. Easterby-Smith et al (2002, p. 90) view "Failure to develop trust may well result in interviewees simply resorting to telling the researcher what they think he/she wants to know".

In order to establish an atmosphere of mutual trust it was agreed to conduct the interviews outside the workplace. Easterby-Smith et al (2002, p. 91) state "By conducting interviews in the manager's office adverse results were produced because the employees being interviewed were uncertain as to the confidentiality

of what they might say". To assure the interviewees that they could articulate their viewpoints safely and freely the choice of selecting a location was offered and a mutually convenient place was chosen for all the interviews. Privacy, convenience and a congenial atmosphere was the pre requisite for the location of the interview. According to Kvale (1996, p.125) "The interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experience and feeling".

In conducting this research, the valuable principles which are stated in the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct are taken into consideration as they apply to conducting research with human participants. The British Psychology Society Professional Practice Guidelines (1995, p.7) states that the principles outlined in the guidelines supplement for researchers with human participants are the general ethical principles to be adhered to in any research. Some of the issues that these principles address are: Consent, Deception, Debriefing, Confidentiality, Protection of Participants, and Giving Advice.

3.11 The Main Study

Based on the experience of the three pilot interviews, semi-structured interviews were conducted. It was found to be the most suitable way to collect data from people who are specialized in areas that I have little or no knowledge about and to gain information on the "lived in" experiences of these people. The questions were prepared well in advance and aimed at getting answers that will help the main research question. Some of the questions related to EDS corporate policies

and what the interviewee thought of the corporate culture prevalent in EDS. Semi-structured interviews allow the use of a schedule of questions very much like a questionnaire but the questions themselves are more like a guideline for the researcher as to the direction he should follow. The specific questions end in a series of open ended questions to provide an appropriate atmosphere for the interviewees to get an opportunity to expand their responses to include their views, observations, and opinions. This in effect becomes a collection of the "lived in" experience of people. In order to successfully conduct semi-structured interviews and obtain the best possible results, thorough preparation is required. Hancock (2005, p. 14) states "Semi-structured interviews should not be seen as a soft option requiring little forethought. Good quality qualitative interviews are the result of rigorous preparation".

3.11.1 Identifying Interviewees

In identifying the interviewees the criteria (Creswell 1998) or a purposeful sampling approach (Morse and Richards, 2001) was used to categorize the interviewees into two categories, namely EDS executives and local employees. From both sides the parameters considered were availability, willingness, exposure to multicultural environments, number of years of work experience, specialization and their current position and role in EDS hierarchy.

 'Research population' and 'sample' are two basic concepts that are discussed thoroughly in this paper for the purpose of judging the quality of my research and for knowing to whom the research applies.

The research population is EDS' 153 employees in Bahrain; 126 of these employees are Bahraini nationals, and 27 are expatriates of different nationalities whilst US nationals hold senior management level positions. This is the theoretical population but due to the large size of this population, it is not feasible to collect data from every member. I therefore selected a sample of the local employees as well as EDS management, and as the sample is from the population, this data will be applied to the rest of the population.

The accessible population was 55 employees, thus I prepared a sampling frame that listed the following information:

•   Employee's name
•   Contact details
•   Their level of English
•   Employee's cultural background
•   Years of service with EDS
•   Frequency of employee-management interactions
•   Employee's work location
•   Position held
•   Any known politically motivated views, or bias against others.

Table 3.4 Sampling Frame for Semi Structured Interviews

From this list I drew a purposive, non-probability sample. According to (Oliver 2004, p. 128), this sample is typical of research within an interpretative perspective which has been adopted in this research. For this sample I selected a list of respondents from the available population as follows:

Eight local employees categorized as: 1 female junior staff, 2 male junior staff, 2 female senior staff, and 3 male senior staff.

Four Western employees categorized as: 1 female senior staff and 3 male senior staff. These respondents were selected in accordance with the following selection criteria:

Good command of English, as all the interviews were conducted in English and not in Arabic for the purpose of avoiding any misinterpretations in translation.
Minimum of two years service with EDS. This is to ensure that they are exposed to the current work situations and understand the cultural nuances at the workplace.
Bahraini respondents who interact with the management and work in the main building where the majority of management staff is located.
Staff from different positions, principally middle management, technical, operational, and administrative.
Staff that does not have any politically motivated views or bias against one group or another. This ensures that their views are purely objective and neutral.

Table 3.5 Selection criteria for Semi structured Interviews

Access to the individual participants involved organisational and personal approaches and I followed a procedure that ensured the consent of everyone involved in the process of conducting my research. This procedure had proven to be appropriate when I conducted the three pilot interviews. Thus, before approaching any participant, I contacted their manager through telephone/email and personally explained about my research and requested their consent to interview their employee. Once this was approved, the same procedure was followed to gain the consent of the interviewee. The interview was conducted at a location which the participant was comfortable with and at a time that was convenient for him/her.

Five members of EDS management were interviewed ranging from the regional director of EDS in the Middle East to expatriate consultants who were hired on contract basis for specific jobs in EDS. Though 8 were approached 3 of them turned down the request. One of them was leaving EDS and felt that his views didn't have any relevance to the research question. I was able to recognise the importance of this employees' experience even though he was leaving but was unable to convince him to speak with me. The other two considered the research topic controversial and did not want to commit to any opinion and specifically did not want to be quoted as it might affect their careers adversely.

Details of EDS Foreign Managers

	Interviewee Initials	Sex	Nationality	Department	Position	Exposure To Other Cultures	No. of Years Overseas Assignments
1	C	M	American	Marketing	Senior Manager	UK, China, Bahrain	18
2	L	M	American	Account Managers	Regional Director	US, Ireland, UAE, Bahrain	10
3	I	M	South African	Account Managers	Managing Director	US, S. Africa, UAE, Bahrain	10
4	B	M	British	Infrastructure	Director	US, UK, Holland, Bahrain	15
5	R	M	Australian	Security	Manager	Australia, Bahrain	7

Table 3.6 Details of EDS Foreign Managers

Nine local employees were contacted and out of that group only five opted to participate in this research. Most of the local employees didn't want to be drawn into any discussions about culture, religion or their job as they felt any untoward opinion or misquoting may affect their standing in society as well as endanger their job with EDS.

Details of EDS Local Bahraini Employees

	Interviewee Initials	Age	Sex	Department	Position	Exposure to Multinationals	No. of Years with Multinationals
1	F	Mid 40's	M	Development	Architect	3	9
2	B	Late 30's	F	Help Desk	Supervisor	2	10
3	A	Mid 40's	F	HR	Middle Management	3	11
4	D	Early 40's	M	Projects	Supervisor	2	9
5	S	Early 40's	M	Data Center	Middle Management	2	8

Table 3.7 Details of EDS Local Employees

An outside opinion from the local side was obtained from an expert in the HR field who has vast experience with multinationals as well as a good understanding of the local culture. A manager in a call centre who is a local Bahraini was also interviewed to get a perspective of local employees in multinationals. An outside view of a foreign manager was also obtained to observe if the same perspectives were experienced by individuals in other Bahrain based multinationals.

Details of Other Multinational Employees

	Interviewee Initials	Sex	Nationality	Organisation	Position	No. of Years Exposed to Multinationals
1	J	M	Bahraini	HRM	HR Consultant	20
2	W	M	British	Pilots Training	Senior Manager	20
3	A	M	Bahraini	Call Center	Middle Management	10

Table 3.8 Details of Other Multinational Employees

The data collection process is detailed in the table below.

Process – Data Collection (adapted for Geswell 1998)
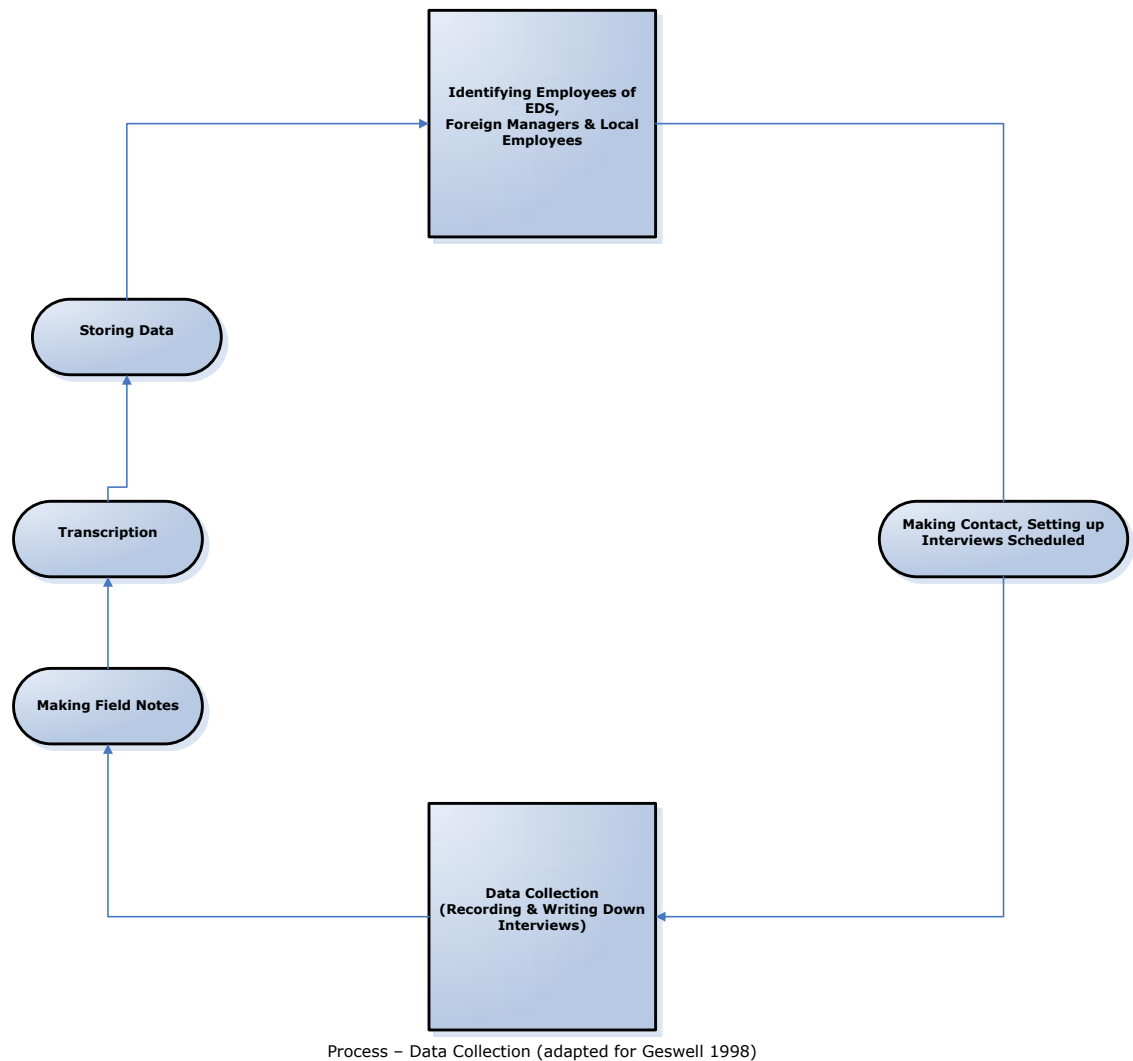
Figure 3.1 Process of Data Collection

3.11.2 Interview Process

All interviews were recorded and verbal consent as well as written consent was obtained. Demographic data was first collected at the beginning of the interview. Years of experience, their field of specialisation, and exposure to different work environments are included in this process. Data about their academic qualification were also collected.

The interviews began with an overview of the research topic, my interest in it and what I want to achieve out of this research. Once there was acceptance there was willingness to volunteer information as well as insights to relevant questions (Oakley 1981, 1999). The questions evolved through reflexivity along the lines of the pilot interviews. Care was taken to ensure that every interview covered the same areas. Follow up questions were used to go back or to raise a new topic which came up in the course of the interview (Dick, 1999). Most of the interviews took place in EDS offices. Some others were conducted in a coffee shop.

The main aim of the interview was to ensure that Kvale's (1996) ''conversation'' with the interviewee happened. This included eye contact and hand gestures as visual cues. It helped me focus on the dialogue. I did not steer them in any particular direction which allowed me to hear their ''lived in ''experiences.

Confidentiality and privacy was assured though very few wanted their names to be concealed. Each interview lasted an average 40 minutes and on average

each interview contained four to five thousand words. But most respondents gave insights after the tapes had been turned off. It was not that they saw it as off the record information (Warren, 2001) but perhaps after giving me the information they felt I needed, they relaxed and in a casual way gave me their opinions. The most interesting of insights, observations and opinions came out of these casual conversations.

3.11.3 Field Notes

Post interview field notes were made immediately when the memory and perceptions of the interviewee remained fresh in my mind. Two interviews field notes were recorded as I was traveling out of the country on business and this was later transcribed. Some interviews were back to back so I jotted down points which were later elaborated as field notes.

The field notes covered in general my feelings as to progress of the interview, my perceptions as to the response of the interviewee as well as my own role as the researcher. It helped me see the emotion that represented the words that were used and it helped later to establish the intensity or indifference of an opinion or view. My own reactions to some of the responses during the interview were also noted down as field notes. Extensive notes were kept of the conversations that happened after the tape recorder had been switched off.

3.12   Transcription, Coding and Data Analysis

The process of transcribing the interviews and formulating the coding system are outlined in this segment. The analysis process is then explained.

3.12.1 Transcription

The first few interviews were transcribed by listening deeply to the interviews that were recorded. The words used by the interviewee were transcribed verbatim and there was no substitution of words used or phrases. Even unfinished sentences, words that may have looked in the wrong context were retained.

After the transcription was done I listened to the tapes again intently with the transcription in front of me and made necessary corrections to make the transcriptions accurate. My voice and that of the interviewee were clearly demarcated by putting three spaced dots where transcription was unclear. Then an explanation was added for the way the words were used, for example with the intonation it was possible to discern if it was irony or sarcasm. Brackets were used to add a comment which clarified the meaning, e.g. the person referred to was an employee or family etc.

The one thing that got lost in the transcription was the emotions of the participants during the interview. This includes the pauses, reflective moments, silences (Hyams, 2004) sarcastic laughter, mirth, raising of the eyebrow, the passion for a particular aspect of the subject e.g. religion or even anger when

talking about particular issues. There are conventions in noting this in transcriptions (Poland, 2001) the intimacies and the enriching experience it becomes is inadequately captured in the best of transcriptions and ignored completely in the worst of them. This is because while transcribing we focus only on the words and do not necessarily highlight the frame of mind of the interviewee.

I have used real names since the interviewees had no objection to being quoted. The whole atmosphere of the research has been an open enquiry into the perceived gap in knowledge and how to bridge it.

3.12.2 Data Analysis

Morse (1994, p.25) reminds us that

'' …data analysis is a process that requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation and accurate recall. It is a process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious, of recognising the significant from the insignificant, of linking seemingly unrelated facts logically, of fitting categories one with another and of attributing consequences to antecedents''.

There are a number of techniques and methods to analyse data. In this paper the data was analysed using the social constructionism paradigm which considers text as a 'window into human experience' (Ryan & Bernard 2003, p.259). The

variety of techniques exist because of ''richness and complexity'' (Punch 1998, p.199) of social research. But generally a number of processes are linked to research design and followed diligently; like organizing and preparing data for analysis, obtaining a general sense of the overall meaning of the research, developing a coding process, descriptions and categories of themes to determine how these descriptions will be represented. Then the data are interpreted and a meaning evolves out of it.

Coding is the process which starts the analysis and as described by (Ryan & Bernard 2003, p.274) is the ''heart and soul of whole text analysis''. It involves data reduction into more manageable segments for interpretation. The researcher is then able to make judgments (Ryan & Bernard; 2003) about meaning and bring new insights from the interviews (Marshall & Rossman; 1995).

Codes are tags given to segments of data in order to be able to retrieve it as a meaningful section. The codes can be applied to tag a word or a paragraph which can be recalled at a later date (Richards1999; Ryan & Bernard; 2003).
The two types of codes are descriptive codes and pattern codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this case the coding found most suitable was descriptive codes, and segments of data coded included the text surrounding it as well so as to give it a complete meaning and not to lose significance. As Yates recommended one of the questions asked while choosing descriptive coding was ''what is the main story here and why?''.

Interviews were carefully looked over and similar words and threads of thought were assigned an alpha numeric defining code. Significant issues of the research questions were identified and used as coding and the category to which the interviewee belonged as well as their names and the number of times they referred to the particular coding was listed.

Tesch's (1990) eight steps for analysis of unstructured data were used as the framework of this analysis in order to manage data. This systematic approach to analyzing text helped making the meaning clear and issues and practices emerge.

The steps followed are:

1. Going through transcripts carefully to arrive at the meaning as a whole.

2. Significant transcripts were selected and examined for richness of meaning.

3. The process was repeated to evolve more topics.

4. The new topics were made use of to re-examine the data to start the coding process.

5. Descriptive words were taken from the interview texts to form the codes and categories.

6. For each category a final coding was decided.

7. Then the data were organized according to categories and sub categories.

8. Wherever necessary data were re coded according to the new categories that emerged.

The data in this research were coded three times. First number coding was used to simply give each line a coding. This was found to be inadequate in data reduction. Then the descriptive alpha numeric coding was done and applied to the data. When this was done two super categories were discovered. The EDS managers and the Local Employees were the two super categories. This super category was inducted into the coding system. As analysis progresses more categories may need to be added to reach to the research conclusion.

3.12.3 Coding Of Data

<u>Data Overload</u>

Once data compilation begins a challenge arises. In the early stages all data looks promising and unless data are condensed, analysis will be a time consuming process. Data collection is a selective process and with qualitative research you end up with words not numbers.

Data Retrieval within the large volume of data lies at the core of coding and one must be careful to avoid data overload. The challenge is to be mindful of the purpose of your study and to remain focused on the theories that form the foundation of the research. To do this, one needs a variety of safeguards against tunnel vision and self delusion (Miles & Huberman.1994, Chapter 10). Equally important is attaching a corresponding condensing and analysis exercise to each segment. This is where coding comes in.

Coding is analysis. To review a set of interviews transcribed and to dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between them intact is the challenge the researcher must meet. Codes are tags for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive inferential information compiled during a research. For our purpose it is not the words themselves but their meaning that matters (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.76). Bliss, Monk, & Ogborn (1983) tell us that a word or phrase does not contain its meaning as a bucket contains water, but has the meaning it does by being a choice made about its significance in a given context. That choice excludes other choices that could have been made to ''stand for'' that word or phrase because it is embedded in a particular logic or a conceptual lens whether the researcher is aware of it or not.

Coding also reduces the text so that the data can be displayed in an explicit form for the researchers' interpretations (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Coding is a dynamic and fluid process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). There is no one correct or ideal way for data coding (Bryman, 2004; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Until recently qualitative researchers outside of linguistic fields and its sub fields were not very explicit about how they went about assigning units of meaning to pieces of data. The conventional advice was to go through transcripts and mark off units and then divide them into topics and sub topics. These are descriptive codes. You are attributing a class of phenomena to a segment of text. When you handle the same segment interpretively more thematic codes come up. So once

we identify the parameters of the research we come up with codes that could be used interpretively. If a pattern of differences in culture becomes clear then a descriptive code like CDI meaning cultural differences can be assigned to text interpreted to be in that category. It is the inferential code that is applied to data collected.

3.12.4 Creating Codes

Of these inductive coding techniques, one of the most helpful is that of Strauss (1987), described best in Strauss & Corbin (1990). Initial data is collected, written up and reviewed line by line typically within a paragraph. Beside or below the paragraphs, labels or categories are added and a list is generated. The labels are reviewed and typically a slightly more abstract category is attributed to several observations. Then they are put into a data category card. To pick out a provisional code Strauss (1987) suggests re reading of interview notes of contrasting groups so that you are sensitized to what is different about them. Read interviews for recurring phrases and with an eye to surprising or counterintuitive material that needs to be clarified elsewhere. Getting started Strauss suggests coding for ''conditions'', ''interactions amongst actors'', ''strategies and tactics'' and ''consequences''. To find conditions the analyst looks for such words as ''because'' or ''since''. To find consequences you follow up on such terms as ''as a result of' and ''because of ''. Phrases that are repeatedly used by interviewees are also good leads to creating codes. They often point to regularities in the interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Bogdan & Biklen (1992) divided codes in the following way:

- Setting/Context which provides general information on surroundings that allows you to put the study in a larger context.

- Definitions of the situation to highlight how people understand, define or perceive things.

- Perspective which sets out ways of thinking about the premises shared by interviewee.

- Ways of thinking about people and objects which is a foundation for understanding each other, outsiders, etc.

- Process which is the sequence of events flow, transitions.

- Activities which are regularly occurring behaviors.

- Events or specific activities.

- Strategies and/or ways of accomplishing things.

- Relationships and social structure such as cliques, coalitions, friendships, enemies.

- Methods of the research process.

