

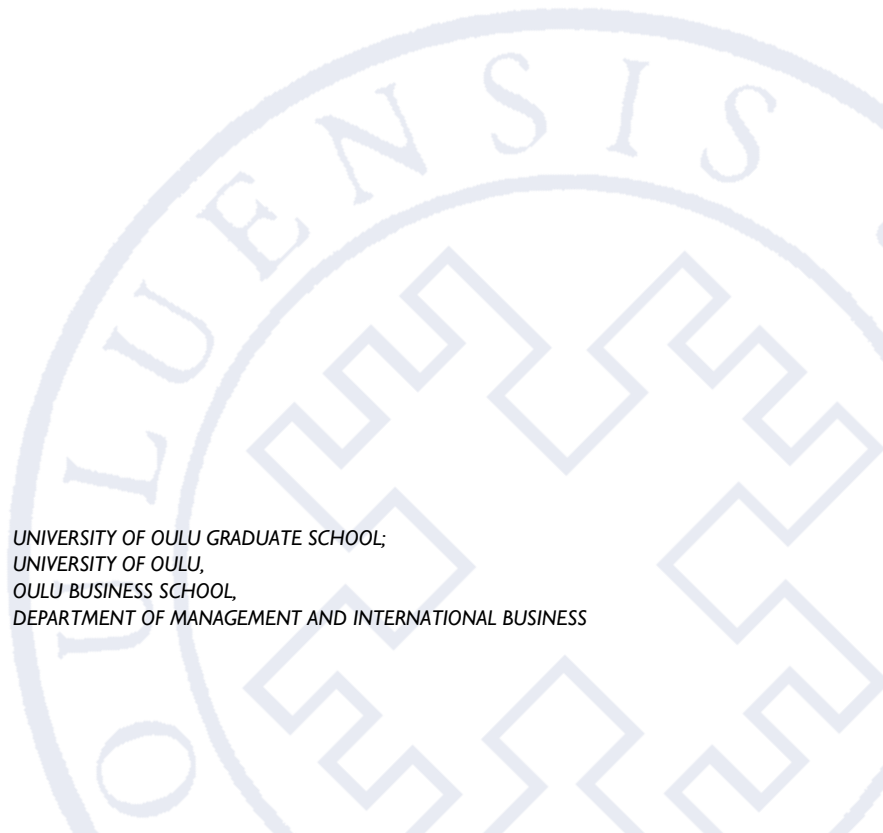
Asadullah Khan

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE UAE

*MULTI CULTURAL AND DECENT WORK
PERSPECTIVES*

UNIVERSITY OF OULU GRADUATE SCHOOL;
UNIVERSITY OF OULU,
OULU BUSINESS SCHOOL,
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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ASADULLAH KHAN

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CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
IN THE UAE**

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Abstract

This thesis investigated the national culture of the construction labourers in a migrant country and empirically found the impact of cultural behavior on the performance of construction projects and labourers while practicing the decent work indicators. The study culminates by helping to form a migration policy by both the sending and the receiving countries of migrants that would economically and socially benefit both the migrant labourer and his family at the individual level. This thesis therefore helps by adding to the theoretical knowledge and also in the successful completion of projects and successful temporary migration.

The research involved multi-research methods, starting with the narratives of the construction labourers. The research methodology was further augmented through a case study approach with the participant observation method. The data were coded according to grounded theory into national cultural dimensions. Re-confirmation and cross-checking interviews were also conducted to confirm the correctness of the coding. The qualitative data collected were quantified to give meaning to the data collection through triangulation in data analysis. After introducing national cultures in the construction projects of the UAE, the national culture of the construction labourers within Geert Hofstede's framework was identified, while observing the decent work practices indicators. This was achieved through narratives, observations and semi-structured interviews.

The thesis investigates decent work practices indicators specific to the culture of migrant construction labourers from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese labourers in the UAE. The thesis reveals that the national culture of the migrant construction labourers in the UAE is not the same as that identified by Hofstede some four decades ago. Indian construction labourers revealed high Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), Pakistani labourers showed high Masculinity (MAS), Bangladeshi labourers revealed low Long Term Orientation (LTO) and Individualism (IND) and Chinese construction labourers showed high IND and LTO. The study suggests that the management of cultural differences could help the successful completion of projects, which could be beneficial for both the migrant sending country and the host country and also for the individual migrant and his family. The study further investigated the difference in decent work practices in the UAE and the national culture (as seen in cultural behavior) of the migrant construction labourers in the UAE. Studying this difference in practice and learning about the cultural behavior of the construction labourers has economic and social implications for construction labourers, migrant receiving and sending countries.

