**SEDA - Final Report**

**Immigrant academics in the pedagogic 'foreign-land': Factors influencing their pedagogic acculturation**

**I. Name and institution (including the names of any partners in the project)**

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**II. Project title**

Immigrant academics in the pedagogic 'foreign-land': Factors influencing their pedagogic acculturation

**III. Why did you choose the project?**

With globalisation there has been an increase in cross-border travel of skilled work forces (Kim and Locke, 2010; Poole and Ewan, 2010) including academics within Higher Education (HE). Nearly 28% of academics working in the UK HE sector come from other countries (HEFCE, 2015). The presence of immigrant academics may offer pedagogic opportunities and challenges not only for themselves but also for their students, colleagues, the HEIs and the HE sector in general. In spite of increased academic mobility, the challenges that may be faced by immigrant academics and adaptations that they may make in their new work environments have been relatively under-researched (Pherali, 2012; Johansson and Sliwa, 2014). Whilst there is a body of literature capturing the experiences of migrant/international students, the research on the experiences of international academics moving to work on a long-term/permanent basis has been limited.

The immigrant academics in their new environment may encounter some differences in the pedagogic culture they have experienced in their own learning and teaching journeys in the countries they have been educated and the universities they teach in the UK. This may inhibit/influence their professional practice and development in their new pedagogic context.

Our study therefore intended to find out:

* The reasons for any pedagogical dissonance which may include immigrant academics’ perception in the differences of the educational systems, learning and teaching approaches at the programme and module level, institution type and student body;
* If the degree of pedagogical dissonance is related to the pedagogical acculturation strategy adopted by the immigrant academic based on Berry’s (1997) acculturation classification of integration, separation, marginalisation and assimilation;
* Immigrant academics’ views on the professional/ academic development opportunities that their HEIs may provide to facilitate their acculturation into their new pedagogic environment;
* Ways of supporting immigrant academics’ pedagogic transitions into UK HEIs as expressed by the immigrant academics.

**IV. What you did and how it was carried out?**

This study focussed on early to mid-career immigrant academics in the UK as these academics are likely to be actively restructuring their pedagogic practice to adapt to, and/or adopt to their new pedagogic environment. The participants were drawn from different disciplinary backgrounds as this disciplinary diversity was likely to influence the nature of teaching-learning negotiations (Gurung, Chick & Haynie, 2009), and allowed for examining any disciplinary differences in the pedagogical opportunities offered and challenges faced by immigrant academics.

The study used a sequential mixed methods approach involving an online survey ( survey link [here](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PXSVMJR)) and interviews. Firstly, the survey distributed via various networks was used to determine the parameters affecting pedagogical difference experienced and the acculturation strategy of the immigrant academics. The pedagogical differences experienced were measured using an adapted version of the acculturative dissonance scale (Le and Stockdale, 2006) whilst acculturation strategy was measured using an adapted version of the acculturation attitude scale (Sam, 1995). Socio-demographic data such as gender, country of origin, age, length of teaching experience etc. was gathered to identify any variance due to these parameters. Additionally, qualitative data was collected using open-ended questions. Follow-up interviews from a sample of the survey participants (5 in all) were used to investigate in-depth the reasons for any difficulties they experienced in adapting to the new environment. Further, the professional/academic opportunities that these participants undertook (e.g. PGCERT in Academic Practice) and how it enabled their acculturation into the British HEIs was explored.

**V. How did you respond to any recommendations / conditions given to you in the feedback from the committee?**

The committee did not make any recommendations regarding making any change to the original project proposal. However, our mentor Laura Hills, a member of the Scholarship and Research Committee of SEDA provide valuable feedback on the survey questions which was helpful in shaping the final survey questions.

**VI. What have you learnt from doing this work?**

The key findings coming through from this work is that some migrant academics feel as if their teaching experiences and backgrounds are undervalued when they move to new contexts. For those who can socialise into the system and feel a sense of belongingness, these feelings of being undervalued are of a lesser extent. Further migrant academics often have several cultural teaching issues they need to overcome such as universities’ governance and quality assurance structures, student-teacher relationship and student-centred teaching approaches. These findings suggest that universities and academic development units may need to do more to make migrant academics feel more valued and belongingness if they want them to be engaged lecturers. More details of the outcomes of the project are being included in the two articles currently in development. Some of the key findings were also discussed in the two seminars , a conference paper and a article that has already been submitted (see section VII below).

**VII. How have you told others about your work?**

The following presentations based on the work have been presented at various fora:

* 25th October 2016 - The initial findings of the study were presented as part of the Liverpool Hope Business School Research seminar series in a present entitled *‘Migrant Academics and Pedagogic Acculturation’.*
* 9th December 2016 - The interim findings of the study were shared by Dr Anesa Hosein as part of her presentation at the SRHE Annual Conference in December 2016.
* 8th March 2017 - Dr Thushari Welikala, Lecturer in Higher Education at King’s College London who was one of the contributors to the study and the book based around the study presented her experiences as a migrant woman academic at the International Women's Day at University of Warwick at an event organised by AMIN – Academic Mobilities and Immobilities Network at Warwick in collaboration with SRHE’s International Research and Researchers Network
* 26th April 2017 - A seminar led by Dr Namrata Rao entitled, ‘*Migration and academic acculturation: Perspectives of the Migrant Academics*’ was organised as part of the seminar series of the research centre (Centre for Education and Policy Analysis) at Liverpool Hope University
* 17th November 2017 - The final findings of the study will be presented as part of the 22nd Annual SEDA conference at Cardiff in a presentation entitled, *‘Immigrant academics in the pedagogic 'foreign-land': Factors influencing their pedagogic acculturation’.* Abstract [here](https://www.seda.ac.uk/resources/files/9_Hosein.pdf)