Many researchers use a simple two-level scheme: a more general ''etic'' level and a more specific ''emic'' level, close to interviewee's categories but nested in "etic" codes.

For all approaches to coding, codes will change and develop as research progresses. Some codes do not work, some decay. In such cases codes are

discarded or their levels are changed. Another pitfall is that some codes flourish and too many segments get the same code. In this case codes will need to be broken down to sub codes; otherwise the problem of bulk crops up again. Some analysts have names for coding procedures later in the study. Like Lincoln and Guba (1985) talk about these operations:

- ''Filling in'': adding codes, reconstructing a coherent scheme with new insights.
- "Extension'': returning to data coded earlier and interrogating them in a new way to construct a new relationship.
- ''Bridging'': seeing new or previously not understood relationships within units of given category.
- ''Surfacing'': identifying new categories.

Like Strauss (1987), Lincoln & Guba suggest that coding and recoding are over when analysis itself appears to have run its course – when all the incidents can be readily classified, categories are saturated, and sufficient numbers of irregularities emerge.

Throughout this process of revision three sources of knowledge are being weighed.

First the researcher is refining or recasting conceptual structure he brought to the study.

Second the research filed has a life of its own that becomes more meaningful and decipherable.

Third the field emits a continuous stream of leads, themes and contradictions that will never perfectly fit into a precoded conceptual frame or even into a more grounded emerging coding system.

Codes should relate to one another in coherent ways, they should be part of a governing structure. Codes should make retrieval and organisation of the material not burdensome.

Coding:

1. Exposure   -   EXP-E/L /O

2. Experience   -   EXE-

3. Perception   -   PER-

4. Cultural Differences   -   CDI-

5. Alienation   -   ALI-

6. Influence of Religion   -   IRE-

7. Dress Code   -   DRC-

8. American Culture   -   ACL-

9. Corporate Policy   -   CRP-

10. Arab Culture   -   ARC-

11. Foreign Managers   -   FRM-

12. Local Laws   -   LCL-

13. Data Collection   -   DAC-

14. Influence of W.Culture   -   IWC-

15. Language Barrier   -   LBA-

16. Consequences   -   CON-

17. Corporate Culture   -   CRC-

18. Integration   -   INT-

19. Corporate Training   -   CTR-

The codes that have evolved through this research are given above. The conceptual frame work is around the cultural differences between the EDS

managers with their organisational culture and the national culture.'E' stands for EDS managers and 'L' stands for local employees. A separate category has been created 'O' for independent observation by employees both managers and locals in other multinationals in Bahrain. This is followed by the first letter of the name of the interviewee and the numbers are the references to the number of times that category has been inferred to or referred to in the interview. In order to identify the interviewee the 2 letter code defines the category he /she belongs to and the name of the interviewee and the numericals define the number of times the same context has risen in the interview. This also gives an indication as to how important certain factors are to each interviewee. Clear operational definitions have been given so that they can be applied consistently by the researcher or other researchers when they approach this topic.

3.13   Conclusion

This chapter has described why social constructionism has been selected as the epistemological stance because it led to the author's choice of interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach for this research. That this method is a perfect fit for the research questions of this study and has helped the researcher achieve its objectives has been outlined. The details of data collection and data analysis are presented transparently so that it provides a clear picture of the method and processes involved in this research. The ethical concerns of the locals were taken into consideration. Approach to rigour has also been outlined in this chapter. The findings of this analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1   <u>Introduction</u>

In chapter two, it was outlined that there is a gap in research investigating the conflict between western corporate cultures and local cultures. The misconceptions arising due to a lack of awareness of the local culture has not been studied conceptually or empirically, particularly from a qualitative perspective. The objective of this research is to identify patterns of assumptions while expanding business into an alien culture and the influences which are key factors to success in that environment. The research also aims to discover a framework that can be adapted by American companies venturing to do business in the Middle East. With the help of the data collected through semi structured reflexive interviews, this chapter is dedicated to discuss and analyse the findings of this study. 5 EDS managers of different nationalities, 5 Local employees who worked in various capacities in EDS and 2 foreign managers and one Local HR professional from other multinationals were interviewed. A brief background of cultural conflicts is outlined collected from secondary sources and that is followed by a profile of EDS the corporation which is the subject of research in this study.

The findings that emerged from data analysis are detailed in the rest of the chapter. It exposes the 'lived in' experiences of local employees of EDS as well

as the perceptions of the foreign managers in the work place. Presenting evidence from the data, the key findings and discussions of this research are outlined.

Interviewees' narratives were selected to illustrate the concerns that have emerged and other points that have come up during the course of template analysis. The texts presented here are the marked interview text that is proof from where the coded theme was derived in the data analysis.

4.2   Mode of Data Collection

Semi structured interviews were used to collect data as outlined in Chapter Three. Thirteen interviewees form the research sample for this study. They are EDS foreign managers, local employees and other foreign managers with an exposure to local culture. My reflections on the phenomenon are also recorded separately as a reflexive ethnographic interview.

Out of these, 5 were EDS managers of different nationalities. 5 Local employees who worked in various capacities in EDS were interviewed. To get an overview of multinational operations in Bahrain 2 foreign managers and one Local HR professional from other multinationals were also interviewed. The interviews were conducted over a period of 14 months. Each interview averaged between 40 minutes to an hour. 10 of them were tape recorded. Transcripts have yielded more than 50,000 words. As the general purpose of this research is to explore

lessons American corporates can learn from EDS experience in Bahrain about operating in local cultures, every interviewee was asked to reflect on their motives and feelings while working for a multinational company. Their perceptions and opinions have enhanced this study to a large extent.

While conducting this research, precaution regarding the ethical issues was taken considering the culture and sensitivity of Bahrainis for their religion and culture. For example, some local employees criticised EDS policies, while foreign managers touched upon attitudes of the locals and confidentiality was assured to both parties. Interviews were conducted with 3 professionals from both categories namely the local employee and the foreign managers from other multinational companies other than EDS to ascertain that the cultural alienation was not an isolated case at EDS only.

Brief of the research environment detailed above provides information which will help researchers to understand the background of the research question and context underlying this study. Further to this, findings and analysis of this study are explored and discussed.

4.3   Motives of EDS in setting up operations in Bahrain

EDS broke off from GM in 1996 and as a pioneer in Information Technology was expected to be an industry leader influencing and inspiring other startups as the ideal benchmarking in the IT field. In spite of its proud heritage, superb people

and a rich stock of intellectual capital EDS failed to become the industry leader in the fast growing field of IT services. ''But structurally and culturally it was unprepared for the rapidly changing IT marketplace. Competitors grabbed the lion's share of the growth and by 1998 EDS was in trouble'' (Action Urgency Excellence, Ram Charan, p.9). By bringing in new leadership the board of EDS set out to tap the company's full potential for creating profitable growth and share- holder value. Out of this vision came new management, new structure, and internationalization. Expanding into other markets was one strategy that helped EDS retain its market position. As Dick Brown its dynamic CEO and perpetuator of that change said ''our value proposition to clients around the world is that we deploy knowledge and technology to make any organisation we touch stronger in the digital economy.'' EDS emphasized organisational culture and inspired employees to be aligned with its own corporate culture and use that as the guideline in all circumstances.' Cultural change efforts are rarely rigorous. Yet what that term represents is vital'' (Action Urgency Excellence, Ram Charan, p. 6) When we talk about corporate culture what we are talking in essence is whether the beliefs and behaviors of employees are in tune with the goals of the organization. If beliefs and norms of behavior have not changed then all other changes are not sustainable. Given below are some reflections from EDS senior executives in early 2000 about how the corporate change had transformed them: ''Change is very, very tough .But if we are going to compete in this world we have to change''

''It feels like a big start- up company to me The energy levels are high, people want to do things, they want to change the face of the industry, reclaim the company's number one position''

''Today there is a lot more accountability and there are serious consequences for failure to meet commitments''

''This is a problem. Let's fix it and move on. ''

Quotes from Action Urgency Excellence the handbook on EDS for employees, clients and share–holders written by Ram Charan. The two key changes that stand out in these testimonies are confidence and decisiveness. EDS focused on being a service provider thus appearing unbiased to its clients as they were not manufacturing hardware or software. This increased the credibility of EDS in international markets as well. EDS had its clientele in western markets such as Rolls Royce, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, New Zealand Telecom etc.

Though the ratio of EDS stock price to the earning per share of stock (P/E ratio) doubled after the organisational culture change in EDS it was again a victim of its own success. In deciding what they will pay for the prospect of future earnings investors look for a pattern of predictable results. The company has to be growing revenues quarter by quarter. It must show high quality earnings that will grow consistently for years in order to generate the interest of investors. Sudden boost in revenue due to quick cost cutting or selling off part of the business are not effective in the stock market. Investors need to know that operations are

generating cash that is available for investment. They need to believe that leadership is using that investment to take the business in a promising direction. Keeping that in mind EDS evolved a business strategy which broke away from old beliefs and behaviors. The new belief paved the way for a new ''virtuous cycle'': superior service that helps clients improve their own service to their customers, which in turn provides longevity for EDS in client relationship. Thus EDS commands a premium price for its services and reduces the cost of acquiring clients. Equipped with this new business model EDS started its foray into markets like the Gulf which was foreign to EDS considering that it had western styled clients till then. The pressure to be an industry leader was on EDS as is reflected in its CEO Dick Browns words as quoted in ''Action Urgency Excellence'' by Ram Charan. The two fundamental goals of EDS were to be growth and increase in productivity. 'By definition you've got to be above market growth rate to be a leader. And we are aiming to be leaders in every line of business in every industry group.'' Thus it is clear that EDS expects its people to stay focused on the company's priorities to build a bright future.

Venturing into a market like Bahrain with the above policies, strategies and vision EDS has set up operations here confident that the formula which worked for it worldwide would work here too.

4.4   Unique Bahrain Culture

Religion, Language and Terrain has shaped the culture of Bahrain. Though it may appear as one unified cultural congregation there are various influences that make up the social fabric of Bahrain. Its locals are an amalgam of Arabs, Palestinian, and Lebanese and Persians races. The expatriate population comes from the subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), the far-east which comprises of Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, Africa (Ethiopians & S.Africans) and the Western expatriates from Europe, UK, US and Australia.

Bahraini culture aligns itself with Arab culture with a few and influences from the subcontinent culture. There is an elaborate system of identifying themselves and others within their society as per their social class, rank and position within the family, clan, or tribe. ''This has its roots in the early desert culture's need to quickly know whether a person being spoken to is a friend or a foe. In an environment of scarce resources one is naturally suspicious of the intention of strangers'' (Baker, 2003, p.9).Thus a verbal identification by clan or tribe helps determine if the stranger is a friend or a foe. Either a person is identified as someone's progeny or someone's father belonging to a particular family. Ibn or Bin means son of and Abu means father of and one of these two suffixes will be found in all the names. Thus the name Omar Abu Ali would mean Omar who is the father of Ali, and Ali Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa would mean Ali who is son of son of Mohammed belonging to the family of Al Khalifa. The same applies to women as well. Bint means daughter and Umm means mother. Thus you will see that identity of an Arab or Bahraini is a collective identity and not an individual

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identity. The word private as westerners understand it does not have an equivalent or exact Arabic translation. There is no concept of intimate privacy to oneself exclusive to all others. Arab culture emphasizes on group rights as part of their desert culture survival requirements where little value is placed on the needs and desires of the individual and much more value importance was attached to the survival needs of the group. In that extended identity as a group a ''friend of my friend is my friend'' policy prevails in the Arab world. Once the national or regional identity is established there is a sense of ''The Arab Family of Nations'' where an enemy of my friend becomes my enemy too.

4.4.1 Cultural Traits

Honour and dishonour are key factors that influence the lives of Bahrainis. Their public behavior is influenced by the factor that someone could be watching them. Thus they formulate their behaviour upon other people's perceptions and conclusions about their behavior. Certain gestures and postures are considered offensive. For example sitting across someone with the soles of your footwear pointed at them. Many a westerner has met with cold responses after a warm reception and wondered what went wrong. Appearances are of importance to Arabs. 'Honour, retribution and restoration of honor are paramount in the Arab world'' (Baker, 2003, p.54). During business meetings it is important to exchange pleasantries, accept your colleague's hospitality before you start the business proceedings. The western style of going straight into business is considered impolite and an insult to the host. ''An Arab will do business with you not because

your product is superior but because he feels good about you'' Baker, 2003, p. 68) whereas the west is driven by factors such as performance, profit and maintenance.

4.4.2 Religion

A thorough understanding of Arab/Bahraini culture and society can be attained only if one acquires a basic knowledge of their religion Islam and its founder Prophet Mohammed. The word Islam means ''submission to the will of God''. The act of prostrating while praying is symbolic of this. The holy book Qur'an is the infallible word of God. The Qur'an is not meant to be questioned, translated or interpreted precisely because it is God's word. Prophet's recitations called for all to rid themselves of their sinful ways and worship of pantheon of Gods and to worship only one God as the true God whom he called Allah. Prophet called for social reforms, caring for those who could not care for themselves, giving personal wealth to charity and forbidding one to charge interest on loans. His followers were forbidden to drink alcohol and eat pork. The five pillars of Islam are, Profession of faith, Prayer, Almsgiving, Fasting and Pilgrimage to Makkah. Prayers were to be offered 5 times a day prostrating towards Makkah at daybreak, midday, mid afternoon, sunset and nightfall. The Qor'ān invites Muslims to systematically investigate natural phenomena not simply as a vehicle for understanding nature, but also as a means for drawing close to God. (Goodman, 1983). Philosophers like Ibn Tufayl's view of the sciences must surely have been influenced by Islam's self-presentation as a naturalistic and rational

religion, for the simple reason that the whole of the world was seen as a hypertext containing God's signs (Goodman, 1983). Thus religion is a part of everyday routine of a Bahraini regardless of his profession or standing in society. The Qur'an is accepted as the unquestioned canon word of God. In Arab society even the most secular person dares not speak irreverently of God, the Qur'an, or teachings of Islam lest it is blasphemy and they evoke the vengeance of God.

4.5   Factors influencing EDS Operations in Bahrain

In fulfilling the aims of this research the main objective was to observe the underlying conflict which existed between the local employees and EDS management. With the ongoing process of selecting, identifying and abstracting the complied data from the interviews 7 sets of factors emerged. They are:

1 Perceptional Issues – PER	2 Influence of Religion – IRE	3. Arab Culture - ARC	4. Cultural Differences - CDI
5. Corporate Policies - CRP	6. Corporate Training - CTR	7. Alienation - ALI	

Table 4.1 Emerging Primary factors from data Analysis

Out of data analysis emerged factors that contributed most to the phenomenon under observation. Seven primary and twelve secondary factors emerged which contributed to the conflict at work place between local employees and EDS foreign

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managers. They are listed in Table 4.1 and table 4.2. Perceptions regarding each other on the influence of religion and the local culture added to the already existing conflict on cultural differences and corporate policies. Both sides were unanimous in agreeing that they were not provided with enough training to counter this thereby alienating them from each other.

The secondary factors contributed in pulling each faction farther apart. Though seemingly unimportant the secondary factors acted as catalysts to divide the local employees and foreign managers into two distinct groups instead of colleagues.

Several secondary factors also emerged which are listed below:

Exposure - EXP	Dress Code - DRC	American Culture -ACL	Experience-EXE	Foreign managers-FRM	Local laws- LCL
Data collection- DAC	Influence of Western culture- IWC	Language barrier-LBA	Consequences- CON	Corporate Culture -CRC	Integration - INT

Table 4.2 Secondary factors emerging from Data Analysis.

EDS managers can be identified by the indicator E and Local employees by L. Whereas the other sources are listed as O.

4.5.1 Perceptional Issues

Knowing the background of EDS organisational history and the Bahraini cultural and religious history let us examine the wide gap in perceptions between EDS foreign managers and the local employees. EDS Manager I while acknowledging that there is a professional approach to work is confused about the need for a Bahraini to be treated as special. As defined earlier Arab identity is not individualistic but that of a group and it is important for a Bahraini to be acknowledged as whom he is as part of a family, clan or tribe.

> ''*Although most people have an international approach to the work, because they are in the IT field. There is strong national pride and a demand for special treatment expecting more than what is normal in the international work environment. Higher expectation of their rights as Bahraini citizens. ''* (PER-EI 1.1)

This echoes in most of the EDS managers interviewed. Manager B echoes the same perception that who you are seems to be more important that individual performance. How you appear to people seems to be the key.

> ''*It seems to have some kind of status with it which >you know< also in the West status is very important. The size of your office and where you car park is and all this stuff is important to some people but it seems to be a bit more important over here''* (PER-EB 1.1)

Manager C feels that while local employees may or may not adapt it is also important that managers don't see their corporate policies as brands that need to be implemented without being sensitive to the local way of life.

> ''*I think some people can adapt and some people can't adapt (.) it's a simple question and a simple answer (.) I think some people do want to adapt and some people don't (.) ah some people would see the culture the organisation they work for have to be the brand and therefore they represent a brand (.) the brand should be pretty (understood) therefore they feel comfortable with that sort of*

approach not quite understanding the local view or any type of relationship' PER-EC 1.1

Manager R perceives that the influences that govern the local employee should be given importance or else there will be conflict at the work place.

''Well if it is not recognized then that may impact the local workforce they may think they are not given the freedom to pray between the working hours so that may impact the working environment''. PER-ER1.1

But local employees feel that Americans have stereo typed perceptions about Arabs and even when faced with realities are unwilling to change it.

''this is the problem what I found from the Americans (.) most of the people that I have dealt they have stereo type >you know< when they think about somebody in their mind and they have got a perception they don't change it (.) they feel oh this is the person this the perception they will not change it their mind >you know<'' PER-LD1.4

The locals also have a perception of the Americans which really doesn't match with the reality. These perceptions form a barrier in communicating.

((sigh)) honestly speaking the problems with the Americans as I said ah they don't have a touch of traditional here (.) >I mean< I have noticed also they don't have the touch of socialism >you know< things like >you know< we as Arab countries especially the Muslims are very social people very family type people where as with the Americans unfortunately even I have some experience even during my study (.) my academic study because I studied in the university of Maryland where I was in touch with lots of Americans from the Marines (.) so we've seen them >you know< they are very I mean ah [aggressive and who are isolated (.) I can say aggressive that's the right word for them you know they don't a touch of >you know< feeling human feeling like especially >you know< lots of things like we are related we care about people (.) they are somehow because of there work probably I have been dealing with the marines (.) very naive people >you know<'' PER-LD1.1

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Manager R perceives that certain concessions have to be made to accommodate the local culture or else the work force may be de motivated. What comes across is that all the EDS managers form their perceptions on assumptions and there understanding or lack of it of the local culture. They talk from their experience in organisational culture where the priority of the goals of the company is the ways to success. When encountered with a set of people who have priorities other than job satisfaction they are not equipped with policies to deal with them. Since religion, family and community play such important roles in their life the local employees are perceived not to focus on corporate goals.

Manager B is surprised that jobs have only meaning to the locals as a means to earn money. There is no concept of job satisfaction or working towards and advancement in career.

> *''I know that financial matters seems to be a lot more important in this culture it seems on the top priority that you don't find in the West. If you ask an employee what are the ten most important things you'll find things like job satisfaction comes to the top and salary tends to be down in sixth or seventh if you do it in this region you will find salary comes to top.''* ARC-EB1.2.

But when you hear a local employee talk about their ambitions it becomes very clear that the foreign managers are unaware of their aspirations.

> *"I think some people do want to adapt and some people don't (.) ah some people would see the culture the organisation they work for have to be the brand and therefore they represent a brand (.) the brand should be pretty (understood) therefore they feel comfortable with that sort of approach not quite understanding the local view or any type of relationship"* PER-EC 1.1

4.5.2 Influence of Religion

EDS managers are willing to concede that religion is important to people in the region but consider work to be more important.

> *''Religion is a key component of the Bahraini life and therefore must be respected and understood by all. But there must be a balance in the work place and religion should not be used to get out of doing a full days work, for which they are employed and paid for''* IRE-EI1.1

Whereas for a local employee religion is an integral part of their culture.

> *''religion drives our culture, our religion teaching us obedience and respect that drives our attitudes and I think in a way it is kind of related (.) it is kind of helps us or moulds the actual character of that person (.) so in a way using religion or partly using religion inside our culture they are intertwined they are linked together >I mean< we just can't keep it out [>I mean< despite what others might think >you know< religion is an integral part of the Muslim culture''* IRE-LS1.1

The conflict is clearly outlined that it is unthinkable to the local employee that he can be considered without his religious belief. But he readily agrees that religion should not be an excuse for not working at the same time the managers have to understand and more importantly respect their religion.

> *''if there is a public holiday he would understand that if there is a religious holiday he would understand that but he shouldn't or the actual staff should not take advantage of the ignorance of the manager the foreign manager and take advantage in the fact.''* FRM-LS1.2

> *''Religion of course the religion is very important (.) family type things this very important value for me (.) and no matter what happens my family is number one''* IRE-LD1.1

Routines have evolved out of religious beliefs. A typical work day in Bahrain is centered around the compulsory 5 prayer sessions spread throughout the day.