Keywords: Bangladesh, China, construction industry, construction labourers, decent work practices, India, national culture, Pakistan, performance, project based industry, temporary migration, UAE

Khan, Asadullah, Työsuorituksen parantaminen Yhdistyneiden Arabiemiirikuntien rakennushankkeissa. Monikulttuurisuuden ja ihmisarvoisen työn näkökulmat

Oulun yliopiston tutkijakoulu; Oulun yliopisto, Oulun yliopiston kauppa- ja liiketoiminnan yksikkö, Johtamisen ja kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan yksikkö

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Tiivistelmä

Tässä väitöskirjassa tutkittiin toiseen maahan muuttaneiden rakennustyöntekijöiden kansallista kulttuuria ja todettiin empiirisiä tutkimusmenetelmiä käyttäen, kuinka kulttuurinen käyttäytyminen vaikuttaa rakennushankkeiden toteuttamiseen ja työntekijöiden työsuoritukseen, kun sovelletaan ihmisarvoisen työn indikaattoreita. Maahanmuuttajien lähtö- ja tulomaat voivat käyttää tämän tutkimuksen tuloksia apuna laatiessaan maahanmuuttopolitiikkaa, joka hyödyttäisi taloudellisesti ja yhteiskunnallisesti siirtotyöläistä ja tämän perhettä. Tämä väitöskirja auttaa toisinaan lisäämään teoreettista tietämystä ja sujuvaa tilapäistä maahanmuuttoa sekä saattamaan hankkeet onnistuneesti päätökseen.

Tutkimuksessa käytettiin useita eri tutkimusmenetelmiä, ja lähtökohtana olivat rakennustyöntekijöiden omat kertomukset. Tutkimusmetodologiaa täydennettiin lisäksi tapaustutkimuksella käyttäen osallistuvan havainnoinnin menetelmää. Tutkimustiedot koodattiin käyttäen grounded theory -lähestymistavan mukaisia kansallisten kulttuurien ulottuvuuksia. Haastatteluille tehtiin lisäksi ristiintarkistus ja ne vahvistettiin uudelleen, jotta voitiin varmistua koodauksen paikkansapitävyydestä. Kerätty kvalitatiivinen aineisto ilmaistiin määrällisenä, jotta kerättyjä tietoja voitiin analysoida triangulaation avulla. Tutkimuksessa esiteltiin aluksi, miten kansalliset kulttuurit liittyvät Yhdistyneiden arabiemiirikuntien rakennushankkeisiin, minkä jälkeen määritettiin rakennustyöntekijöiden kansallinen kulttuuri käyttäen Geert Hofsteden teoriaa ja noudattaen ihmisarvoisen työn käytäntöjä koskevia indikaattoreita. Apuna käytettiin kertomuksia, havaintoja ja puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja.

Väitöskirjassa tutkittiin rakennustyöntekijöitä, jotka olivat muuttaneet Yhdistyneisiin arabiemiirikuntiin Intiasta, Pakistanista, Bangladeshista ja Kiinasta. Tutkimuksessa todettiin, että ihmisarvoisen työn käytäntöjä koskevat indikaattorit ovat kytköksissä työntekijöiden omaan kulttuuriin. Väitöskirja paljastaa lisäksi, että Yhdistyneisiin arabiemiirikuntiin muuttaneiden rakennustyöntekijöiden kansallinen kulttuuri ei vastaa Hofsteden neljä vuosikymmentä sitten määrittämää kansallista kulttuuria. Intialaisilla rakennustyöntekijöillä havaittiin voimakasta epävarmuuden välttämistä, pakistanilaisilla työntekijöillä voimakasta maskuliinisuutta, bangladeshilaisilla työntekijöillä vähäistä pitkän tähtäimen orientaatiota ja individualismia ja kiinalaisilla rakennustyöntekijöillä puolestaan havaittiin voimakasta individualismia ja pitkän tähtäimen orientaatiota. Tutkimus osoittaa, että kulttuurieroja hallitsemalla voitaisiin edesauttaa hankkeiden viemistä onnistuneesti päätökseen, mikä puolestaan hyödyttäisi maahanmuuttajien lähtömaata ja isäntämaata sekä itse maahanmuuttajia ja heidän perheitään. Tutkimuksessa tutkittiin lisäksi, miten ihmisarvoisen työn käytännöt eroavat Yhdistyneissä arabiemiirikunnissa ja maahan muuttaneiden rakennustyöntekijöiden kansallisessa kulttuurissa (mikä puolestaan ilmenee kulttuurisessa käyttäytymisessä). Tämän eroavaisuuden ja rakennustyöntekijöiden kulttuurisen käyttäytymisen tutkimisella on taloudellisia ja yhteiskunnallisia vaikutuksia rakennustyöntekijöihin sekä maahanmuuttajien lähtö- ja tulomaihin.

