ASSESSING ORIENTATIONS TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCE OF THE FACULTY OF A UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PROGRAMME IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH INFORMED BY THE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM AND USING THE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY

Submitted by

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Signature: Ian Ross McKay ……..

ABSTRACT

This study examined the orientations to cultural difference of sojourner educators in the Foundation Program at Qatar University to determine if orientations were correlated with select demographic and experiential variables, including gender, age, time overseas, education level, formative region, ethnic minority status, job position, length of time in Qatar, intercultural marriage, default language, formal teacher training, and overseas development organization experience.

This study used a sequential mixed-method design. Perceived and Developmental Orientations were measured using the Intercultural Development Inventory© (V.3), which produced a measure of each respondent's orientation to cultural difference. Focus group interviews were conducted to engage participants in explaining and interpreting the findings. Five focus groups of three to six participants each were conducted.

Most of the teachers were found to operate from within the transitional orientation of Minimization, although individual scores ranged from Denial to Adaptation. On average, the educators were found to overestimate their orientations by 31 points. A positive correlation between orientation and formative region was found, with participants from North America showing the highest orientation. Statistically significant differences emerged for orientations when comparing Middle East and North African (MENA) and North American formative regions.

Formative region was found to account for 4.8% of the variance in orientation and is a significant fit of the data. Focus groups participants speculated that (a) core differences regarding multiculturalism in MENA and North American cultures help explain the results, (b) aspects of the workplace culture and both the broader MENA and local Qatari culture encourage a sense of exclusion, and (c) external events further complicate cross-cultural relations. The study findings add to the literature by providing

baseline orientation data on sojourner educators in post-secondary education in the GCC region, and by confirming some of the findings of similar studies.

The study provides practitioners with suggestions for staffing and professional development. Future research should focus on the measurement of orientations in broader samples of educators, changes in orientation over time in Qatar and other cultural contexts, differences in orientation among short-term vs. long-term expatriates, the impact of employment systems and societal structures on orientations in sojourner educators, the impact of educator orientation to cultural difference on student achievement, and the design of effective cross-cultural professional development for educators.

Key Words:

Intercultural Development Inventory, intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, Qatar, sojourner, orientation to cultural difference

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all sojourner educators in Qatar. I hope that this work highlights your experience in Qatar, and that it and provides suggestions for meaningful change.

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