Meetings are scheduled taking this into consideration. Fridays are holidays and

EDS managers find it difficult to adapt to this.

> 'There are things like that ah funny one of the things that the religion influences as well is the fact that actually today is a Friday and we are off (.) that's something that we struggle with sometimes (.) the rest of the world since it works Monday to Friday and we work Sunday till Thursday (.) so we are out of step with the rest of the corporation and that causes business problems sometimes''
> IRE-EB1.4

Instead they just accept it as a fact of life to be accepted and tolerated which also

creates a barrier.

> '' [here locally we accept that as part of the religion so we just fall into step with it'' IRE-EB1.5'

> ''ah I think the second one is the way the culture have certain traditions about how to go around about their day to day duties and their responsibilities and also their approaching attitude and again I think >you know< with the Arab culture we have to bear in mind they are very strong religious (countries) in terms of prayer needs etc which need to be accepted (.) and also I think very much taking into account the specific discussions and the daily time frame that some people may not be aware of but things do happen in a particular way (.) ''IRE-EC1.1

EDS managers have an idea that prayers are an integral part of the daily routine

but there does not seem to be an attempt to incorporate this awareness in the

business routine of the company.

> ''I think from religious point of view >I mean< obviously religion ah it goes into your overall culture but to be more so (popular) in the Middle East by the very nature way of life (.) and I think ah that is something else that you need to understand and be mindful of and also to respect a lot'' IRE-EC1.2

As Manager C points out that there is a need to be ''mindful and respectful'' about

religion in the EDS policies there seems to be a lack of this aspect which

combined with other ignorance of cultural nuances has helped create a resentment amongst the local employees.

"in this part of the world and being a Muslim >I mean< we have obligations towards our religion like the >I mean< on a Friday it is our weekend and there is like a prayer time >I mean< you don't expect >I mean< somebody from the states to call oh I want this want this want this during your praying time because the >I mean< the corporate in the states they will not understand this is a Friday you have a prayer time and it's mandatory for you to pray these things [Okay so that was something that the employee will >I mean< they will not feel happy about it" IRE-LF1.1

For a Muslim religion precedes every other need in life. Religion is not considered as an intrusion into work times but work is perceived to intrude into prayer times. The Local employee sees his religion and way of life as a non negotiable value compared to any other aspect of his life.

"although in Holland a lot of people are very religious it doesn't tend to interact with the work life and over here it is part of the culture in general (.) it does have a big influence yes and it is a major difference and you have to be ah you have to recognize it's part of the culture and work around it sometimes (.) like don't arrange meetings at a prayer time and things like this and this idea of three days off once a death in the family for mourning >you know< (.) you just wont get that in the west that's all" IRE-EB1.1

In Western culture where individual success is considered as part and parcel of the success of the corporate and where individual ambitions drive an employee it seems the most improbable thing to do when such emphasis is given to prayers during work hours.

So it amazes Manager B that even the most important meeting can wait till prayer times are over.

"Yes as I have said already its ah >you know< we did struggle originally with things like prayer time ah funnily enough you one of the things we don't like is the status of the toilets when you guys go

for prayer time (laughter) you got water all over the floor because you got to do the belief in this thing but as you get" IRE-EB1.2

''I think any company who is coming to this part of the world I think religion is the most important thing to get familiarized and to get adjusted'' IRE-ER1.1

It's a cautionary fact to any corporate wanting to do business in Bahrain that standards of hygiene seems more important that prayer times. Whereas Islam dictates that a believer has to wash himself before each prayer the foreign manager finds it appalling the toilets are left wet. This results in an atmosphere of mutual scorn amongst the two and becomes a divide that only grows bigger with each perceptional issue piled on to it.

''Because ah this part of the world is like majority is Islam so ah American companies or Foreign companies who is coming to this region has to admit that this is a Muslim country ah they got prayer times which they have to adjust to in Western countries they may not I mean pay attention to prayers and other things other than local culture'' IRE-ER1.2

Acceptance of the fact that this is an Islamic country and an American company should formulate its corporate policies for that region keeping that in mind is the opinion of EDS manager R. Yet he has not seen the need to emphasize this fact to his management and bring about a change in policy. Thus there seems to be a disconnect in their mind as to what reality is and what actually the company should be doing.

''Well I mean religion is the main thing which again goes back to where the company has to realize that it's a religious country and people are more religious than other part of the world so they have to accommodate that in the working culture'' IRE-ER1.3

''this one thing another thing is that they need to understand our culture here is that (.) again based on religion >I would say< that

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woman should not shake hands with men and I think this something even the management should look at it ah one thing.'' IRE-LB1.1

Both EDS managers and Local employees have the opinion that religious sentiments and customs should be respected, yet that private opinion does not translate into a practical policy.

Islam has laid down rules for literally everything. People do not think of these rules as written a thousand years ago, rather for them it is something to be adhered to regardless of how lifestyles or society change.

> *''Okay I would say my religion which is Islam ah we do believe strongly also believe that Islam >you know< has given us the roadmap for everything (.) [one of them I need to be loyal to the place I am working in (.) loyal means >you know< I have to give my hundred percent >okay< loyalty in knowing any information I should give it to my ah company (.) and another thing I need >my religion taught me< that I need to trust people (.) If you cannot trust people you cannot work as a team and this where everybody is going in nowadays we need to have a team work (.) [my religion also taught me to respect people and if you don't respect people >you cannot< work with people if you don't respect them so as you come to see if I go on it's a huge list so my religion really gives me things to allow me to produce and improve my work so I need to be loyal I need to be trustworthy I need to be honest I need to produce things on time and it have to be with good quality this is all what my religion is calling for''* IRE-LB1.2

The Local employees are sure that their character is formed due to these rituals. Every aspect of their life and how to go about it is governed by rules laid down by their religion.

> *''religion drives our culture so >you know< it is slightly related also for certain things (.) but >you know< our religion teaching us >you know< obedience and respect (.) that drives our attitudes >you know< and I think in a way it is kind of related (.) it is kind of helps us or moulds the actual character of that person (.) so in a way using religion or >you know< partly using religion inside our culture*

they are intertwined they are linked together >I mean< we just can't keep it out [>I mean< despite what others might think >you know< religion is an integral part of the Muslim culture" IRE-LS1.1

The importance of religion is again and again reiterated by the local employees. They believe that the more religious a person is the more sincere and hard working an employee will be. But due to the perception of the managers such an employee is kept at a distance mainly because the managers have no understanding of the religion and the culture.

> *"Being sensitive to religion should translate into real respect and recognition of those very hard working individuals who perform very well **because** of their religious values and ethics. Islam is the main religion in this part of the world and in this religion it **is a sin** for a Muslim to expect let alone ask for preferential treatment!! Not on account of nationality or wealth or social status,, etc but only of degree of commitment to work, to humanity and to adding value".* IRE-OJ1.1

There is resentment in Local employees that neither respect nor recognition is given to employees nor those who are perceived as western are given preferences. I myself have felt isolated by both sides as the Local employee looked at me as someone who is more western than local with my educational background and the fact that my partner is a westerner. At the same time the managers looked at me as a local employee because I spoke the same language and followed the customs of any local employee.

> *"I do not agree with the assumption that religion gets in the way of work. On the contrary the best performers in this Bahrain market are those who are religious. Because according to Islam God does not accept the worship of those who compromise their work in favor spending more time at the mosque or whatever".* IRE-OJ1.3

> *"should not get any preference because they are religious or not religious. That is definitely my own opinion and so you reward the people that are good and do good job and you know, if people are*

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not doing the job but they are religious, it still doesn't mean they avoid the, you know, whatever type of disciplinary action or anything should be" IRE-EL1.1

Both sides agree that religion should not encroach upon work but the perspectives are different. While for a local it is an accepted norm that prayer times are set aside in their work schedule. Whereas EDS managers feel that religion should not be used as an excuse to relax working pace.

4.5.3 Arab Culture - Language Barrier - Dress Code

While the Arab culture is a collective culture has its own dress code and a classical language like Arabic the average local employees is proud to be part of it.

> *"I think that has other implications in terms of planning I think a lot of it to do with an understanding from a distance working in the Middle East or exactly those types of different working conditions and their constraint is based up on a westerner who does not quiet understand the culture (.) the way things are done (.) and I think secondly ah by understanding that particular nature the way the Arab interact themselves and the type of relationship that they also working with and working to and by that I also mean the relationship is very much based on trust (.) and also face to face (.)*
> ARC-EC1.1

Etiquette, customs, and behavior are unique and different from others for Arabs. A certain code of conduct is expected and honor is very important to a Bahraini. To lose face in front of a crowd is unacceptable. Even business meetings have to go through the ritualistic motion of chit chat and after partaking of hospitality business talk commences.

> *"I think still in across Europe for us very difficult (.) its different languages ah and even down Australia okay it's a common language but it's a bit like America but slightly different in terms of*

interpretations (.) the way things are done (.) I am not saying dramatically different but different enough the fact that need to be taken into account" LBA-EC1.1

"that you cannot literally go into a country in the Middle East and expect a decision to be made on the spot (.) they might take sometime and equally expect the culture to slightly shift across the Arab nation ah when it comes down to I guess business aspect etc some Westerners may feel slightly (put up) because >you know< they kept waiting they have to be there when they are expected to be there **"** ARC-EC1.5

For a westerner entrenched in organisational culture all this seem to be a waste of time. Arabs do business based on relationship whereas in the west it is influenced by strategic factors.

"Westerners they don't have this they have to understand this when they come to work in this region they have to understand that culture they have to understand what is the impact of the religion in the employment [environment or say one of the examples for instance the dress code [that's for example the westerners they don't look at this and here in the Arabic culture we look into that and we had issues I remember in the past people use to come and complain to me about the (western) dress code sometimes even it is difficult for me to pass on to them like this is not >let's say< the standard or expected from a person in a work environment okay outside [its within (the environment)" DRC-LA1.1

"[Both sides because you want to give and take so it has to be from both parties so I think the Arab are giving more than taking" ARC-LA 1.3

"now the big difference here is (.) you go into a meeting and you spend ten minutes saying hello before you get down to business ah you even see that reflected in the language you look at the western languages very direct straight into business, you look at Arabic and that is to start to learn Arabic and you say what you have been saying for the last ten minutes to your friend and he says I just said hello. You see lot of it like that". ARC-EB1.1

It is considered rude amongst the Bahrainis if you speak in a foreign language to

your friend. Whereas for a westerner it is tantamount to insult if people speak in a

language he cannot understand.

> *"I have worked in western end of Holland down in the southeast and I found the west of Holland is very western >you know< the people there they don't speak off-line in their own language if somebody of a different language in that room they switch to that language. Ye I do find it very rude but it seems that local people don't just accept it".* LBA-EB1.1

> *"we talked about the enshalla I know it can have two meanings the way it meant to be which is >you know< this is in God's hands and there is not much I can do about that if God decides not to let this happen but the way it tends to get used over here which is >you know< I will do it if God wants me to do it so people don't take accountability for anything and I think it does overlap into corporate life and it's one of the things we struggle with".* ARC-EB1.1

The Arabs leave everything to the will of God. When they say a definite ''yes''

then also they leave it to the will of God. The EDS managers feel this only

creates an ambiguity in the listeners mind whether the job will be done or not.

> *"Yea we mentioned dress code is one of them (.) what we recognize is the dress code is national dress or business dress we had initially in the past people come to work in jeans and T shirts that's not part of the local culture so we don't accept that it's either the national dress or the business dress*'' DRC-EB1.1

Being a proud race the Arabs consider their national dress as a formal dress to

be worn for meetings and weddings.

> *"In the West you look at contracts and say that's what the contract says that what we do and here is the culture of ah I've heard this expressions from one of the local managers for friends we interpret the contract for our enemies we enforce it and that seems to be an approach over here contracts they are not black and white even if they are written in black and white(.) They do get interpreted a lot more than in the West"* ARC-EB1.3

The western managers think that for the Arab as part of their culture status is a bigger priority than job satisfaction. This tends to make them treat local employees not a committed workforce.

Managers lament the fact that while there is a strong resistance to the influences of western culture in the region everyone seems to be watching western movies and eating fast foods.

> "Another thing while we were talking about culture and influences I think you'll find that the influences of the Western on this region is far greater than the influence of this region on the West the reason being that you watch a lot of Western movies (.) everyone is watching Western movies, there are MacDonald's here, everybody drinks coke, driving around with American car all this kind of stuff (.) Where as the influence of the local culture here when you look at ah let's say local food >you know< if you look at date and coffee and things like this you are not going to find much of the Arabic culture which made its way towards the West in any significant sort of way and especially movies don't underestimate the influence of movies because people get their impression of the Western culture a lot of it comes from Western movies >you know< there is a huge influence and it means that people have seen a lot more of the West where as in the West all they see of the local ah Gulf culture if you like or the local Middle Eastern culture is what they see on CNN" IWC-EB1.1

Though the peripheral trappings of the western culture are appealing to the locals they are also watching out where the western influence can be a negative factor.

They seem to come to the conclusion that there are more things undesirable in the western culture than the burgers and the movies that they love.

> ''The other thing I noticed is that I mean people here is like little laid back little kind of relaxed way of working and then may be EDS as an American company you can say that it is kind of ah the working culture is fast things to be done immediately ( ) here people expect

things to be done slowly ah that kind of things when pressure is put them they may not like that why I should do it immediately why couldn't it wait that kind of thing" ARC-ER1.1

There is a sense of timelessness which is common to all great cultures of this world. Things can and will be done in their own time. For a westerner who goes about his job as if there is no other time but now this seems like an indifferent attitude towards work.

> *"Lawrence of Arabia managed to deliver what his bosses asked of him and in fact exceeded their expectations when he took Aqaba. He did not work like everyone else he did better simply by localizing himself and dissolving his identity into that of the local illiterate Bedouins!!"* ARC-OJ1.1

4.5.4 Cultural Differences

EDS managers recognize that they are operating in a local culture but are convinced that their own corporate culture alone will contribute to the growth of the individual.

> *'' There should always be respect for the culture and religious differences. But those excel due to their skills and desire to advance on a Global playing field should be rewarded and advanced based on their worth to the company.''* CDI-EI 1.1

> *"Ah I think for two folds I think number one ought to be the general understating how the culture will impact any work relationship (.) so in terms of ah working with ah presumably an Arab community and recognizing also the Arab community and the mixture of other workers the expatriate workers like the Indians subcontinents"* CDI-EC1.1

The company has not really thought about how the local culture should be assimilated into its won work ethos.

> *"No I don't think it is easy (.) I think it is probably the opposite (.) I don't think EDS is alone (.) from the experience I've had working with other multinational companies is not enough thought and*

consideration goes into ah where people actually work (.) this thing could be true not only in the Middle East but China and India and even in places like Australia for instance I think where you got some easily identified cultural differences in terms of ways people go about doing" CDI-EC1.1

"they are not so close the westerner culture is completely than our culture there are lots of customs in our culture that the west does not understand it and I think [okay let's say for example aah come to religion for instance religion plays a lot of role even in hour work environment" CDI-LA1.1

The differences in culture impact the work atmosphere because there is no basic in built trust between the local employees and EDS managers. One can infer that there is a big difference leading to confrontation because there is no basic awareness of what his culture means to a local employee.

4.5.4.1 <u>Lack of Sensitivity</u>

"but these are one of let's say the biggest difference between aah western aaah ((prolonged thinking)) I think the aah the way you handle your daily work err I think the relationship I think in the Arabic culture its more sensitive and its more [yea than the Western (.) in the Western I am not saying that they are not human [much colder so I think this is one of the other aspect they don't (.) [why it is big value for them and we have seen a lot of examples here" CDI-LA1.3

The business like attitude and coming straight down to business is perceived as being cold and rude to the Local employee. The Arab culture is steeped in tradition and etiquette and an Arab prefers to do business with people whom he knows. Whereas in the western tradition it is considered wise not to mix business with relationships.

> *"if the management doesn't understand the culture of the country or the business that they are going to deal with it will be like they are going to have difficulties in conducting business with the customer plus their employee (.) because the first thing they have to win their employee's trust because in each business the employee is the driver for your success without employee trust and the >I mean< productivity you will not achieve your goals and if you don't build this trust with your employee there will be a gap between the management in the corporate and the employee"* CDI-LF 1.1

Unless a manager understands the culture it is going to be difficult for him to win

over the trust of the employee. For that he has to be sensitive to the customs of

the people. Like it is a wise and practical knowledge in Bahrain that even with

Bahraini men it is better to wait till they offer their hand before you put your hand

out for a hand shake.

> *"some people like especially the religious people they don't like to shake their hands with women or even the religious men >I mean< (male and female) they don't want to shake their hand with the ladies so they are reluctant >I mean< that make some sensitive >I mean< they just make some embarrassment for the two sides"* CDI-LF1.2

4.5.4.2 <u>Perception of Hypocrisy</u>

> *"So you are always at clash with corporate cultures and it takes a while to get it across here the extra challenge is you got the local culture as well and yes we the expat managers are very much in the middle there and we have to translate the corporate needs and fit it in the local needs we do a lot of training the corporate training courses we have a thing called the ethics certification where we say these are the ethics of the corporation and you have to agree that you abide by them but we have to do a lot of coaching and mentoring as well and sometimes we have to interpret in between the two."* CDI-EB1.5

Manager B talks about the difficulty of trying to fit in the local employees needs to that of the corporate goal. Though in his words there is a lot of coaching and mentoring it is not reflected in the local employee's voice that it happens or even if it does happen it does not seem to have had an impact on them.

> *"it brings with it some hypocrisy as well because you've got a lot of people around here who are very much against Western ideas and Western culture (.) and then they'll drive off in their Western car to Macdonald's and eat Macdonald's and drink coke >you know< and that's to me is simply hypocritical (.) if you are going to criticize that culture then why are you joining in with it and then go home and watch your Western movie on TV >you know< its (.) so ah (.) some people aren't really open to it either (.) but that has a lot to do with it the way it is portrait in the media. There is a lot of resistance in the West and I think this is also why probably a lot of the Senior managers in EDS aren't really interested in the Middle East because they are getting influenced by that as well they do believe that everybody here is walking around with guns and blowing each other up.)* CDI-EB1.11

> *''some of them were business some of them were just getting together just get together >you know< [just being as bosses with the staff (.) I didn't like the areas of gathering >you know< honestly if they use to go to some places where they don't serve alcohol yea it will be fine with me but serving alcohol and drinking >you know< I am just trying to avoid to get to a situation where the person gets drunk and where he can loose his control start throwing bad words >you know< I am just trying to avoid such incidents or such act >you know<''* CDI-LD1.8.

There is also a lot perceptional issues such as the westerners feel that their culture is harshly criticized yet the locals drive American cars and go to McDonalds, drink coke. In the west also the perception of Islam is of fundamentalism and a lot of EDS employees hesitate in taking up assignments in the Gulf countries. With this mind set it is not surprising that both sides lack respect for each other

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"EDS would bring a set of business values and processes which help with how international business operates and a set of globally accepted business ethics. This would assist in individual growth as to having a global view and can be a real benefit locally as well". CRC-EI1.1

4.5.4.3 Rigidity

Local employees also feel that for EDS managers culture relates to only their corporate culture and the local culture is of no importance to them.

"If they respect the culture ah [from their point of view as I said it's towards there company or the organisation" CRC-LD1.1

"a Western in a Western company with a Corporate culture (.) whereby a lot of communication these days is done in ah not much in a face to face but on a remote base CRC-EC1.1

" I 'mean< there is a big difference between the local corporate and the American corporate (.) the American corporate they are more like into the business process oriented where as the local companies they are lacking these types of business processes >I mean< they have very discipline business processes is" CRC-LF1.1

The Local employee feels that for an American corporation the process is all about discipline and procedures and a local company can learn a lot from their business practice.

"I mentioned the timing differences (.) [there is something about eight hours difference between us and the States (.) by the time we leave the office they will start there business >okay< and the management in the corporate they need some work to be done from there side so they will be sending you emails calling you after your working office hours [Okay >I mean< sometimes you might be in the Mosque praying >I mean< you are sitting with your family so >I mean< this a disturbance for your social life also" CRC-LF1.3

The Local employee feels that he is dictated to and ordered around without a thought about his needs and this is the western style of management.

> *" they are like dictators just do it this way (.) if it is wrong then we will fix it but will not listen to your opinion (.) although >I mean< you are here you know the culture you know the people you know how to treat the people you understand how the business runs here they will not listen to you they want to do it their way"* CRC-LF1.4

Since Arab culture has got everything to do with honour, to be dictated or commanded or even talked to brusquely in front of others is considered a breach of etiquette.

> *"I think one of the main differences if you work at Western Department (.) is very direct its all about business everything has to happen on time and when you start a meeting bam you're straight into business very little social interaction there is some but not very much, "* CRC-EB1.1

Whereas EDS managers consider a waste of time the period spent on socializing before a meeting.