***Other outputs***

* **Edited book** - We have recently submitted a manuscript of an edited book to Bloomsbury (Link [here](https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/academics-international-teaching-journeys-9781474289788/)). The development of the book and the introductory chapter have particularly been informed by the work we did on the SEDA project. We anticipate the book would be a good vehicle to disseminate the work we have done in this area when it comes out in print. The reference of the work is as under:

Hosein, A., Rao, N., Yeh, C. S.-H. and Kinchin, I.M. (Eds.) (due 2018) *Academics’ Teaching Journeys: Personal Narratives of International Transitions*, London:Bloomsbury.

* **Educational Developments -** An article has been submitted to the SEDA magazine, *Educational Developments*, with the provisional title: *Migrant Academics and their Academic Development Training Needs.*

**VIII. What effect has it had and where is this activity now heading?**

* ***SRHE Event in London*** - Our proposal for a seminar entitled *‘Migration and Academic Acculturation’* funded by SRHE has been accepted for presentation in London on 19th April 2018 which will be sponsored by *International Research and Researchers Special Interest Group* of SRHE. It draws on the findings of the SEDA and another SRHE funded study. The seminar would provide us an appropriate opportunity to share this work with academics from across the sector in London. We are hoping to share a summary of the key findings of the study highlighting some of the pedagogic challenges faced by migrant academics in their teaching journeys at this event with the view to create greater awareness of the teaching training needs of migrant academics across the sector via the event attendees.
* ***SRHE Annual Research Award*** - Further when we worked on the SEDA study, the findings of the study lead to the realisation that many of the responses of the academic to the pedagogic environment and the dissonance they might experience are largely influenced by the responses they might receive from the native academic whom they work alongside with. This has informed the development of another funded study entitled *‘Migrant Academics and Professional Learning Gains: Perspectives of the Native Academics’* which we were awarded by SRHE. The project explores the perspectives of the native academic and how their professional practice is influenced by working alongside the migrant academics, the intention being to better support the acculturation of migrant academics in foreign environments.
* ***ALDinHE Research Award*** - The outcomes of the study has also informed the development of the Association for Learning Development (ALDinHE) funded project entitled, *‘ An evaluation of doctoral students’ learning development on accredited professional teaching programmes’* which focuses particularly on the doctoral students experiences of teaching programmes and training they are offered. A strand of the project looks particularly on the international doctoral students experiences and the difficulties they might face in teaching and on teaching programmes in foreign contexts.
* ***Establishing a ‘Community of Practice’*** – In the attempt to collect survey for the study we have over the period of last year come in touch with various migrant academics from within the UK and those working elsewhere. We hope to be able to formalise this network in more concrete ways so as to develop some kind of ‘ Community of Practice’ (see for details Lave and Wengner, 1991) to bring together academics working in foreign context to share experiences of teaching in foreign contexts and consider ways to best negotiate these. The key purpose of the CoP would be to provide a space ‘real’ or ‘virtual’ for problems shared and solutions proposed by the migrant academics connected via this community, therefore providing an informal space for supporting their teaching related academic development needs. The CoP we anticipate would work well in providing a mechanism for the dissemination and sharing of good practice. Depending on the appropriateness of the context and number of migrant academics, it would be appropirate to consider setting up such CoPs at various levels, Departmental, Institutional, Cross – instutitonal or beyond.
* ***Hieghtened awareness of the teaching related training needs of migrant academics*** – We anticipate that the dissemination of our finidings at various fora either in the form of presentation or as published work may help in making improvements via better understanding of the teaching related training needs of the migrant academics and more sensitivity to the issues that they face in teaching in foreign context which are unique to them. It will hopefully enable migrant academics to contextualise their teaching more seamless and be active and effective members of the teaching community.
* ***Views of the Russell Group Migrants*** – All our interviewees were from post-1992/modern universities which therefore has meant the interview data may not reflect the experiences of those migrant academics who are employed in Russell group universities who might experience very different challenges than those experienced by academics in the relatively new, modern universities who often have a teaching focussed agenda
* **A toolkit for academic developers on migrant academics –** We are anticipating putting together a toolkit that can help academic developers determine the appropriate types of resources and workshops to help migrant academics adapt to their new teaching posts.
* **Anticipated Publications**
  + **Hosein, A. and Rao, “Migrant Academics and their Academic Development Training Needs”, *Educational Developments***
  + **Hosein, A. and Rao, N. “Factors influencing pedagogical relatedness of academic teaching staff in Higher Education”, *Teacher and Teaching Education***
  + **Rao, N. and Hosein, A. “Training needs of migrant teaching academics: a toolkit”, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*.**

**IX. What outputs have resulted from this activity?**

**References** –

* Higher Education Funding Council for England (2015) *Staff employed at HEFCE-funded HEIs: Trends and profiles.*
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* Johansson, M. and Sliwa, M. (2014) Gender, foreignness and academia: an intersectional analysis of the experiences of foreign women academics in UK business schools*. Gender, Work and Organization*. 21 (1), 18-36
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* Poole, D., & Ewan, C. (2010) ‘Academics as part-time marketers in university offshore programs: An exploratory study’*. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32, 149-158.