> *"Yea absolutely it's part of EDS corporate culture to recognize culture of diversity it's the corporate speaking"* CRC-EB1.2

In theory everyone seems to understand that cultural diversity has to be recognized and understood but how to deal with it on a practical and daily basis seems beyond anyone's comprehension.

> *"Well I am not sure if the corporation takes all the credit for it but it's part of that culture yes (.) which have tried to direct people into. We do a lot of training for people which always make them more aware and again >you know< they realize they can get satisfaction at the job as well. It's not just financial I'd say we got a long way to go"* CRC-EB1.4.

4.5.4.4 Lack of Respect

EDS has a training policy to make the employee understand the value of work but the more you emphasize on work without giving equal importance to religion and way of life the lesson is lost on the local employee. For he is seething with

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resentment that he is being forced to comply to company policies which are against his culture.

> *"Another thing I noticed fairly quickly was the difference between time and timing. In the West we agree something will happen or be done on a certain date and time, driven by the calendar and the clock here there is more emphasis on the timing being right, that is everybody being in the mood for whatever action or discussion or agreement needs to take place (.) This can lead to deadlines being missed but soon after getting a call at night or during the weekend that the person now feels like it the timing is right and then whatever it is that needs to be done gets done. In some ways this is a less stressful way of doing business since it creates maximum co-operation but in other ways it is more stressful as the business has deadlines and commitments which must be met otherwise there are commercial consequences"* CRC-EB1.6

Sense of time has always been a conflict between ancient oriental cultures and the modern western culture. Whereas in the oriental cultures there is a lack of urgency to do anything and an attitude of fate and will of God, the western culture is perceived as rushing headlong into things as if time itself was running out. The local employee looks at it with amused indulgence and the foreign manager sees it as a lack of discipline.

> *''Well when you say EDS, I mean its all depends on the person who is coming on the top ah who is going to look after EDS Bahrain.. EDS Bahrain as a local entity which is part of EDS global and whoever is on the top of EDS Bahrain has to recognize the religion and other things so it depends on person to person''* CRC-ER1.1

> *''I don't think there is any major conflict between EDS culture because EDS is a global company recognizes all the local cultures in respective countries so they allow people to exercise that, but again it boils down to the respective manager or the account manager who is placed in that country how far he is going to exercise that''* CDI-ER1.1

The managers are convinced that EDS does recognize other cultures but they don't seem to be aware that at ground level the statements on their website don't seem to be working in creating a good work atmosphere.

> *''What I understand from like corporate culture is like it's a combinations of things it's a combination of business values the way the company is operating ah understanding employees its all together becomes the culture of the company. Ah There is nothing specific to the culture and there no specific training saying that it is EDS corporate culture but there are different kind of trainings on how EDS conduct business what are the ethics that EDS follows, so I think this all adds to the culture''* CRC-ER1.3

Corporate culture is the way a business functions and the different kinds of training they offer seems to be enough for an employee to adjust to the corporation. This sidelines the fact that a local employee is a bundle of influences and may not perceive things exactly the way EDS wants him to perceive them.

> *''it's mainly like the way of doing business here in the middle east is slightly slightly different slightly different than the way of doing business in other western countries because here may be few things work on relationship ah by knowing other people and other things but in Western countries this might not be a big thing ah they just work on the business thing and relationships is not a major thing in other part of the world but here the relationship is a key thing which ties up with other business decisions or business operations''* CDI-ER1.2

While in the Arab culture it is the relationship that ties up a business deal in the western companies it is only the mutual benefit that ties up a business relationship.

> *''(.) its again like corporate has to admit that this a local culture and they have to like motivate people to come out of that people has to realize this a foreign company and they need to be little more ah aligned to the company's culture''* CDI-ER1.3

> *''I was working may be it is different in other areas but where I have worked I have noticed that it's who you are and who is the person*

you are working for and based that you will be getting trainings you will be getting promotions and all of this (.) the actual work you are doing is not considered that much (.) when I came to a multinational organisation I noticed there is a difference (.) they look at the person himself as an individual what he does his main tasks >okay< and ah and they give you a room to speak also > to speak out (.) you can say what's in your mind clearly and without >you know< feeling that you will be intimidated or anything so I thought this is the big difference between the two which I like where I am now'' CRC-LB1.2

Social standing is important to an Arab. Who you are and whom you are with dictates his position in society. In the western environment its only a person's hard work that speaks for him and trying to be friends with the bosses is considered as nepotism.

4.5.5 Corporate Policies

The EDS foreign managers genuinely believe that their corporate policies would assist in individual growth of their employees as per corporate culture goals. These processes are tested in other market and have worked effectively for them.

> *''EDS would bring a set of business values and processes which help with how international business operates and a set of globally accepted business ethics. This would assist in individual growth as to having a global view and can be a real benefit locally as well.''*
> CRC-EI 1.1

Though the local employee is aware of existing corporate policies, he feels it is not practiced and it all remains in paper.

> *''Honestly speaking ah I haven't feel it (.) [ah it was all on papers (.) you know like when they established their company it was just like (almost) one of the rule of the labor in Bahrain (.) that they have to co-op and comply with the culture (.) but unfortunately this I have seen it all in paper but in reality they were not going with it >you know< they were not complying with it''* CRP-LD1.1

The local employee feels that he should be respected and trusted when it comes

to corporate policies and it creates a distance within him from his managers.

> *''It is just based no my experience with foreign management >you know< I mean ah their expectation of us is just work work work (.) >okay< I mean >okay< we're getting paid to get the job done that's fine but they should have the flexibility and respect of the actual person working and trusting him that''* CRP-LS1.1

The managers are insensitive to the importance of Friday in the lives of their

employees.

> *''EDS being a corporate American company only think about their own time and their own weekends for example Friday is a working day [for them (.) for us it's a weekend it's the start of the weekend and there are last minutes things that they expect you to provide and do it on a Friday that they pick up the phone or send you an email on a Friday I want this done today''* CRP-LS1.2

In spite of long years of service in Bahrain the managers still do this and the local

employee feels this is done so that their weekends are not disturbed. But when

you compare it with the EDS managers reasons it makes it very clear that both

sides don't understand each others reasoning for adopting a certain policy.

> *"the overall chain of commands is different to a degree you could say in certain areas there is of an autocratic way of management ah equally you could argue that >you know< that this autocratic will be opposite very much the democratic way of doing things in terms of the decision process is being made (.) but whichever way you look at it it's going to be slightly different and it is slightly different the way the normal Westerner European person or an American person would necessary experience (.) and I think that take time to accommodate that way of working and start of a relationship is all what you got to do (.) and again I think it's all about relationship building to come in (forward)".* CRP-EC1.1

4.5.5.1 <u>Sense of Belonging.</u>

EDS has to look at local employees as partners and not autocratically. As an equal partner if they are treated and motivated and accepted the way they are then there opens up an avenue of working in a mutually beneficial manner. Otherwise the local employee sees EDS as an intruder who is trying to be autocratic.

> *"but I think it is a matter of how a company organisation goes about selecting people for overseas assignments (.) ah and how they then actually help them develop those particular people (.) to settle-in in that type of environment if they lean to it (.) and I think again in a lots of companies you would argue where does the actual responsibility of selection come from (.) it come from a core division departmental function or aided and assisted by Human Resource function who basically does all the Administration but equally would not understand what the local culture is"* CRP-EC 1.2

There have been no attempts from EDS side to send local employees for training abroad and giving them an exposure to EDS as a global entity.

> *"like the processes the procedures they are there they are standardized to a certain extent the benefits also I would say not a hundred percent of extent but at the end still you have to customize the culture where you are and the market where you are placed at (.) but this is I think one of the processes I saw"* CRP-LA 1.1

A process standardized to suit EDS in Europe or US will not be as effective in another country with local culture. All processes need to be customized to suit the environment they have to function in. At EDS it is very evident that such thought has not been given to this issue.

> *"I cannot use hundred percent company's policies at the end I have to make sure I am following the law of the country my employees has been hired and contract has been issued from where from"* CRP-LA1.2

The local law of the country also has to be taken into account while formatting procedural policies when a corporation decides to do business in a culture different from what it has been used to all the while.

The perception that a local employee has about EDS management style indicates that each side does not understand what drives the other.

> *"I think a lot of this refer to their leaders and manager how do they pass to them let's say the global vision, missions and objectives because we keep saying OK you need to make sure when you set up your objectives make them in hierarchy to the top if the leader did not communicate the way EDS globally is going (.) the local will say fine I am here I am suppose to do the job expected from me from A to Z from seven o'clock to five o'clock then I am going to leave"* PER-LA1.2

If a local employee is not made to feel part of the global entity called EDS and he/she has not been motivated to understand and feel strongly for the vision and mission of the company then for him it is just a 9 to 5 job and his productivity will definitely reflect that.

4.5.5.2 <u>Sense of impermanency</u>

> *"Why people run away is because we have a limited contract with these people is it because now the contract is due for renewal and people unstable what is going to happen to this are we going to be transitioned and so on (.) so when you come to the end of the contract people feel unsecured about what it is going to happen to their future if somebody offer them better salary in a stable company probably they move"* CRP-LA1.7

When a Local employee is employed on a short term renewable contract it is a message to him or her that no loyalty or sincerity is expected of him. His tenure is short and he has no stake in the future of the company. This is the most de-motivating factor in any person's career.

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"The way I look at it if it's an international company that comes to establish itself they have to understand the market they have to understand the culture they are working in I wouldn't mind >okay< let them for example expatriates I think they should look at if they want to really grow they should start to use the local people than bringing an expat here and use them in senior positions to play role for their organisations as much as they can I think the success of these international companies is much better because the local knows the country better they know the culture better and they know the people better so they will be able to sell the company in the market and bring growth to the company better than the expat unless the expat he has been in this region for a long time and he knows and then he try to interact whatever the vision of that corporate company and the local vision but >I mean< to rely always on the expat who don't understand the market I don't think aah I don't think its big barrier because there are a lot of international companies and they are doing good I think" CRP-LA1.6

At the same time local employees are prepared to change their routines because they realize that they are working for an International company and will have to make adjustments. The words of LA are ample evidence of this.

"[Of course when come and take say a local hire you tell them exactly what is expected from them >let's say< for example when you are working for an international company sometimes they need you to come and work on Friday and they compensate you (.) you have to be adapted to these kind of little changes >I mean< like holidays weekend time difference you'll have to have that CRP-LA 1.8

" each corporate has its own rules and regulation and policies (.) and >I mean< most of them all the employees should follow that and adapt to the corporate policies (.) however without giving them proper training without enlighten them with these processes this is what they are lacking they think that people know they understand the corporate full >I mean< the corporate rules and regulations (.) so this is where the >I mean< the gap will come" CRP-LF1.2

The emphasis on training and creating an awareness of the expectations EDS has is being stressed by local employee F. In practical terms unless an employee

is made aware of this before accepting the job offer there will arise a conflict of

perceptions.

> *"If they don't you will loose the business >I mean< you will close >I mean< this is what is happening it seems to EDS [I mean they are going to loose the business because of not understanding the local environment and the market and understand the region "* CRP-LF1.4

A strong statement from F that if they don't understand these undercurrents then

EDS has to be prepared for the eventual loss of business.

4.5.5.3 Perceptions about Corporate Policies

> *"Yea for instance we recognize dress, people coming in national dress which is fine, we recognize they have prayers time, we recognize the three days off for mourning all this kind of stuff"* CRP-EB1.4

This statement from EDS manager B is proof that EDS has recognized the

alienation from a very superficial level.

> *"To recognize and work with diverse cultures (.) Actually you find that in other countries as well, if you have a Muslim employee in Holland then you know you accept and tolerate and work out ways to allow them to recognize their own culture"* CRP-EB1.6

If in Holland you will accommodate then it is clear that in a Muslim country you

have to put in a bigger effort.

> *Yea I mean you get differences that we get in every organisation we take over which nothing really to do with the culture (.) that is just the nature of the business of the transitioned people from a company and they feel that they still work for that company and not for EDS [but Its not really to do with the culture is it* CRP-EB1.11

EDS was trying to separate local culture and way of life of an employee from his work routine. For a Muslim there is no point in time when his religion is separate from his daily routine. This statement itself is a proof that EDS has not clearly understood what religion means to its employee.

> *"Yea I still think the business will have to be a lot bigger before we can do that I still think we have to do that through the people who have got the experience of the West and understand how the West works, just translating this into Arabic is not going to be enough I don't think [Because you are taking across the corporate culture and local culture at the same time (.) you need people who are somewhere in the middle of it (.) like we are Western managers and we are here in the local culture so we understand to a certain extent the local culture and you've got locals who have worked and educated in the West who understand how the West works and you need people in the middle like that"* CRP-EB1.16

This thought has come as an afterthought that local employees should be trained to step in as managers. This will create a chain which will link the local employees to the EDS management.

> *"Certainly a decentralized business works a lot better in my view when you are working internationally as you can take a lot more account of the local culture (.) you are right the majority of this being a US centric >you know< typically they don't want to understand other people's issues and problems and so on it's just purely about business, the bottom line has to be right. That's why I said I think we need that middle layer of locals who understand what West needs and wants and some Westerners who understand what locals need and want"* CRP-EB1.21

A decentralized hand on management would be able to get better productivity from employees rather than a remote management who cannot be communicated with.

> *"What I think that ah EDS has to like who ever is appointed in that particular country has to know about the local country culture, they have to know about the people because when it says in the corporate culture.. I mean they say they adopt whatever or they*

recognize the local culture but it all comes to that particular manager who is responsible to bring up the account in that particular new country so it is very particular ah important for him to understand the people and the culture" FRM-ER1.1

EDS managers have to be trained to understand the local culture and its

influence on people before trying to implement global corporate policies.

"[because if I say yah the policy doesn't say that don't recognize any other local culture or you don't admire any of the things which is there in the local country it is very flexible but if you have a person who doesn't admit that or doesn't recognize that then its is a problem" CRP-ER1.1

This same view expressed above by foreign Manager R is also evident in the

local employee responses listed where they have felt that they were not

understood or accepted.

"[Yeh I mean like I got personal experience like seeing clients expects kind of relationship with EDS to exclude something that is business decision but EDS is looking purely from the business prospective to that project or decision making thing. This is some of the areas where I can see EDS has to align themselves to the local culture so they can improve business more effectively" CRP-ER1.2

Manager R is emphatic in the need for EDS to align itself to the local culture if it

wants to develop its business relationships in the region.

"Yeh I mean when you have foreign people working for a foreign company that feeling is not visible but if you have like local people working for a foreign company they may feel that difference as a big difference I mean the local employees will always be aligned to their local culture." FRM-ER1.2

A local employee steeped in his local culture will prove to be an asset in forging

new business relationships within the region. EDS didn't recognize this factor.

"Make employees believe that they are the required and excellent assets that the company has which would increase their performance". CRP-LB1.7

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This is a very valid belief and if recognized and respected it would have helped

EDS grow stronger in the region.

> *''EDS being a corporate American company only think about their own time and their own weekends for example Friday is a working day [for them (.) for us it's a weekend it's the start of the weekend and there are last minutes things that they expect you to provide and do it on a Frdiay that they pick up the phone or send you an email on a Friday I want this done today (.) >I mean< for many years and years they have had presence in this part of the world and they should know by now that the Friday and Saturday is the weekend (.) they don't want to be disturbed in their weekend so why should they disturb us in the weekend''* CRP-LS1.2

> *''By making a clear policy statement "People management should not be delegated to HR" each manager must make the effort to understand his team and get closer to them and know how they think and feel''.* CRP-OJ1.1

4.5.5.4 Partnership

If every manager was given the responsibility to manage his own people and not

depend on HR to integrate employees into the organisational culture of EDS. For

that first he has to understand the nuances of the local culture.

> *''I think the structure that EDS brings I think that's much of a Bahrainis new environment. A company like EDS goes in to, you know, EDS has a lot of structure, it's a big corporation so it has a lot of things like, methodologies, processes, organisational thinking, that's good for Bahrainis to''* CRP-EL1.2

> *''I think to me, religion is very much an individual thing, if you are very religious and you pray a number of times during the day and the company provides facilities for you but you still do the same at work and I've seen both sides of it, I've seen people use religion as an excuse for not doing work and I've seen very religious people being some of the best people in the office and so I think religion is not an excuse for not doing work, if you know what I mean, but say a westerner coming in it is a difficult topic to approach because people don't know how to approach it because I've also trouble and I have seen the really bad side, I have seen people excused of a bias against religion which is wrong and I think the way you have to*

manage it is, if you are a brand new multi-national coming into Bahrain, I think its very that you have a very good mix in the senior management team. There have to be Bahrainis on the senior management team and there have to be other people as well''. CRP-EL1.3

Manager L feels that there have to be Bahrainis in the management team.

''I think looking back the two, it could have been too cozy in that we didn't tackle some of the issues on the account like say, non-productive of people?, which was fine for 5 years when we were making our 20% margin and Gulf-air was getting their hours and everything but at the end we paid the price. If we raised the bar it tackled the people awarding productive, went to gulf air proactively and said, "We want to, we've captured the contract they're just going to save you money, it's just going to be better for you". We probably could have done a deal 2 years ago when Tariq was in place and say, do an extension of five or six years''. CRP-EL1.5

Here Manager L is very clearly saying how EDS would have been more

successful if they had made use of the resources of the locals to get more

business. This is a failure of the corporate policy in not integrating local

employees into its management structure.

'' The key learning for me, because I've taught an awful lot about this contract because I don't like losing deals, I think the key learning for me is if you just accept the trouble easy set up your house, which we did a couple of years ago and don't make changes then and prepare yourself for a recompute or try to avoid a recompute then it will come back to bite you if you just accept the status call I think eventually if you not improving all the time and not examining what you are doing how you are doing it you could be in trouble''. CRP-EL1.6

Manager L clearly states that EDS had not adapted to the new environment and

integrated employees into its culture and hence lost a lot of ground in developing

business and establishing itself in the region.

4.5.6 Corporate Training

> *''Yes, management of the company should be mostly local, the expats should be used to assist and develop the local management skills and not remain too long''* CTR-EI1.1

This is the most practical and visionary statement that has come out of the interviews expressed by EDS manager I. For a company to establish itself in the region it has to train locals assisted by the expats to completely take over operations.

> *"ah I think the responsibility for multinationals I think realistically how to prepare people (.) who are either visiting or spending time in the country to actually help them understand that the way things are done and not necessarily the way they expect them to be done (.) so I think it's a matter of preparation (.) which again a lot of companies probably weren't doing as they could do (.) these are observations not criticism (.) ah I think secondly >you know< how long does it take you to understand settle-in to Middle East environment ah again I think it depends on the person's approach (.)"* CTR-EC1.1

Manager C endorses this view by saying that visitors should be prepared to accept the situation and work within that frame work rather than go on expecting things to be done as per experiences in other countries.

> *"I think again it goes back down to ah the pre-education if you like (.) ah and I will not say the word training but certainly an understanding of >you know< how a particular culture does operate and how it organizes itself (.) the more people realize that when visiting a particular country then they would find it probably easier to settle in there and easier for them to understand how meetings are conducted"* CTR-EC1.2

Manager C emphasizes on the importance of creating an awareness of the culture of the place where an EDS employee is going to take up an assignment so that the manager is prepared to handle the work force.

"Yea and I think it's a key of preparation (.) preparation in terms of understanding (.) again of how a typical meeting would be conducted with an Arab (.) again taking that from not just a Westerner point of view but also taking it from an Arab point of view" CTR-EC1.3

"I think it is preparation and understanding the way they need to goby in understanding the way traditional things are done within the Middle East (.) they have an impact on the way people conduct themselves and what is expected of them (.) and therefore I think they can actually plan ahead accordingly (.) and I am going back to the days of BA (.) we used to go through quite a lot of preparation work for these typical type of issues where >you know< you are dealing with >you know< multinational (.) quite few different cultural background in one particular area I am going back to the seventies (.)and need to go through a lot of role playing prior to being sent out and the role playing was based on negotiation skills and negotiation skills to the knowledge back to the people sitting in the room (.) [Yea I think the preparation continues through to the next level of steps because obviously you need some guidance on that (.) and either you decide to go alone and learn the hard way or you have someone in the room with you who is of a local nationality who can actually help you understand a little bit in more details (.) again I would use a Chinese example who are pragmatic (   ) if you reside in China (.) but China you have two or three people for one person sitting with you who can advise and recommend the way you conduct yourself in a meeting (.) close to the type you conduct in Japan as well (.) and I suggest to recommend for anyone going to the Middle East for the first time need to think about that as an approach " CTR-EC1.4

It is clear that the need to prepare a manager for the role he has to play in a new environment is a matter of theoretical knowledge but it has not been implemented in EDS Bahrain as a policy.

"this is my plan and this is what I exactly expect from you and if the person is not adopting himself not to consider if you have to take a different action but I mean the more leaders communicate to their people the more leaders see the results expected from expected from them" CTR-LA1.1" CTR-LF1.1

"in this part of the world people with these best practice industry processes ready >I mean< you have to develop these skills in them (.) and beside >I mean< when you try to impose these processes

on the existing or the local people many of them they cannot handle the pressure and they just leave" CTR-LF1.3

"So in that sense we haven't recognized the local culture because we do other course in other languages in the west (.) >you know< they do get translated (.) But as far as I am aware we don't do anything in Arabic, >you are right" CTR-EB1.2

4.5.6 .1 Training to be Managers

EDS has not really implemented any training programs but has depended on employees who have an understanding of western culture to disseminate policies and corporate culture to the local employees. This is evident in Manager B's statement below:

> *"I think that is beyond their stream of influence to do that, I think what we rely on in this region is people like yourself who have been educated and worked in the West so you have more of an understanding of the Western culture and very very good English and there are coaching focused on you and we rely on you to then to get that through to the local people"* CTR-EB1.3

Manager B states that EDS relied on people like the author to make the locals to understand. It shows a clear lack of policy in how to integrate the locals into the company. It also put me the author in a dilemma. I was not accepted as an equal by the management. The locals also felt that I was more a foreigner with my UK education and the fact that my partner was a foreigner. In more than one way I also felt alienated from both sides.

> *"Educated in academically in ah because honestly I have dealt with lots of Americans they don't know what is the Gulf (.) when we tell them Gulf (.) I have an experience I was talking to somebody in the university in Bahrain ( ) we were just talking about the Gulf and all of a sudden and it was one of the courses that I was taking towards the government (.) politics of government and they were talking about war in the Gulf and this was one student who jumped and*

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said my God I was just wondering what happened to my family >you know< he can't understand and differentiate when he was talking about Gulf it is Arabian Gulf or Persian Gulf or he was referring to Gulf of Mexico (.) so there are lacking this >you know< although you find them they reading most of the Europeans most of them you see wherever they go even in the train they've got the books they read but this is only in certain area they don't have [knowledge" CTR-LD1.2

4.5.6.2 <u>Data Collection and survey</u>

'' [yeh that will be an idea to conduct surveys or questionnaires that will encourage employees to give there feedback back to the company and management what they expect and what is their feedback on the operation of the company" DAC-ER1.1

It is surprising that the idea of feedback and survey was not built into the

corporate policies of EDS. That manager R readily agreed is proof that EDS

approached Bahrain with more of an autocratic management approach.

''Ah its (.) you cannot say a hundred percent understanding is there, but yes yeh generally speaking yes they do understand the corporate culture because we've got trainings awareness programs and other things" CRC-ER1.2

Manager R reluctantly agrees that the kind of training programs EDS has does

not create a 100% awareness in corporate culture.

''and I do believe the time they come to Bahrain they need to sit and provide a separate session or dedicated time to understand first the culture because if you understand the culture >you know< how people are working how people are believing in things and how they can give you a better ah job or better production you need to sit with them and understand everything from the beginning and then from that you can work out from there" CTR-LB1.1

Local employee B is emphasizing the fact that EDS should have spent some time

to understand local culture, work environment, and then start operations here.

''I do believe that there are Bahraini's that have capabilities that are equal if not more than other workforce of different cultural

background. Saying that it also makes me believe that in some sectors, it would be beneficial to have different cultural background that would transfer their expertise and knowledge and create a stable and efficient environment. Being on job is a continuous learning practice which should not stop whether by training the Bahrain's to become leaders or not". CTR-LB1.1

''< the security course is concerned they should have >okay< it's good to know American security and all things but they should also have a section related to the local law or whatever the presence is (.) Ethical training (.) ethical is kind of the same everywhere more or less [But there might be some aspects related to >you know< certain cultures but all the training that we take online (.) when you read the examples when you read the issue is all related to the American law and the American issues". CTR-LS1.1

''When corporations open up businesses in any part of the world they can get a sort of like a training ah a brief training about the culture what to expect and what not to expect in the sense of (.) just to get a brief understanding of the culture and may be slightly touch on their religion". CTR-LS1.2

These again emphasize the need for training and awareness in EDS managers before they take up assignments in local cultures. A lot of the problems arising due to perceived insensitivity is actually ignorance.

''EDS managers who come to this region must not look for employees who resemble them or look like them or behave like them. They should themselves get localized. They must make the extra effort and work form within the local team not outside it or from the top of it. EDS expatriate managers must receive formal training and coaching on how to become part of this local team. They must not try and duplicate the American or the European team which they last had because it is like trying to drink whisky out of a bottle of wine!" CTR-OJ1.1

4.5.6.3 <u>Managers to be trained</u>

A good suggestion by a neutral observer J that EDS managers must be trained to be part of the local team rather than expecting locals to be part of them.

'' to get the best of both world those Bahraini leaders need to be trained locally by American or European leaders. This way we import best practice and international standards. Additionally those local leaders should be trained outside Bahrain for short periods. This way they do not remain totally and narrow mindedly "local". They could be taken out on a one year tour to get to know about other EDS operations and especially to see and interact with their counterparts whom they will have to hear but not see them in the future''. CTR-OJ1.3

The local employees should be trained abroad so that they can take up roles in

senior management so that the company benefits from the insight of an insider.

''I think you have to see this with some leaders from Almubadalah coming in and bringing in knowledge of the company and expertise. Ultimately the goal should be that it ends up with the Bahraini leader. And if you look at what we did in Egypt, we've got over 400 people in Egypt. And it is run by an Egyptian, Mr. Mohammed Al Afeefi, and very successfully and he integrates very well with the leadership in Europe and represents Egypt very well and that's the model you should infer''. CTR-EL1.1

The aim of the company should be to give the leadership to the locals assisted

by expats if needed. This factor was not keyed into EDS policy structure.

''Yes, I think definitely looking back we could have done more to integrate on 2 levels; 1) individuals. 2) The account. About 3 years ago, we should have integrated the delivery with EDS delivery, it has to be   from Pauric, and he was right, even though we argued against but he was actually right and then we should have integrated the account better''. CTR-EL1.3

4.5.7 Alienation

" I have also seen other expatriate who stand out like sore thumb who no matter where they are the expatriate life probably mean to an end for them (.) it provide them with ah >you know< really good life style (.) but they didn't really get involved from a local point of view culture tradition etc (.) that is not interested ah and I think that just the make up of people in general' ALI-EC1.1

The expat manager tends to isolate himself from the locals and live a life of

luxury and generally is perceived as not interested in what the locals do. EDS

manager C points out this aspect of expat life.

> *"Probably some of the drawbacks that some people see this an example a year back or about two years back Global has announced there is an offer for retirement package globally there but then they said >no no< its only for the US nationals. Here is the drawback (.) if you are going to offer something globally then you need to include all the company (.) you cannot say ok this is only for the US ah country or I mean US employees so this was [not"* ALI-LA 1.1

Local employee A feels that EDS does not make the locals feel part of their

corporation. They see in the mails various offers for global employees but they

are not included in any of this.

> *"you see lots of communications we have celebration bla bla bla we have this weekday >OK< people is going to gather (.) people cannot gather because we are working internationally but if they say like select a break I am not saying every day a number of people get a break or something to get together from New York from the US from the Middle East etc the far East whatever and do two or three days conference let the people know what is going on let the people feel they are part of EDS (.) Like >okay< as long as we are part of it whether we are ten percent of the total of the whole company or twenty or seventy (.) they have added us as part of the Global EDS"* ALI-LA 1.3

A sense of not being part of EDS is strong in the minds of the local employees as

the words of A reflect above.

> *"Ah from my experience a lot of the people locally do feel that they are kept aside they are ignored and that they are not (.) ah they don't know even what is going on in this account or what is the future of this account or they think there might be something might be happening inside"* ALI-LA 1.4

Perceptions and lack of awareness causes a sense of alienation which is

reflected in the words of Local employee F

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" when a European management comes to this part of the world they think this people they are unskilled like them or they are not matured like the European or the [American underestimate the people here >I mean< if you see >I mean< good example is the salaries [>I mean< you see there is a big difference between the local people and the expat (.) may be ten times fifteen times more higher than the local people (.) although some in some cases the local people their perform and their productivity much higher than the people than West >okay< " PER-LF1.1

The above statement by local employee F makes it clear the sense of alienation when he says that there is definitely a segregation between the foreign managers and local employees.

"with the country like Bahrain with the unemployment of more than 30% I mean people will be reluctant >I mean< to speak for their rights" ALI-LF1.1

"Yea I think you can find that in every country actually you find people in an EDS location which is far from the center for example south East of Holland you feel isolated from the corporation and don't feel appreciated (.) [and that certainly true here as well because we are a small organisation pretty well isolated from the rest and I don't think that is going to change significantly. I do think (.) >yes< the corporation don't really doesn't understand this region and I don't see any (.) personally I don't see any motivation to understand it either (.) at this point" ALI-EB1.3

While the unemployment rate of Bahrain makes it impossible for the local employee to talk about their rights it is also evident from manager B's words that EDS really does not understand the region and it has not put in efforts to do it either.

"Western people here who are not open to the local culture what they try to do is carry on as if this was the west and they got no interest in the local culture at all (.) and those people either don't last very long or they live in isolation." ALI-EB1.4

''EDS as a company has to understand the value of relationship and the employees has to understand that everything should not be taken under the umbrella of relationship which should be your

business values I think it should be a mix and match approach.'' ALI-ER1.1

''the key thing is the relationship, they have to (.) management has to build relationship with employees so they can feel free and talk about their issues and other things ah I mean the management should not (.) or the people should not feel that the management is a foreign entity they should feel like also they are among them so that they can share their issues and talk to them freely'' ALI-ER1.2

Coming from EDS manager B it is a telling statement of the indifference of EDS as a corporate about the local culture and its impact on the work life of an employee. Unless the corporation integrates the local employees in to the culture of the corporation and ensures that its foreign managers have integrated into the local culture. Unless everyone feels part of the same team it is impossible to work as a team.

''(.) If you understand our culture definitely you will be able to get out of me hundred and ten not only hundred'' CON-LB1.2

Local employee emphasizes the fact that if EDS managers try to understand the local culture then they will get the best productivity out of the local Employees.

:'' No it shouldn't be the case (.) you see I have a way of thinking is that (.) see people sometimes or as you have mentioned it's business you would tell me it's business I don't have to think >okay< twice before I talk to you or I approach you in any matter of business (.) I would say >okay< it is business but how many hours I am doing this business with you (.) is it eight hours is ten hours this is my life this is my time in my life you are taking my life so I do believe that I deserve to spend those eight or ten hours that I am spending with you which I am not spending with my family >you know< to be treated in a way that it will make me comfortable I don't care >you know< if you are from other company you come here to Bahrain (.) I want to be treated in a way that will make me comfortable [You need to understand me to get something out of me (.) may be sometimes if you take people or you bring your team with you when you come to Bahrain may be they will not be able to

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give you exactly what I can give you because this is my country and I will be able [to know many things about my country that you will benefit out of it much better than a person who knows your culture and accept anything from you so (.) this is the main thing so it is not only business you need to look into other aspects (.) it is really important to understand people and to treat them the way they want to be treated" ALI-LB1.2

To understand people and treat them the way they want to be treated is the lesson that EDS should have known even before it came to Bahrain.

"I think EDS probably Honestly could have done more Integration to Bahrainis and all of the EDS Bahrain staff in to the bigger EDS Company, probably a little bit of feeling that a bit of an island and remote, probably true for the whole goals set up. In honestly I say. It probably could have integrated more people into the company, may be send people like yourself to UK for a year or other people to UK or to USA for a year to understand the company and understand the business". ALI-EL1.1

The same voice is echoed in Manager L that integration of Bahrainis was an important aspect of setting up business in Bahrain .To do that people should have been sent to UK or USA to understand the company and its values.

Manager L points out that the author himself would have been an ideal candidate for this. It left me as an EDS local employee that if I was found deserving what stopped EDS from giving me that opportunity. In a sense it is a total failure of policy implementation.

4.6 Discussion

So far the findings of interviews of EDS managers, local employees and independent observers were presented to show the differences in perceptions in all major areas of interaction. The cultural, linguistic, religious barriers creating a

sense of disparity also have been explicitly presented. In order to facilitate further discussion on lessons an American corporation can learn from the experience of EDS in Bahrain for this research relevant theories reviewed in chapter two will be discussed.

4.6.1 Factors which cause Conflict

As reviewed in chapter two ''culture is rooted in practice sustained by structures and become habitual'' (Anthony, 1994, p.98). Routines are embedded into the psyche of the people and it is difficult to bring them to move away from it. The Local employees come to work embedded in their culture and the routine it dictates and are presented with a different set of routines as part of their work.

There is a different language for transmission of information other than their own language. Whereas Arabic reinforces their cultural identity; English only tends to make them feel uprooted from their familiar environment.

4.6.1.1 Religious practices

As stated in 2.6 Islam is a set pattern of behavior and belief which does not exempt any segment of human life from it. In organisational culture anything to do with your personal beliefs such as religion is kept away from the work place. This is the primary concept that arouses resentment which leads to conflict at the work place. Ideals, aesthetics, material culture all are outlined in Chapter Two and are the foundation of what appears to be the influences that drive a Bahraini.

Unless one tries to learn their history, their terrain and their evolution one cannot begin to understand the driving force behind their lives. When an organisational culture tries to bring in new set of guidelines it makes the Local employee feel that he is being asked to let go of the foundations upon which he built his life. For him the need to pray 5 times a day, observe religious fasts, holy pilgrimages are all rules set out by the Koran which cannot be compromised upon. When he is made to feel that his religious practices are a hindrance to business it creates a conflict within him because all this while his life has been woven around the rules of Islam.

4.6.1.2 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture (as detailed in 2.3) has evolved as a subject in the late 70s coinciding with the rise of the Japanese industry and the decline of American industry. The success of the Japanese industry was attributed to its culture with its inherent unique values which the organisational culture wanted to emulate. Yet the findings clearly show that the uniqueness of the Arab culture was not explored and turned into an advantage. The rigid organisational value systems which earlier were a formula to success started to fail in the national culture environment. The organisational culture instead of adapting to its environment seemed to have expected the local environment to adopt its values. The purpose of organisational culture is to motivate employees towards a common goal for the benefit of the organisation as per Peters and Waterman,1982; Deal and Kennedy,1982; Kotter and Heskett,1992 (2.3).The key word here is to motivate

employees. In order to motivate people one should have a clear strategy which takes into consideration what is of primary importance to them as well. Until the employee feels part of the organisation and is made to feel that his beliefs and values are respected this is difficult to achieve. Whereas culture is formed by 'what collective behaviors shape and sustain' organisational culture is socially created by attempting to change norms, values and attitudes in order to make correct contribution towards organisational effectiveness (2.3). There is bound to be conflict if an organisation assumes that an individual or group share the same values and beliefs. As is clear from section 4.5 the interviews clearly indicate that the local employees do not share the same corporate values or goals of EDS.They feel that these are imposed upon them without an awareness of their own values and beliefs which play an integral part in their lives. EDS has policies and value systems in place in its company literature but as detailed in 2.7 it has been criticized ''for its failure to honor its own value systems''. This very same criticism is reflected in the views of the local employees. The Literature review has clearly shown that American businesses do not give non western cultures any importance in their scheme of business plans. For many USA clearly was the world. Hence scholars of management are generally ignorant about Arab culture. So the Arab is perceived as ''primitive and irrational''. Chapter Two (2.8) indicated that ''trust, mutual respect and admiration'' has not been the characteristic of the relationship between the west and the Arabs.

4.6.1.3 Arab Culture

Repeatedly throughout the interviews you will find the same refrain from both sides about EDS managers not understanding that in Arab culture the individual has no place. It is a collective society manifested in the family, tribe and its derivative ethnicity and religion.' Their life is interdependent and many of its elements are inseparable'' (Moran and Harris, 1982: 240)''. Power is based not on individual success but on family, friends, charisma and ability to use force'' (Weir, 2001, p.1). As Nydell pointed out (2.5) if a foreigner wants to understand the Arabs it is important that he is aware of these cultural patterns and by identifying their most basic beliefs and values. Whereas westerners tend to believe that the individual is solely in charge of his destiny the Arabs believe that most things in life are controlled by fate. Even while applying the word Arab one must realize that Arabs spread over Middle East and N.Africa have different food habits, dress code and even political values. So when I use the word Arab in the context of this research my focus is on the Bahrainis. The past glory of the Muslim empire, strong sense of brotherhood and a common destiny is important to them. This reflects in their business practice where personal contact is important. An Arab will do business with you because he likes you and not necessarily because it is a good business proposition. The conflict arises when the corporate policies expect you to look clinically at the deal in hand and its benefit to the organisation. The Bahraini feels left out in such decision making.

4.6.2 Lack of Training

In the Literature review Weir (2005, p.4) has been quoted as urging ""This is a part of the world that we clearly do not inform ourselves about or teach our students about". When there is such indifference in academic circles a multinational like EDS aggressively focused on profits would not have invested in understanding the region. The fact (as discussed in 4.5) that the local employees were hired on contract basis and had to search for new jobs just in case contracts were not renewed proves that EDS gave no thought to the culture that it was going to do business in. While it is evident that Bahraini culture plays an important role in business transactions and that the majority of EDS employees in Bahrain are the local people of this country there is no evidence in company literature that this aspect has been looked into. Thus there is no evidence that relevant elements of the local culture have found their rightful place in the corporate culture or its corporate policies.

In the semi structured interviews both the local employees and EDS managers have reinforced the need for prior training before taking up jobs with EDS. The managers felt that with proper awareness training of the culture that they were being sent to they would have been more sensitive to the cultural and religious influences of the local employees. The Local employees felt that training should have been given to them to understand the principal objectives of the corporate culture and what was expected of them. Moreover EDS never tried to integrate Bahraini employees into its mainstream policies and there was a sense of

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alienation which demotivated them. The Bahraini employees were made to feel that they were on a remote island which was not worth visiting or being included in all the social activities of the organisation.

A concise training program to develop second rung leaders was not conceived. The ones who successfully climbed up were not sent for training to expand their horizons. EDS assumed its successful employees would disseminate information to the lower rungs without empowering them. Thus this research conclusively finds evidence that lack of training and awareness programs led to the phenomenon of alienation amongst local employees. This alienation was the major factor which negatively impacted the EDS business. The proof of that lies in the fact that EDS has had no other client in Bahrain except for its primary client which is Gulf Air. By training the locals EDS would have been able to penetrate the local market through its employees for incremental business. Instead it is left with its sole client and a work force which is not committed to the EDS corporate objectives.

4.7   Chapter Summary

To summarize drawing primarily on the interview data this chapter has discussed how EDS conducted its business in Bahrain. To explore the phenomenon of alienation felt by local employees the author interpreted the data gathered through interviews. The focus was kept on the cultural differences, influence of religion, Arab culture, Organisational culture and finally alienation. Besides this

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study has put forth a vision of how American companies can strive to get the maximum productivity and commitment from its local work force.

Overall this research has offered a better understanding of the conflict that arises when an American organisation sets out to do business in an local culture. This has identified a few new influencing factors that have not been addressed in existing literature (discussed in Chapter Two). It also detailed the factors that cause such conflicts to come up. This will help American companies setting out to do business in Bahrain see a clear picture of what a local employee expects from his foreign employer. This research implied that no generalized guidelines or rules can be applied to all American companies venturing into new markets.

Individual attention should be given to different environments and policy makers should carefully consider different circumstances and scenarios before designing and implementing corporate policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE AND REFLECTIONS

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical and practical contributions and implications of this study to American Corporations are highlighted, especially in the area of an American corporation setting up business in GCC countries.   GCC is the Gulf Cooperation Council formed in 1981 with six Arab states namely Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and U.A.E to form a trade block after having signed a unified economic agreement. These countries are called the GCC countries.

Following this is a review of the rigour, trustworthiness, and relevance of this research. To conclude, the limitations of this study, suggestions for further research on American organisations' approach to operating in local cultures are looked into. As established in the beginning of chapter one, the purpose of this research was to extend an understanding of lessons American companies can learn in adapting to local cultures while setting out to do business in local culture environments, by making a case study of the EDS experience in Bahrain. Three issues important to this research will be reviewed in this chapter: Contributions to practice, research reflections, and professional development. This chapter begins by outlining the original contributions made by this study to business and management practice. It presents the practical contributions and implications to both American companies and local employees working in multinational companies. Thereafter I reflect on the intellectual journey and research processes through my epistemic reflexivity and methodological reflexivity. The

role that I played as a researcher throughout this research is also evaluated and judged. Most importantly, the development of my professional as well as reflective practices in this intellectual journey is minutely examined through the successes and challenges and difficulties that I encountered while striving towards the completion of the DBA thesis.

5.2   Synthesis of Primary Data and Literature review

In chapter two, a review of literature on organisational cultures of multinationals and the local culture in the markets in which they operate was done. But some aspects seem to be lacking in the context of American corporations operating in the Middle East especially the GCC countries like U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. In Chapter Four it becomes evident that these aspects have been explored and some new insights have been discovered.

Several research objectives were set to guide this study: To identify the Bahraini local culture and the organisational culture of EDS; explore corporate policies to assimilate local culture, understand the influences that shape and mould the local employee, to discover the key factors that EDS should have taken into account while venturing to do business in Bahrain. To achieve these research goals and objectives, interviews were conducted with EDS managers, local employees and managers from other organisations to recommend practice and then analysed to get a clear picture. Furthermore, this study identifies the roles EDS managers need to take on at the work place to bring about a feeling of integration in the company. The empirical results of this study have revealed that adequate training

needs to be given to the managers before they take up any post outside of their familiar environment. It is this training which will stand in good stead and help the manager instill confidence and provide inspiration to all those who have to work with him. Overall, based on the findings of this research, a clear picture has emerged emphasizing the need for proper training and awareness on both sides in order to make a venture successful and sustainable.

5.3 **Literature and Findings**

There are various reasons why multinational companies expand their businesses internationally (see section 2.3). External as well as internal factors influence the motives of American companies for entering markets in which local cultures influence the work environment. These motives and driving influences are presented in Chapter Two. It was clearly shown that the effects of American companies operating in the local culture of the GCC have not been properly investigated. Through analysing and interpreting interview data based on the experience of EDS managers and local employees in Bahrain, findings reveal that 5 sets of factors influence the creation of an effective work environment in American companies with local employees on their payrolls. Though some of these factors are similar to the ones discovered in past research on internationalisation, some of them did not appear in the case of American companies operating in the local culture of the GCC. The factors indicated in table 5.1 are typical and originated in the context of multinationals functioning in local cultures.

Factors (high-code)	Factors (low-code)	Notes
Influence of Religion	● Arab Culture ● Language Barrier ● Dress Code ● Influence of Western Culture	Important to both sides
Cultural Differences Sense of Alienation	● Bahraini Culture ● Organisational culture ● Integration Issues ● Perceptional Issues	Perceptions due to lack of awareness
Corporate Policies	● Data Collection ● Local Laws ● Inclusion in Management ● Imposing Organisational culture	No knowledge sharing
Corporate Training for EDS managers & Local Employees	● No Training programmes ● No Literature in local language ● No transition period ● Contract basis employment.	Agreed upon by all

Table 5.1 Factors that Influence Operations in Bahraini Local Culture

As table 5.1 (above) indicates, there are various influences that affect the productivity of the local employee in an American corporation. Although GCC countries, particularly Bahrain, are open to multinationals operating within their countries, there is particular emphasis on retaining their unique culture intact. In fact the labour laws and work routine is centered on the fact that religion plays an important role in the daily routine of the local employee. The support of the local government is crucial for multinational companies to operate successfully. It is also evident that the cooperation and commitment of local employees is important from the perspective of networking and expansion of business in the region. Thus the influences identified have immense value to the multinationals in understanding and implementing policies which will affect their continued presence in the region. The result of this research indicates that many of the theories built upon multinationals from Western developed countries are not necessarily wholly applicable in other countries.

Though the factors influencing the work atmosphere are listed in Table 5.1, it is to be noted here that all these factors contribute to conflicting perceptions. These perceptions, without ratification become convictions. These convictions then govern all the decisions and actions of both the EDS managers and local employees. This leads to less commitment to work and adherence to corporate policies. This finding suggests that one reason why EDS in Bahrain finds it difficult to obtain the cooperation and full support of their local employees is because there is a lack of awareness of the local culture and a lack of

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enthusiasm to integrate into the local culture by the expatriate managers who are posted to Bahrain for a short span of time. EDS managers have not been able to instill confidence in local employees that their manager understands what is important to them and hence will do what is best for them. In summary, some classic factors that contributed to the success of American companies such as individual goals and individual ambitions and aspirations do not appear to be successful in Bahrain. Neither do the structured corporate policies of achieving success in the past decades of American business history seem to have an impact in the local culture. This implied very clearly that mainstream theoretical literature, which is largely and exclusively derived from multinationals operating in environments influenced by Western culture needs to be adapted before it is applied to local cultures such as the Bahraini culture.

The findings of this study add new insights from a different perspective which is that of a culture that is not influenced by individual success but a stronger perception of collective success. A summary of the key influencing factors and their impact on EDS managers and local employees is presented in figure 5.1, highlighting 5 sets of influencing factors and their impact on EDS managers and local employees.
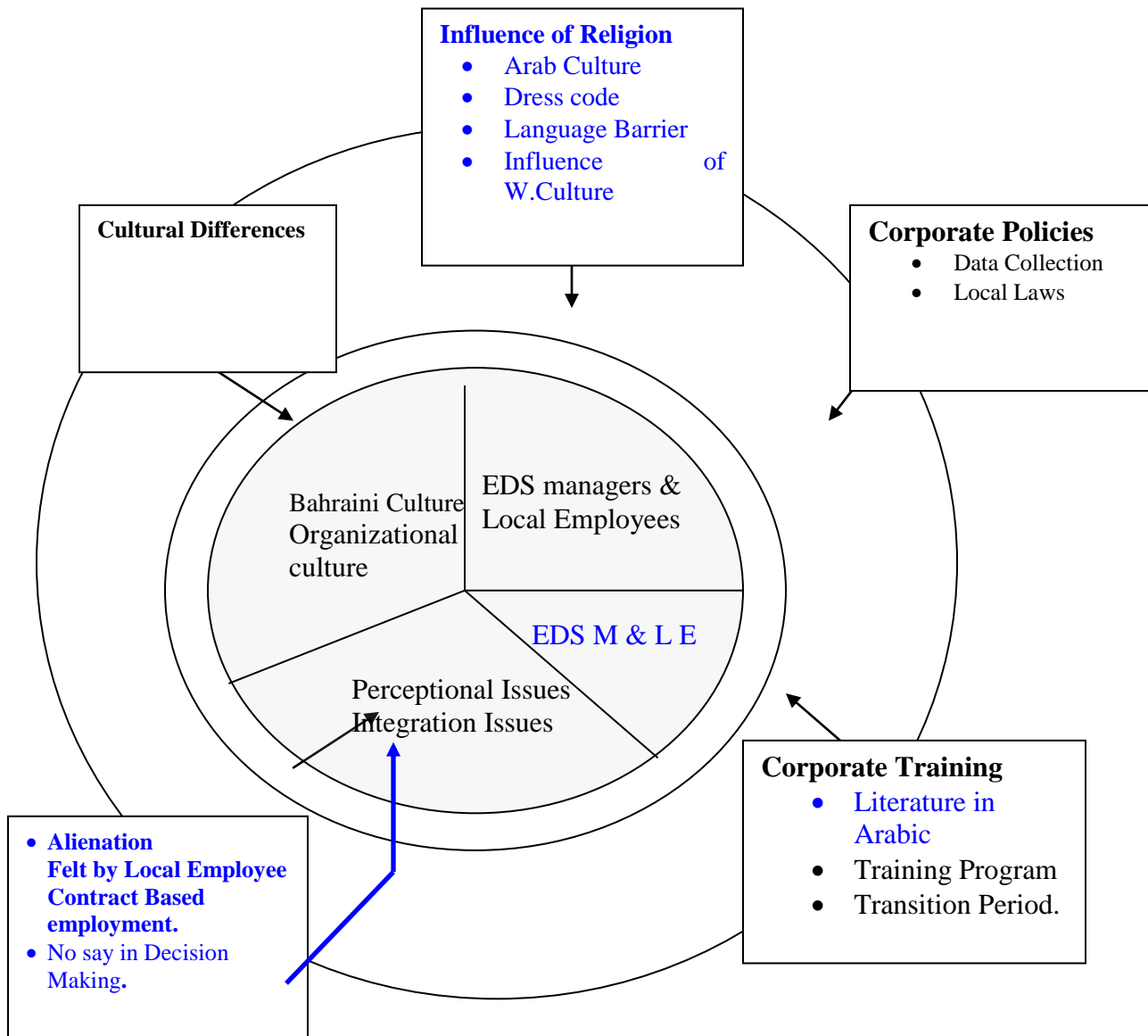
Figure 5.1 Summary of Key influencing factors

Some of the factors were similar to, and supported by, existing literature. However, the factors marked in blue in figure 5.1 were typical and original in the context of EDS in Bahrain. Some of the underlying 5 sets of influencing factors presented in figure 5.1 have been previously studied to underpin the impact of organisational culture in the internationalisation process of American corporations. But certain aspects have come to light in this study which are unique to the region and the culture. Most importantly, a set of previously unrecognized factors emerged in this study. Those factors include the influence of religion, corporate policies, cultural differences and a sense of alienation, amongst other things. Empirical research in relation to the difference in organisational and local culture in the past mainly focused on the performance of the corporation and its employees assimilating the corporate culture. The direct impact of the local culture on the work ethics of the local employees has not been explored properly. This is important to sustain and expand the business of the foreign company.

It was discovered that vast cultural differences prevented EDS managers from understanding what a local employee aspired for at work. It was difficult for EDS managers to understand that religion, its rituals and customs formed a more important and affirmative part of the local employees' life. The EDS managers attributed this lack of focus towards work as indifference and apathy.

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This research provides a practical insight for future managers to understand the unique Bahraini culture and to incorporate it into work ethics so that the local employee has the confidence that his employer understands him. This in turn will have a positive impact on his productivity.

Islam is a part of the everyday routine of its believers and its rituals are not meant to be taken lightly. Amongst the Muslims you will find that the 5 times a day prayer routine is adhered to strictly by all regardless of where they are and without any embarrassment.

The existing literature has concentrated mostly on the difficulties faced by multinationals in other markets which are influenced by western culture. This study has extended the research to an insightful understanding of how local employees feel about the corporate policies and work culture of an American corporate. The EDS managers' understanding and awareness of the Bahraini culture gives us a clear picture of what is lacking in the management to increase productivity and expand their business.

5.4   **Contribution to Practice**

In Chapter One, I stated that one of the main objectives of this research was to make contributions to practice rather than just focusing on advancing theory. Theoretical contributions and implications, while important, are only a part of the answer to the research question. From a practical point of view the empirical

findings and original contributions of this research to business and management practice are discussed in this section.

To summarize, the findings of this research highlight that EDS managers need to understand the local culture and its implications in order to get the best out of their local employees. Moreover the EDS managers themselves while needing training also have to ensure that the local employees are trained and made to understand the corporate policies of EDS. In essence the corporate policy to be applied in Bahrain then would be a combination of Global corporate policies and the local cultural influences.

This research has offered some insights that have expanded mainstream business theory into the area of cultural influences. The importance of understanding, assimilating and incorporating cultural influences when operating in markets influenced by local culture is outlined. The EDS managers, local employees and managers from other multinationals interviewed in this study exhibited unique insight, retrospection and willingness to change and correct existing paths. The implication is that existing theories require contextual perspective in order to be effective. For instance; research in internationalisation should be conducted by separating companies which function in markets influenced by western culture and those that operate in unique national cultures. Furthermore, this study also implies that cross-boundary cognitive disciplines should be used to explain the functioning of an American corporation in local cultures rather than focusing on parent disciplines exclusively. As this study clearly indicates, resolving conflicts at the work place involves not only the

international marketing and management disciplines but also attitude and cultural influences.

5.4.1 Contributions to Business and Management Practice

The data collected and the findings thereupon offer a comprehensive picture of how managers of American corporations actually implement policies that are the cornerstone of organisational culture. It also draws a picture of how a local employee with his own national culture perceives the organisational culture and feels alienated. A lack of awareness of the influences that shape each ones belief has led to alienation amongst the two which in turn has created a conflict at the work place. Thus this study has an original contribution to business and management practice which will be useful for American companies wanting to do business in the GCC region.

Implementing global policies into an environment with a local work force which has its own culture and way of life is a difficult and complex task. A lot of research has gone into studying the effects of organisational culture in markets which have strong traditional influences. But the vast differences in cultures render those studies not very practical in the GCC region. In my research I explore the major factors that should help the foreign managers implement corporate policies in a way which will be mutually beneficial. Understanding and studying these factors will provide the managers the insights required to obtain the maximum productivity from their local work force. Practically, this research serves as a guide for the managers and the local employees to work effectively and more productively under the constraints of limited time and resources.

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Whereas previous studies focused on the relationship between organisational culture and its effect on local cultures, my research has explored the difficulties organisational culture faces in integrating local culture into its work environment in order to provide a more practical guide to everyday functioning. A practice based framework has been arrived upon based on the findings of this research (see figure 5.2).

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │      The target culture     │
                    └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                                   ↓
   ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Data Collection on the influences and culture that shape the   │
   │ local work force.                                              │
   └──────────────────────────────┬────────────────────────────────┘
                                  ↓
   ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │         Assessing influences instrumental for productivity     │
   └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Religious factors	Customs / Etiquette	Awareness of corporate policies	Integration of Managers	Training & Involving in Management

Religious factors	Customs / Etiquette	Integration / Training
- Five Time Prayers - Friday prayer & family time - Developing relationships - Dress code - Honour & position in society	- Create awareness for the need of corporate policies. - Training and exposure to corporate	- Training in local culture for managers. - Adaptability to local customs - Respect their view point - Understand & accept local customs - Be part of that life style - Training to create local managers - Offer career opportunities for

Figure 5.2 Steps for Implementing Policies

The framework in figure 5.2 along with table 5.1 and figure 5.1 forms a comprehensive guide for foreign managers to implement processes that will help the smooth running of the business on a day to day basis. This, in the long run, will bring about the success and development of the business that remains its main motive. This also provides a valuable guide to managers who are relocating from other parts of the world on how to manage the resources they have and help them focus on the business rather than grappling with conflicts at the workplace. It provides them an extensive understanding of the dynamics of the workplace and acts as a guide to address the productivity of the multinational work force. The diagrams along with the points given below can be used a guideline by any company and implemented straight away by any American company wanting to set up business in any local culture (see table 5.2 and 5.3).

• Commission a study of the target culture to collect data that will create a data bank to study all the relevant information about it.
• Identify data on the culture and influences that shape the local workforce.
• Assess the influences that are essential for optimum productivity of the workforce.
• Design a country/region specific corporate strategy and incorporate policies which are essential from the organisations own corporate policy and integrate the two into a corporate policy for the country/region.
• Train the managers in this structured policy where they understand the local culture and influences that shape the productivity of the local workforce.
• Managers to train the local employees to understand the organisational culture of the company and the corporate policy structured for the country/region.
• Periodically review the policies with both the managers and the local employees to determine if the policies are functioning effectively.
• Discard policies which are negatively impacting productivity. Adopt new policies and restructure old ones which seem to be having no influence so that optimum productivity is seen.
• Train the local employees to take up management positions and incorporate the idea of equal partnership in them.

Table 5.2 Frame work for Setting up Business in Local Culture

Figure 5.3 below illustrates the framework which can be adapted and implemented when an American company sets out to do business in local cultures.

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Target Culture      │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Data Collection     │
│    Commission Study     │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Country/Region      │
│    Specific Strategy    │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Train Managers     │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Train Employees     │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│         Review          │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│         Adapt           │
└─────────────────────────┘
```
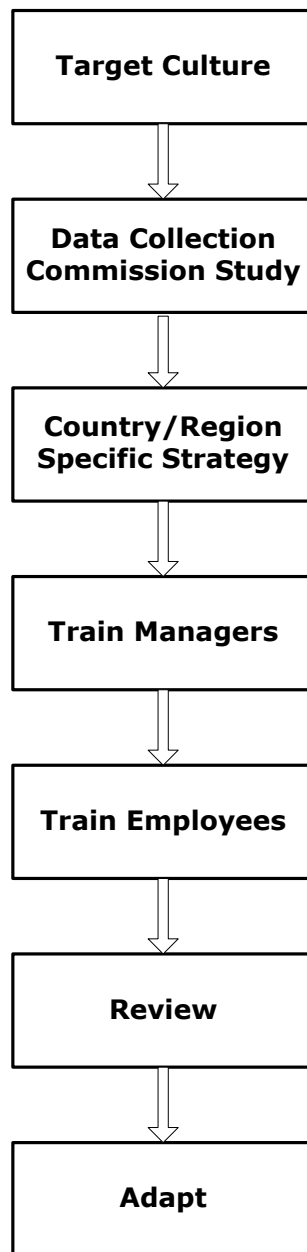
Figure 5.3 Process of Implementing Framework

An EDS manager commented in my post-research interviews: "You have finally hit the nail on what is going wrong in EDS. EDS should gradually share its management responsibilities with the local employees. They should be sent to UK or US for training. It's clear that data collection and surveys to understand the local culture should have been part of our strategy." Yet another interviewee in the post-research interview stated that he would take into consideration the findings of this research for future implementation of policies. The relevant feedback from practitioners is valuable evidence in judging the practical contributions of this research.

5.4.2 Contributions to Policy Makers

Apart from the contributions to the foreign managers and local employees when setting up business in indigenous cultures, this research is also important to policy makers in the corporate sector. The issues dealt with in this research offer a valuable reference to all policy makers of American companies entering a foreign market with its own unique culture. This study also identifies the areas which need support from the policy makers in this kind of venture.

5.4.2.1 <u>Contribution to Policy Makers- EDS, U.S.A</u>

The insight provided by this research demonstrates that even a successful corporation needs to be aware of the importance of understanding and accepting the culture and way of life of its local employees. It acts as a guide to understand the importance of partnership. In the post research interviews a vice president of

EDS commented that: "This research will certainly help us, and EDS policy makers in America, to help integrate the organisational culture with national culture." Such comments are evidence of the contribution of this research to policy makers.

5.4.2.2 Contribution to Policy Makers - Bahrain Government

For the local employees this study provides a better understanding of multinationals setting up business in their country. It also acts as a guide to policy makers in the local government to design awareness courses for local people so that they know what to expect when they join a foreign company. The Bahraini government in its dossier Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain stipulates that "in accordance with the guiding principles of sustainability, competitiveness and fairness……we aspire to shift from an economy built on oil wealth to a productive, globally competitive economy shaped by the government and driven by a pioneering private sector."

The same document states that their aspiration is to make the Bahraini economy one "that raises abroad middle class of Bahrainis who enjoy good living standards through increased productivity and high – wage jobs." It proudly says that "International confidence in our economy has also increased with foreign direct investment inflow increasing from BHD0.2billion in 2003 to BHD1.1billion in 2006."(The Economic Vision 2030, p.6). One of the principles that has been identified to achieve this economic development is "The need for coordinated

reforms: national, regional and global developments compelling us to develop a coordinated Economic Vision" (Economic Vision 2030,p.6). The result of this study clearly defines the mutual benefit of internationalisation and the opportunity to opitmise growth is in total alignment to the Bahraini Governments Economic Vision 2030. It is outlined in this document that "Bahrain's economy can grow and prosper if we respond to challenges and opportunities presented by the world around us." This is a clear indication of the government's intent to exploit every opportunity provided by multinationals to achieve a good standard of living and high – wages for Bahrainis. As private sector business is being encouraged the findings of this research will be helpful to policy makers in the government to design training courses for training Bahrainis to meet the challenge of working for a multinational with its corporate culture. Local employees lack exposure to international standards and the entry of an American corporation is an opportunity to upgrade their skills to an international level and learn processes and procedures that will help in improving the standard of work. This will result in attracting more foreign companies to set up business in the country thus bringing in overall development. Besides as the Economic vision 2030 outlines Bahrain has an exceedingly favourable business environment, has a progressive and stable government and an ambitious, multicultural society which along with reforms can capitalize on the opportunities that regional growth offers. "Higher productivity requires people with right skills for each position" (Economic Vision 2030, p.11). The successful management techniques can be adapted for the local market also which will give the local employee the "right skills" as

envisioned by the Bahraini government. Its open door policy "Opening up Bahrain's markets ever more fully to expose our companies to process innovation and best practices" is going to help the local employee to get the training to adapt to the environment of a multinational. The policy makers in the government will be able to use the recommendation and the frame work for training Bahraini work force to be ready for "economic opportunities by encouraging investments in selected sectors beyond the financial sector to diversify into tourism, business services, manufacturing and logistics as well as promoting export-oriented sectors for embracing the world markets for products and services". The recommendation to train local employees to meet the challenges of working for a multinational finds a resonance in the government's policy to "provide quality training to our people in the applied and advanced skills required for global competitiveness and attract new industries to Bahrain" (Economic vision 2030, p.22).

5.4.2.3 <u>Contribution to Policy Makers–Private/Training Sectors</u>

The research findings which show how cultural influences are important to work ethics is valuable information for Bahrain chamber of commerce as well as American chamber of commerce in strategising expansion of multinational business and foreign direct investment in Bahrain. It will help the American embassy in understanding the people of Bahrain and thus be able to offer advise to American multinationals seeking to set up operations in Bahrain.

By gaining an understanding of the organisational culture of American businesses the Bahrain-American Chamber of Commerce will be able to evolve strategies which will help them expand business internationally.

Training centers like Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) can use the insights offered in this thesis to train local Bahrainis to enable them to meet the challenges of working in a multinational company.

The findings of this research will be of great help to the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Information & Culture and various other Bahraini organisations in formulating their strategies to deal with Western and organisational cultures.

5.4.3 Implications

The outcome of this study is a guideline offered to all corporations, especially American companies. This research has highlighted the lack of awareness of the local culture and the influences that shape the daily routine of the local employees. This understanding is the key to managing people. The foreign managers must recognize the way of life of the local employees, accept and respect their traditions. A smooth work environment can evolve only if attitudes, opinions, experience and social relationships both inside and outside the organisation are good. This can be achieved only if there is mutual trust,

acceptance, understanding and respect amongst the managers and the local employees.

Another implication of this study is that however much a manager has been trained to be aware of the cultural differences, practically it is impossible to obtain all the information they require ideally to perform to their best. This knowledge should make the managers aware that they have to be open to all experiences and gain from each experience a better understanding of the local employee. So a manager may be called upon to use innovative methods to deal with his work force. It is this openness to new ideas and a fresh approach that will help him succeed in his job. Corporate strategies and policies will need some adjustments in sensitivity to local customs before being implemented. The best method of implementation of new policies has evolved contextually out of this research. It is to train the local employee and make him / her an equal partner in the venture and use his/her skill and knowledge of the region to develop business. This can be brought about only if the foreign managers are trained to use their capabilities and resources flexibly and innovatively.

The effect of this study is that it has brought about an overall understanding of the problems that a foreign company faces when entering into a new market with a local culture. Thus this study provides an insight and acts as a guide to policy makers on both sides; the multinational company as well as the local policy makers to work in tandem to ensure the success of the venture.

5.5   Evaluations of the Research

All studies, regardless of whether qualitative or quantitative, should be evaluated (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). However, qualitative research has long been criticized for lacking structure; for being subjective and difficult to replicate (Bryman, 2004). Hence, evaluation of qualitative research has become an issue for qualitative researchers, especially for international business due to cultural and institutional contexts (Clyne, 1987, Sullivan and Weaver, 2000, Anderson and Skates, 2004). The idea of evaluating qualitative research is to instill a confidence in the 'truth' of the findings and to convince the researcher himself and his audiences that his results are "worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 290). To verify whether the results of the qualitative research have covered the research phenomena, researchers claim to cover, appropriate evaluation frameworks and criteria (Hammersley, 1992, LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). The aim of this section is to provide an account of how this qualitative research ensured its rigour.

5.5.1   Evaluation Framework and Criteria

Measurement criteria for quantitative research have been well established (Saunders et al, 2006, Bryman, 2004). But, evaluation methods used in quantitative research, for example reliability and validity, have always been challenged by qualitative researchers because they simply cannot be applied to evaluate qualitative studies. Alternative criteria of evaluating qualitative research have to be judged and developed (Hammersley, 1992, LeCompte and Goetz,

1982, Johnson and Duberley, 2003, Mason, 2002, Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Anderson and Skaates (2005, p. 475) point out: "there is no single way of validating one's qualitative research findings." There are sets of frameworks and procedures that can be used to evaluate the rigours of qualitative research. After reviewing the existing evaluation frameworks developed by leading qualitative researchers from a philosophical level, Johnson and Duberley (2003) developed a contingent criteriology by considering 4 schools of philosophical thought: Positivism, neo-empiricism, critical theory and postmodernism. By following Johnson's framework more detailed epistemic reflections of this research will be explored.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) argued that judgment has to be made by evaluating: 1) validity, reliability and credibility of the data, 2) the theory itself, 3) the adequacy of the research process where the theory is generated, and conclusions are made about the empirical grounding of the research. Alternately, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed two primary criteria for assessing qualitative research: *Trustworthiness* and Authenticity. In trustworthiness, 4 criteria can be taken into account in evaluating qualitative research: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability. Criteria of authenticity are mainly used to judge action research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Examining the above frameworks, it is apparent that credibility, reliability of data and adequacy of the research process

in Strauss and Corbin's (1998) framework is consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation criteria of trustworthiness. Considering the features of this research, *Trustworthiness was chosen* to be the appropriate criteria in making judgments of this research.

Hammersley's (1992) *relevance* criterion is also used to evaluate this research. By relevance, Hammersley (1992) argues that the importance of a topic within its substantive field and contributions to the literature in that field have to be taken into account in evaluating the qualitative research. In particular, he suggests that practitioners' concerns might be an aspect of relevance. Hammersley's relevance criterion is an important consideration of this DBA research that mainly focused on the practical contribution rather than the more academic contribution with which most PhD theses are concerned.

After going through various evaluative criteria, Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that the criteria are meant only as guidelines. It is important that qualitative criteria be modified to fit the circumstances of the research. After considering all the frameworks and the reasons put forth above, the evaluation frameworks and criteria for this qualitative research will rest on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness and Hammersley's (1992) relevance. Johnson and Duberley (2003, p. 81) state that no matter what frameworks or criteria are used in assessing qualitative research, it is crucial "to use the appropriate evaluation criteria in a reflexive manner". This was the one theory that was applied to figure

out the correct framework or criteria suited for this research. The process of evaluation of this research is to be conducted in a reflective manner.

5.5.1.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.290), is to disclose 'how can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" To assess trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four criteria that include credibility, transferability, and dependability and confirm ability.

5.5.1.2 Credibility

Credibility concerns the feasibility of the account that the research puts forth. In effect, it determines the acceptability to others (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Establishing credibility is to ensure that the researcher has "carried out a good practice…. the investigator has correctly understood that social world" (Bryman, 2004, p. 275). While judging the quality of this research, quite a few arguments can be brought out to convince the reader and the author that this research has its own merits. The first point to consider is that the choice of the research topic gives valuable credibility for this research. This research question is developed on the basis of the author's own professional and personal business experience rather than being based upon the much used literature resources. This elevates the study to a level where it can be judged as a potentially successful research, more so from a practical standpoint.

Much care was taken in meticulously choosing the original research samples. Each interviewee was vetted for integrity and openness. Before the final research samples were determined, I consulted an ex director of EDS currently based in U.A.E. to have a fair knowledge of the background of the people who were going to be the samples for my research. Based on his recommendations, I assessed my personal relationship with the potential samples of EDS managers as well as local employees. I did a second review with a peer in the same field before contacting the interviewees for their consent to participate in this study.

Appropriate research methods were adopted in collecting data. After every semi-structured interview the interview transcripts were filed, and with the help of my field notes a reflexive research summary report was written and filed. Immediately assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an interview helped me to better myself and correct the errors in one for subsequent interviews. Some interview transcripts were sent to the participants for data reviewing and clarifying which ensured the true value of the data collected. Throughout the process of data collection, I was focused on the following: Am I collecting the right data? What else do I need to know? How can I ensure the data is valid? These questions helped me to keep a track on the credibility of data collection during the research process.

To make data more comprehensive, I continued to conduct interviews until such a time as new themes stopped emerging in the process of data collection. Furthermore, building upon the core categories that evolved, I developed my

arguments by considering how I could use theoretical insights to understand and explore my data, and what role my data played in my arguments. To maintain credibility, I tried to understand and review this study through my own cultural lens. Without letting any bias or prejudice work on me I used my Arabic cultural background to produce high-quality research outcomes by understanding the local employee 'talk' and 'feelings' while describing their conflicts at work.

Having a western life partner I was able to mingle and be one amongst the EDS managers as well which gives a fresh perspective and helped in establishing credibility.

To summarise I was able to convince others and myself that this study is good qualitative research. I meticulously supervised the research process from formulating the topic to data collection and data analysis.

5.5.1.3 Transferability

Transferability simply put is the issue of how research findings are applicable to other contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In determining the transferability of this research, I adopted the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993, Patton, 1990) strategy by providing detailed descriptions of the research process in Chapter Three which is the research methodology and methods chapter. In the descriptive data, similarities and differences were observed and transferred to certain research contexts with appropriate adjustments. Clearly the findings of this research were

based upon the individual experiences of both EDS managers as well as local employees. It is specific and contextually oriented. Though the conclusions of this study cannot be used to make broad generalizations, they can be transferred into other small-scale contexts. Some of the insights discovered by this research will clearly help managers from other American companies to make the necessary policy changes to avoid conflict between foreign managers and local employees.

5.5.1.4 Dependability

Dependability is basically the issue of whether the research is applied consistently (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It requires researchers to maintain the consistency of the findings if the research is carried out again. To achieve dependability, researchers are advised to adopt an 'auditing' trail in which the external auditors can not only follow the investigator's research decisions trail, but also arrive at the same (almost impossible), or at least not contradictory conclusions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, the fundamental problem here is *who will be the 'auditors'?* For this research, I claimed social constructionism as my epistemological stance. Taking this stance means that I believe that my own culture shapes the way in which I view the world. Total understanding of Arab, particularly Bahraini culture is important for this research. How I interviewed local employees as well as EDS managers and how I interpreted the data and constructed the knowledge of alienation and the need for corporate training through my cultural lens is the dependability that I brought to this

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research. So the auditors' knowledge of Bahraini culture is equally essential in evaluating the dependability of this research. To return to the point of an auditing trail mentioned above, all research records such as interview transcripts, fieldwork notes, research summary reports, etc. for this study have been maintained in an easily accessible manner. Yet I still doubt that divergent interpretations of this phenomenon (sense of alienation amongst local employees) will exist in an auditor who is from a different cultural background than mine. That dependability will not be a very effective evaluation criterion fitting into this research.

5.5.1.5 Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with how the researcher can be shown to 'have acted in good faith, in other words, it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and findings derived from it'' (Bryman, 2004, p. 276). This is the question that has sparked much debate about how the relationship between the researcher and the researched is to be maintained (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). By adopting an openness and a willingness to listen and to 'give a voice' to participants I was able to avoid my personal values overtly influencing the conduct of the research during the data collection. While analysing and interpreting the interview data I acted as a factist (Alasuutari, 1995) in exploring the experiences of the both the local employees and the EDS managers with complete honesty. But I must admit that due to my role as an EDS employee as

well as a being a Bahraini, it was impossible for me to be completely removed from this research. My interpretations of the data and the whole interview data base would not be completely confirmable to other researchers. In addition, my ontology and epistemological assumptions concern the ''lived in experiences'' of all the employees and consequently confirmability is not seen as an issue for this research.

The evaluations for this research have been done by adopting Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria. The choice of credibility and transferability over dependability and confirmability as more appropriate for this research was also discussed. The next section will deal with another evaluation criterion which is important to this DBA thesis from a practical application perspective.

5.6   Relevance

The final evaluation criterion that was applied to this qualitative research was Relevance recommended by Hammersley (1992, 2002). He argues that there is a definite distinction between practical research and scientific research. Practical research aims to provide a set of guidelines for the practitioners. The suggestion was to take into account the people for whom the implications of this research will create an impact as one aspect of relevance. These practitioners could be either the participants of this research or people interested in the research questions or its implications. Hammersley (2002) argued that researchers and practitioners need not have the same interests. As practitioners, they must be

more interested in how the research findings can help them understand and address problems in their environments. The point Hammersley (2002) stressed is exactly what I also as a professional doctorate researcher (DBA student) focused on and pursued throughout this research.

Adopting from Hammersley (1992, 2002), I determined practitioners' assessments of the findings as an important evaluation for this qualitative research. I am convinced that people with practical knowledge and experiences in similar multicultural work places can assess the implications of this research from their applied perspective. The findings of this research have made valuable contributions to both EDS managers and local employees in bridging the gaps in perception about work ethics, corporate policies and cultural differences which created conflict at the work place. To test its relevance to practice, I conducted four mini interviews (of 20 minutes duration on average), which is called *post-research*. In September 2008, during a conference on IT systems in Bahrain I met foreign managers from Sabre and Gulf Air. Grasping this opportunity I discussed my research findings with them and got very positive feedback. I also discussed the findings of this research with two Bahrainis working with other American companies here. They commented that this research was 'very important for corporate policy makers.' This paper was sent to a peer group for comments on the findings and implications of the study. Two Bahrainis in management positions highlighted this research positively from practitioners' points of view. That the study was held in good esteem proved the relevance to

practitioners. The resonance of the findings in foreign managers as well Bahraini executives gave me greater confidence in the intrinsic value of this research.

To summarise, all the identified evaluation criteria for this research have been discussed and examined in a reflective manner. Researchers should recognise what is important and what criteria should be used to judge the merit of the qualitative work. Although there is no single way to evaluate qualitative research findings, two key principles have to be applied. Primarily, reality of the research process has to be ensured. Secondly, sufficient and holistic information has to be offered to practitioners and researchers for judging the quality of the research.

5.7   Formulating the Research Question from a Practical Level

The reader will better understand the contributions of this research to practice only if I reflect on how the research topic was initially formulated. This research topic has been derived from my personal and professional experience for the purpose of contributing to business and management practice.

I have fifteen years of experience working for International as well as local companies and the last eight years I have been working for EDS, an American company operating in Bahrain, in its IT department. My tenure with multinationals such as Cable & Wireless, SITA, Sprint U.S, Gulfnet Kuwait, Sabre-U.S based in Bahrain and Gulf Air finally culminated in joining EDS in 2001. This exposure has given me the opportunity to observe and understand approaches of multinational

corporations in the process of internationalization. My experience showed me that while entering into markets which had local culture, though business strategy was well planned and implemented, the utilisation of local human resources was not given much consideration. There was no clear understanding of the local culture and customs. Corporate policies were implemented without any thought of how they would be perceived by the local work force and how that perception would bring about a conflict of interest at the work place. Being a Bahraini educated in the west and having a good exposure to values and beliefs on both sides this anomaly caught my attention and slowly evolved into my research motive. My first hand experience and understanding will help bridge the gap between the two opposite perceptions. The results of this research will help American corporations entering into unique local culture markets implement policies and strategies more effectively and efficiently. Since this research idea evolved out of my own professional experience, the results of this research are valuable from a practical point of view. When one reviews the findings of this research, the conclusions of this study are beneficial to practitioners at operational levels.

5.7.1 Development of understanding of EDS policies

In the process of this project, a literature review which is comprehensive and complete has been done on the EDS corporate policies and strategies when entering a foreign market influenced by local culture. The research question evolved out of day to day business practices and was not derived from purely

theoretical gaps in research. The literature review helped me understand the need for companies to internationalize their business and the need for other regions to have multinationals operating amidst them. It also helped me to see the view point of the local employees clearly. This insight provides me with strategies which I can implement to overcome the difficulties faced at the workplace. These two factors have reshaped my knowledge resulting in a more mature outlook towards my colleagues and partners.

5.8   Epistemic Reflexivity

Though it is a challenge, the most effective way to understand good qualitative research is to get qualitative researchers to do a critical self-scrutiny (Manson, 2002). Epistemic reflexivity emphasizes on the systematic attempts to relate research outcomes to knowledge. It also explores the ways in which the researcher's involvement influences a particular study, such as the researcher's own social and historical background, experiences and paradigms that shape him (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). Making use of epistemic reflexivity as a tool, the researcher tries to make "the analysis of analysis" (Johnson and Duberley, 2000) and the "interpretation of interpretations" (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In order to explore the relationship between the object of this research and myself the researcher in this study, I undertook self-reflexivity in a critical manner. Revealing myself did prove to be difficult as it involved exposing the subjective and individual experience throughout the research to a wide research audience.

The intellectual journey of this research has been shaped and guided by the social constructionism paradigm that I adopted throughout this study. Though my personal beliefs and initial assumptions have shaped and structured this research topic; reflecting on 'who I am' and 'where I come from' has given me tremendous insights on the social structure of my environment. Endorsing the core of constructionism philosophy, I am convinced that meaning (or truth) does not exist without a mind. Reality which is meaningful is socially constructed (Crotty, 1998). Hence I have a strong belief that all social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. Hence all knowledge is justified according to the changes in social contexts. By socially constructing meaningful realities eventually people are using their own culture as lenses to view all social phenomena (Crotty, 1998).

The personal struggle for me throughout this research has been my own identity in the role that I played in this research. The impact of my own multicultural background on the research outcome has been a major concern. Being a Bahraini I have spent my formative years within the traditions and customs of Bahrain and it is obvious that some of those influences still largely shape my thoughts. But I also have lived in the UK for my higher studies and had a chance to observe the western culture at close quarters. In addition, my life partner is a westerner. These influences also have had an impact on my thought process and decision making. Setting forth on this intellectual journey I doubted if my situation

would have a negative or positive impact on my research. While going through the interview transcripts I became aware that participants often asked a certain question during the interview, for example B said to me "you know what I mean by this?" Participant R went as far as "you've lived abroad for too many years. You may not completely understand the situation." Obviously, through the cultural lenses of the interviewees, I have been labeled and treated with familiarity and distance by participants. For manager I, I was as western as any of them and felt that I would completely agree with their perceptions. To interviewee local employee B, I was pure Bahraini and that my thoughts and concerns were the same as hers. But for local employees F & R, I was completely different from them. I discovered that there were two types of participants in terms of responses in the interviews. The first was participants who felt I was aligned with the management and hence were careful not to say anything that would affect their jobs at EDS. The other types were the ones who felt that since I was a local they better take care in not offending my sensibilities. So both these groups were very careful to avoid saying anything negative about the research topic. They were more aware of my position which they perceived to be with 'powerful' people and avoided saying anything negative in spite of my promise of complete and total confidentiality (Eckhardt, 2004). Some interviewees treated me as just a local employee more focused on my appearances rather than my thought process.

One of the most important lessons I learnt from this study is that how people perceive you is important for interviewees to open up to you and talk honestly

about their opinions. One interviewee even told me that '' you have had no problems you are their blue eyed employee" My growth and good standing with the management of EDS was an intimidating factor for many of the local interviewees. In fact the three who refused to be interviewed had hinted that whatever they told me might go back to the management and may affect their jobs. But on the whole there was trust and respect both from the management side which facilitated all the interviews and gave me permission to approach anyone as well as the local employees who saw me as one of them. Looking back I feel I have gained more insight into these individuals and have a better understanding of their thought processes. My social position and my exposure to various cultural backgrounds played a very positive role in gaining these insights.

The biggest challenge that I faced was to make sure that the interviewees voice was prominent and not drowned out by ''my voice''. Very often going through the transcripts I would discover that my questions had been lengthier and explanatory to which the respondent just answered affirmative or negative in monosyllables. Hence I reworded my questions into more open ended ones and coaxed answers from the interviewees. In the course of data analysis, I adhered to the check of the questions to any answer namely: Whose interpretation? Whose truths? My exposure to other cultural backgrounds and my experience at various multinationals made it impossible for me to isolate myself from the processes of this research. Reflecting now, I feel that though I have struggled to ensure that the interviewees' voices were heard and their truths included ;and my

interpretation of their perceptions were true to their words there is a growing conviction in me that in the end the findings somehow have been colored through the lens of my own cultural values and beliefs.

At another level there was the struggle of the presentation of the final report. The conflict within me was how to present the findings without compromising on the promise of privacy and confidentiality? While the local employees had fierce loyalties and pride in whom they were, the EDS managers had an equally strong pride in their company and their work. So while writing the thesis I have been careful to omit any such information which would appear as a breach of my promise to the interviewees.

Having reflected upon the role of epistemic reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) I have come to the conclusion that a researcher can never be removed from his research. My social role and job profile did affect the body and the final result of the study. What these discussions provide is a clear and honest picture of how I coped with the conflict between the data and my own experiences and beliefs throughout this study.

5.9   Reflections on Methodology

The method of collecting data and the process of analysing them has been detailed in Chapter Two. Here I wish to reflect upon the methods by revisiting

the research methodology and the actual methods. I will outline how I monitored my 'research behaviors' and controlled them throughout this research.

If we look at previous studies conducted using the survey method, researchers confine the influencing factors to those which were pre-hypothesized from a positivism perspective. But while answering the survey, participants did not have the opportunity to reflect on the influencing factors clearly as those factors have already been predefined by researchers. Taking into consideration the fact that on-the-spot interviews require a little bit of thinking on their feet and hence the complete comprehension of the questions itself are questionable. It was clearly outlined in the methodology chapter that this research took great care in ensuring that interviewees' understood the theoretical concepts and specific terminologies related to the research question. This was done with the reasoning that the interviewees understanding of the research question will definitely influence the outcome of the research. We have to accept that both local employees and EDS managers have not thought of the research question till the time of the interview. They were only aware of their ''lived in'' experience at the work place. This issue was pointed out to me by my supervisor when I began the research design for this study. From then the question of "are my questions meaningful to the interviewee?" have taken priority over all other concerns throughout this research process. Although I gained confidence in my capability to produce good quality research after conducting the pilot study, the process of asking questions and getting meaningful answers was a big challenge for me. Though I did attempt to

get a feedback on the interview transcripts as being authentic to ensure that the interviewees' voice was heard accurately this method was not practical or feasible. Most interviewees were reluctant to take the time out to read through the often long transcripts. My attempts to invite some of the participants to discuss the outcome of the research also met the same fate.

I learnt the important lesson that one had to build a reflexive process for each of the interviews to ensure the quality of the research as well as to justify the semi-structured interview questions effectively. After each interview, I produced a research summary report detailing the interview information: Who, where, when, interview duration etc, and also recorded both the researcher's (me) and respondents' behaviors/postures/body language etc during the interview. After checking my notes I reflected upon the participant's attitudes and reactions. The focus was on their interest and involvement in the interview, and attempted to recollect if any questions evoked any embarrassment or in any way offended them. Accordingly I would adjust the questions in the next interview based on the ethical issues involved in it. This critical self analysis helped as a corrective measure throughout my research. The constant questioning of "Have I collected the data I want? Did I use the right strategies or approaches for my data collection? Did anything unexpected happen during the interview?" helped me list down all the important points that needed improvement for the next interview. This reflexive process was the factor that culminated in producing meaningful good interviews.

By using epistemic reflexivity and methodology reflexivity, I was successful in presenting a transparent account of all that happened in the research process. It added to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research outcome. I am convinced that reflexivity is important during the process of the research and should not be just used as a tool at the end of the research. By using reflexivity we understand both the researchers' and participants' experiences because one cannot change what happened. Using reflexivity at the end again helps improve the quality and effectiveness of the research. By using reflexivity after each interview I was able to drastically improve the quality of my subsequent interviews. This is my proof that I have made every effort to present before you a research that excels in quality and can be used as a practical guide in social processes.

5.10   Professional Development Reflections

From the moment I decided to be a DBA candidate this intellectual journey has been a challenging one. As someone pursuing personal and professional goals, these past 5 1/2 years have seen me through a lot of joy and tears, success and failures. Every lesson has been well learnt and has helped me in not only maturing as a person but also maturing as a manager at work.

5.10.1 Feeling of Success

Developing professionally also brings about personal development. It provides additional skills and enhances learning in a particular area and advances a person's career development (Turner, 1996). The DBA, more than the traditional PhD, is geared to develop the managers' research skills and enhance their professional practices in business management area. I was an IT infrastructure manager in EDS when I started out on my DBA. The purpose of doing the DBA was for career advancement by vastly improving my organisational capabilities. In retrospect after 5 1/2 years of incessant hard work the following factors have made my DBA successful in relation to my professional advancement.

5.10.2 Enhancement of practical research skills

Research skill was an alien idea and a challenge to me. I was able to become competent in qualitative and quantitative research techniques because of the training and practical exercises given to me during my DBA study. I feel that I have a clear understanding of qualitative research. The research process involved sorting out a lot of information, a large amount of time was spent in data collection by conducting in-depth interviews. These practical research exercises have in turn given me extensive interviewing and communication skills which are so important to managers who have a team working under them. It also has improved and enhanced my critical and logical thinking abilities which help me look at problems reflexively in order to resolve work related issues. Being brought up in the tradition of the Arabs I was used to listening and never asking. This

research has taught me to ask boldly, challenge, and be constructively critical about other peoples work. Embedded in my culture, I was unable to do this before I started my DBA journey. It has taught me that to question and criticize is important in gaining new knowledge. I owe this new found skill to my tutors at Newcastle Business School, in particular my supervisory panel, who have pushed, cajoled, and challenged me to be critical.

5.10.3 Links between career development and DBA research

DBA has developed my theoretical knowledge and sharpened my management skills and opened up avenues to advance my career prospects. This research journey has given me the confidence that I have not only reached a high academic standard but I am also capable of translating this acquired knowledge into practice. This is evident in the upward climb of my career graph. The skills that I have acquired from this study enhanced my work performance. I went on to the next level of management in the third year of my DBA. Now finally, as Head of IT Infrastructure all the data collection and analyzing skills help me in keeping tabs on all the various aspects of IT Infrastructure for the varied clients of EDS.

The improvement in my communication skills has worked wonders in disseminating information to subordinates in a quick and efficient manner producing quick results. My circle of contacts within my field has widened resulting in more knowledge sharing and idea swapping. Listening to more view points has expanded my conflict resolution skills as well. It has helped me in

networking within EDS itself making me more visible to the management and thus opening up huge opportunities for my career growth. In all aspects, personal as well as professional DBA has significantly helped me improve.

5.10.4 Challenges and Difficulties

From the day I registered for my DBA I knew that my life would be never the same again. There were difficulties and challenges all along and overcoming them itself was a great life lesson.

There were times when I was in doubt about completing this research. The need to balance work and study along with the responsibilities towards my family were the biggest challenges that I faced during this research journey.

5.10.5 Work and research

While being a doctoral student I was also the IT Infrastructure manager for EDS. Though the job provided me with the necessary environment for my research it came with its own work routine and responsibilities. An increase in workload would slow down my research process. I had to travel a lot during this period for work related matters and that would completely bring to a halt the study process. Returning after a business trip I would discover that I had completely lost the thread of my thought process and forgotten the last referencing I did in spite of keeping a meticulous diary of what exactly was done. Holding on to my

profession from which my research itself had evolved was itself the biggest challenge for me during these past 5 years.

5.10.6 Life and family

When I look back, deciding to be a doctoral student was a very courageous act. As the head of a family of four, I am a husband and a father. Apart from that, in the Arab culture there is an extended family where I am the son, the uncle and the brother with clear responsibilities within each role. Reflecting now I must admit I was not prepared to deal with any of these situations whereby I would have to stay away from family and festivals and weddings. In these years I have missed out on a lot of milestones in my children's lives. It was the support of my family and the DBA management team's encouragement that gave me the courage to carry on and complete my DBA. This was a great learning curve which will last throughout both in my personal as well as my professional life.

All this has left me with one last question 'Does the degree of completion equal success?' Though completion is an important factor in the measure of success I have come to realize that the process itself is valuable enough to qualify as success. It is the research process which has taught me to be strong, consistent and positive. These are the lasting qualities that will stand me in good stead for the rest of my life.

My initial premise regarding the research problem was that foreign managers presumably implement policies in an autocratic manner. I agree with Crotty (1998, p.89) that culture is liberating, but culture can also act as a limiting factor.

The theories and concepts created on the basis of experience in operating in Western cultures (most multinationals operate in western influenced work environment) have to be modified. This study, its outcome and my own experience, strongly endorses and consolidates my social constructionism paradigm. Subsequently, the comparisons of this study on organisational culture and local culture have made me aware that the same phenomena may have varied interpretations at different times and in different contexts. Critical perspectives should be emphasised in contributing to knowledge in such types of research.

Chapter Summary

Outlined in this chapter are the practical contributions of this research to both managers and employees. It provides great insights to managers of multinationals who are about to enter markets which have their own unique culture and traditions. It also presents my epistemic reflexivity and methodology reflexivity. With this I have revealed myself as a new qualitative researcher by being a self critique. I have taken this opportunity to look back upon my research behavior during the research process. Besides I have also conclusively shown how my DBA has evolved me into a stronger person with greater empathy along with phenomenal growth in my career.

This journey has only made me realise that this is only a beginning and learning is an endless process. I confess that the journey was a difficult one and the processes painful but in the end it opened up such vast opportunities that now I can only see the advantages in it. After getting the chance to talk to various managers about the relevance of this research it endorses the fact that my research is valuable and hence all the challenges were worthwhile. This has opened up new avenues for me as a social researcher.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 <u>**Introduction**</u>

A conclusion to the entire research effort is provided in this chapter. In chapter two, a review of literatures in the mainstream on organisational cultures of multinationals and the national culture in the markets in which they operate was done. There appeared to be a gap in research in the context of American corporations operating in the Middle East especially the GCC countries like U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. In Chapters Three and Four it becomes evident that these aspects have been explored and some new insights have been discovered.

Before making concluding remarks based on the key findings of the study, this chapter must take a look at the beginning of the research and briefly summarise how the findings of this research gives a clarity to the whole effort. First, the research objectives of this study outlined in chapter one are revisited. In the next section of this chapter concluding remarks based on the findings and discussions of this research are made. Following this, theoretical contributions and implications of this study to American Corporations are highlighted, especially in the area of American corporations setting up business in GCC countries. To conclude the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research on

American organisation's approach to operate in unique national cultures are looked into.

6.2   Conclusions of the Research Objectives.

As established in the beginning of chapter one, the purpose of this research was to extend an understanding of lessons American companies can learn to adapt to national cultures while setting out to do business in local cultural environments, by focusing on the EDS experience in Bahrain. To answer the research question 'What lessons can American companies learn in adapting to local cultures from a case study of the EDS Corporation in Bahrain?' several research objectives were set to guide this study. To identify patterns of assumptions while expanding business into alien cultures and influences which are key factors to success in that environment; to critically review existing literature of the mainstream theories, to design an appropriate research methodology to explore the research question and to discover a framework that can be adapted by any American company venturing to do business in the Middle East. To achieve these research goals and objectives, interviews were conducted with EDS managers, local employees and managers from other organisations to recommend practice and then analysed to get a clear picture. The various definitions of culture were explored and adopted for the purposes of this research (2.2). Corporate culture which is a more recent phenomena was also detailed (2.3). The corporate culture of EDS was also clearly defined (2.6). The motives of multinationals were identified in Literature Review (2.3). Thus the gap in research of American

companies setting up business in local culture was identified. The major influences that govern the local culture like influence of religion, cultural differences, dress code and language barrier were all studied and compared to existing literature. Taking EDS as a case study a framework was identified which it could have adapted while setting up operations in Bahrain. By applying criteria of dependability, adaptability etc it became evident that this research met the objective of designing a frame work which an American company could adapt to set up operations in Bahrain. This further evolved as a contribution to practice for any company wanting to set up business in a local culture.

To summarize, the findings of this research indicate that EDS managers need to be trained to understand the national culture. The impact and influence it has on the local employee has to be recognized and respected. With this understanding the foreign managers have to set up policies which will not create a conflict at the work place. It is equally important that the local employee be made to understand the relevance of organisational culture and policies. The local employee should be treated as an equal partner and trained to understand what is required from him as well as the advantages such an exposure offers to him. To sum up the corporate policy to be applied in a national culture would have to be an integration of Global corporate policies and the influences that govern the local culture.

Cross cultural issues at the work place require an understanding of the relevant cultures. This was done in the literature review chapter by exploring Arab culture, Bahraini culture, American culture and organisational culture. Taking EDS, the first IT outsourcer company in Bahrain – with its large number of local employees managed by foreign managers - a research method was designed. Social constructionism was the philosophical paradigm used to design the research method. This methodology is clearly outlined in chapter Three. Through Reflexive interviews with both EDS managers and local employees data was collected and analysed. The company had policies on its website for ''valuing different skills, backgrounds, experience and perspective as a competitive differentiator in the market place''. But this did not disseminate to the local employees. The lack of database and statistical surveys to support corporate policies in local culture was also a major factor in the findings. The weakness of multinational companies in implementing policies was also identified during the process of the research.

6.3 <u>Methodology conclusions</u>

The findings and the contribution to practice clearly indicate that qualitative research methodology was the most suitable for this study. Semi structured interviews helped the researcher be part of the research. The insights he offered were conclusive to the evidence in the findings. The coding of data and the research framework designed helped in attaining the objectives set out in the beginning of the research.

6.4   Structure of Thesis

The thesis was structured into six chapters. The Introduction in chapter one clearly defined the research question and research objectives. In chapter two the existing literature on all the main aspects of the research was reviewed. Data was collected through semi structured interviews and analysed. A methodology was designed complete with data coding using social constructionism as the philosophical paradigm. In chapter four which was the findings and discussion chapter the success of the methodology used was evident. Data was easily accessible and discussions revealed a pattern of assumptions. In Chapter five these assumptions used to define the implications of this research and its contribution to practice. Thus all the objectives that were set out in the beginning of the research have been met. A contribution to practice could also be outlined to be used as a practical guide for any American company setting up business in national cultures.

6.5   Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of this study has been to increase knowledge about the conflict confronting American companies while working in local cultures as shown by the study of the experience of EDS an American company in Bahrain. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that this subject has been studied by shifting the research focus from the experience of American companies operating in cultures influenced by Western culture to American companies doing business in unique local culture such as the Bahraini culture. As is always the case this

research also suffers from a number of limitations (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). The most obvious limitation being that the outcome of this study cannot be generalised. However the findings of this study have enhanced the understanding of EDS managers and international researchers about the phenomena of alienation felt by Local Employees working in an American corporation. But it is very specific context oriented. Readers can only make their own generalisation by considering parallel or equivalent circumstances.

Though internationalization of American companies is not a new phenomenon, no research has been conducted by sampling the Local Employees and the Foreign Managers thus far. In comparing the samples it was felt that it was better to take local employees as one group (even though sub groups like Sunni, Shia, Bahraini exist) and the foreign managers as one group (in spite of EDS managers being different nationalities) so that generalisation could be made.

Some international researchers like Sharma and Johanson (1987) and Erramilli and Rao (1993), have suggested that research results generated from different categories of samplings are difficult to generalize. The other limitation which I recognised is that this study only explains conflict at the workplace felt due to differences in local culture and organisational culture of EDS and is unique to the GCC alone. Thus the findings of this research are derived from the context of Arab culture and Influence of religion in their daily routine. Applying the findings of this research in another culture with its unique traits may affect the study

adversely. Consequently it will limit managers' and international business scholars' understanding. However, the above limitations in turn provide an opportunity and a platform for future research.

- First of all, as discussed above, this research did not encompass Arab culture as a whole. Instead it limited itself to Bahraini local culture, which though part of Arab culture is still an amalgam of various other influences. In future research, international researchers may consider investigating this issue in a given industry or sector to gain a comprehensive understanding of how Arabs function in American companies.

- Another research opportunity arising from this study is that future research should extend this investigation into Asian companies entering the Bahraini market and the integration issues they are facing. Eastern countries in different geographic areas have their own ethnic culture and work ethics and it would be interesting to learn if the same issues come up due to their cultural differences.

- There is a lack of research conducted by non Bahraini researchers regarding the national culture of Bahrain. For example Metcalfe, has focused her studies on gender and HRM issues and other researchers have focused on religious issues. There is an opportunity to research the link between corporate culture and national culture by a non Bahraini.

Overall, given the limitations discussed earlier, more empirical studies on American corporations doing business in local cultures are required.

In spite of the limitations, this study throws valuable insights into the functioning of multinationals in cultures other than their own. This study is the first of its kind to address the conflict between organisational culture and local culture. Thus it makes a distinct contribution by extending current mainstream Foreign Direct Investment theory of international business management disciplines. Foreign direct investment theory is a measure of foreign ownership of productive assets, such as factories, mines and land (Shefferin, 2003). Increasing foreign investment can be used as one measure of growing economic globalization.

6.6   Recommendations for practice

The outcome that evolved out of this research was a practice based framework for all American companies setting out to do business in Bahrain. In effect this affords a framework for all American companies venturing to do business in national culture. The table below again emphasizes the recommendations to practice.

• Commission a study of the target culture to collect data that will create a data bank to study all the relevant information about it.
• Identify data on the culture and influences that shape the local workforce.
• Assess the influences that are essential for optimum productivity of the workforce.
• Design a country/region specific corporate strategy and incorporate policies which are essential from the organisations own corporate policy and integrate the two into a corporate policy for the country/region.
• Train the managers in this structured policy where they understand the local culture and influences that shape the productivity of the local workforce.
• Managers to train the local employees to understand the organisational culture of the company and the corporate policy structured for the country/region.
• Periodically review the policies with both the managers and the local employees to determine if the policies are functioning effectively.
• Discard policies which are negatively impacting productivity. Adopt new policies and restructure old ones which seem to be having no influence so that optimum productivity is seen.
• Train the local employees to take up management positions and incorporate the idea of equal partnership in them.

Table 6.1 Practice based frame work to set up business in local Cultures

6.7 Research Summary

This chapter has tied the whole thesis together by reviewing how research aims and objectives have been achieved by summarising the research findings. Generally the studies have focused on the success of organisational cultures in environments influenced by western culture. But this study focused on a better understanding of how American companies choose to conduct business in a culture which is influenced by its own local culture and religion. This qualitative research shows that the underlying conflicts that exist and create a divide between the local employees and the foreign managers are complicated and needs to addressed strategically. One challenge facing international researchers is that future research on this topic should be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective.

It is universally understood that no individual study can be entirely conclusive on such a complex area as international business management. From the theoretical and practical perspectives, this research has expanded the understanding of the impact of local cultures on organisational cultures, with particular focus on American companies doing business in the Arab culture further narrowing it down to Bahraini culture. The conclusions of this study will further the implementation of corporate policies which assimilate the local cultural traits as well. This in turn would help a multinational in focusing on sustaining and expanding their business rather than having to constantly struggle with conflicts at work place. Understanding the ethos of its employee and obtaining his loyalty

and commitment to work will go a long way in establishing itself in the region as a major player. Thus this research can be used as a handbook for guidelines to formulate policies which will harbor a sense of partnership between local employees with their unique national culture and foreign managers of multinational American corporations.

At the end of this journey I understand that the future of the Arab world lies in understanding its own culture and adapting itself to the new challenges ahead as the visionary leader His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan –The late President of the U.A.E. foresaw:

"*A nation without a past is a nation without a present or a future. Thanks to God, our nation has a flourishing civilisation, deep-rooted in this land for many centuries. These roots will always flourish and bloom in the glorious present of our nation and in its anticipated future*".

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APPENDIX I – CONSENT LETTER & OTHER CORRESPONDENCE (COPY)

9th November 2004

To: Whomever It Concerns

This to confirm that EDS – Gulf States has no objection for Mr. Jassim Hussain to carry-out his research and interviews with EDS employees or management staff.

We wish him success in his assignment.

On behalf of EDS,

Ian Wakeford

Subject: <u>Request for an Interview</u>

Dear Participant,

This letter is an invitation to participate in a research study interview. As a part-time DBA student at the University of Northumbria, I am currently conducting a research on the impact of local culture on American companies in Bahrain taking EDS as a case study. This interview will remain confidential. I shall obtain your consent prior to publishing your interview.

Kindly assist me by consenting to be interviewed and informing me the suitable place, date and time to conduct the interview.

Best regards,

APPENDIX II – INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How many years of work experience do you have in your field?
2. What is your exposure to cultures other than yours?
3. How many years have you been in Bahrain?
4. Tell me about your exposure to different types of organisational culture?
5. How did you cope with the differences in culture in professional life?
6. How did you cope with the same in personal life?
7. Did the national culture create a problem at the work place?
8. What adjustments did you make to accommodate the new culture you encountered?
9. Do the organisational and national cultures clash with each other at the work place?
10. Did the company prepare you for the organisational or national culture that you will encounter when you took up this assignment?
11. What was the best and the worst thing about the organisational or national culture that you encountered?
12. Did language create barriers?
13. Was dress code a problem in interacting with the nationals?
14. What is the influence of religion on the local employee?
15. Does a multinational get best productivity from a local employee?
16. Does the local employee relate to the organisational culture of a multinational?
17. Does a local employee feel he is part of the organisation?
18. Does the multinational take steps to familiarize the local employee into its work environment?
19. Do you feel alienated from the local employee or the foreign managers?
20. Are local employees made part of the decision making process?

APPENDIX III – INTERVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

1.   General Interview Information

Pre-interview

First contact by: □ Letter   □ Phone   □ e-mail

Informed consent: □ Singed   □ Not signed   □ Agreed by phone/e-mail

Interview guide: □ Sent in advance by letter
                            □ Sent in advance by e-mail
                            □ Did not send

Interviewee: □ Read the interview questions before the interview
                            □ Did not read before the interview

Interview

Interview Date:

Interview Place: Interviewee's office
Hours lasted: □ One hour □ One and half hours □ Two hours/ more

Title of participant(s): Manager

Gender: □ Male   □ Female

Data recording: □ Tape-recorded   □ Not tape-recorded
                            □ Other forms   Please state   Made notes

Post-interview

Thank-you letter: □ Sent by e-mail   □ Conversation by phone

Recall: □ No
                            □ Yes   Date ➔

                            Reason Confirm some answers

2. Reflexivity of the interview

Participant's reactions during the interview

For example --
- The informant was so involved
  Over-communicative interviewee
  Uncommunicative interviewee
- The interviewee seemed tired / become bored / upset / angry/ embarrassed

Reflections of researcher's interview skills

For example --
- Interrupted the interviewee properly to confirm the answers
- Poor time control -- the warm up questions took too much time, only a few minutes left for the last question

Beyond expectation

For example--
- Interview was fixed in a café near the office. Still the interviewer got delayed because of work load.
- Got delayed in Traffic for another interview.
- Interview was interrupted by telephone call – the interviewer forgot to switch off the mobile

Improvement for next interview

- Checking the traffic condition one day early before the interview.
- Be ready for the unexpected
- Achieving a good balance between talking and listening
- Skills should be improved in making notes
- Make sure the meeting place is inadequate
- For over-communicative interviewee—making sure that the interviewee is not straying far from the questions without adding anything of significant interest
- For uncommunicative interviewee – emphasising the anonymity of all answers again at the beginning of the interview