Asiasanat: Bangladesh, hankeperhainen teollisuus, ihmisarvoisen työn käytännöt, Intia, kansallinen kulttuuri, Kiina, Pakistan, rakennusteollisuus, rakennustyöntekijät, tilapäinen maahanmuutto, työsuoritus, Yhdistyneet arabiemiirikunnat

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This PhD is a result of my interaction with construction labourers in their labour camps, on the streets and in the fields. I was involved with large projects for two and half years and this gave me a chance to observe the labourers closely. Attempting a PhD study while working, particularly at a time of recession when one had to "show extra performance" in order to keep ones job, was not an easy task. But now one of the most important projects of my life is complete. This was made possible by the guidance of my PhD supervisor, Professor Maqsood Sandhu.

I could call Professor Maqsood any time day or night, that I need his help. He always welcomed me to his home, with meals and tea, to discuss how to write a research paper and with his help and guidance I was able to complete my PhD. Both his academic and practical approach to managing research was very helpful to me as an engineer. The process of writing a research paper and having it accepted for publication was difficult in the first place and I remember Maqsood would spend hours in his office and over the phone explaining how to put together a research question and get it answered, through stages, in different sections of the paper until it is completely answered at the end of the paper. He always said that simplifying complex things is harder than making the simple things complex. The most important aspect of the whole research process was that he never forced ideas on me or forced anything that I did not understand. He helped me to manoeuvre the ship in deep waters but left me at liberty to catch the fish.

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List of original papers

The thesis is based material from the following research Papers:

- I Khan A (2013) Decent Work Practice indicators in the Construction Projects of United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Business Excellence* 6(4): 409–424.
- II Khan A (2014) Effects of Cultural Assimilation on the Performance of a Construction Project – Evidence from UAE. *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 21(3): 430–449.
- III Khan A & Sandhu M (2014) Benchmarking National Culture and Decent Work Practice Indicators in Project-Based Industry: Lessons from United Arab Emirates. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*. In press.
- IV Khan A (2014) Improving Performance of Labourers in the Construction Projects of UAE: A Multi-Cultural Perspective. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*. In press.

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1 Introduction

This chapter covers the background of the study, highlighting the prospering construction industry of the UAE and the research gap in this context, the general research question and its sub-questions. At the end of the chapter a section on the structure of the thesis is included, giving an overview of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Decent work practices have been the objective of all the international organizations aimed at improving the performance of employees, of projects and ultimately of people's lives. But decent work practices have a different meaning in other cultural contexts. The UAE is well-known for having the tallest buildings (Burj Kahlifa), largest mall (the Dubai Mall), the largest man-made islands (the Palm Jumeirah and the Plan Diera) and the largest sea port (Jabel Ali). The construction industry contributes about 8% of the UAE's GDP (Vine, 2009b). These magnificent structures in the UAE were made by temporary migrants, construction labourers mostly from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The aims and culture of these migrant construction labourers were different from those of their hosts, since they belong to different nationalities or countries. This study explores the national culture of the migrant construction labourers, decent work practices in the UAE and the performance of the construction projects in the UAE.

Decent work practice indicators are a new concept introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999. Subsequently, most of the decent work studies were performed by the ILO, an organization responsible for identifying, measuring and improving decent work practices in the member countries under its decent work country programme (DWCP). Anker *et al.* (2002) have defined these indicators as an effective tool for improving people's lives, through its simple four dimensional programme (those of productive work, equity, security and dignity) which are easily understandable phrases and descriptions. The ILO has defined common decent work practice indicators for all the member countries. Anker *et al.* (2003) suggest that specific decent work indicators for countries and regions should be measured over time to create broader indicators in future. This thesis qualitatively looks for decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the construction labourers in the UAE, because it is more difficult to establish through quantitative analysis that the decent work promotes high and sustained economic growth and social development (Anker *et al.* 2002). Therefore, to measure the performance of construction labourers,

qualitative determination is necessary before any quantitative analysis can be made (Lima *et al.* 2011). The study is aimed at the improvement of decent work practice indicators in the UAE, considering the national cultural requirements aspect of the temporary construction migrants in the UAE. Culture has an action context and subsequently a contextual meaning. Therefore, the national culture of the labourers should be determined when following decent work indicators in the construction projects of the UAE. The improvement in decent work practices, which results in an improvement in the performance of projects, is possible through an understanding of the national culture of the migrants. Therefore the impact of the cultural behaviour of the labourers should be determined when following the indicators. The impact of these cultural behaviours can be found in terms of their effects on performance, on construction labourers and construction projects themselves at the micro level and of their effects on the countries which send and receive migrants at the macro level. Loosemore and Muslmani (1999) emphasise the cultural sensitivity and behavioural differences at the workplace in international construction projects. However, few studies were found to have covered all aspects of decent work practice indicators in construction projects.

Butcher and Sheehan (2010) studied performance of the construction industry in the United Kingdom and considered health, safety and environment as factors which could affect the performance of construction projects in the United Kingdom. Ailabouni *et al.* (2009) studied the construction industry in the UAE and found that weather conditions there affect the productivity of the construction labourers. Thomas (1992) covered decent work indicators of overwork in the construction industry of the USA. Torres *et al.* (2013) conducted a comprehensive study on the condition of the migrant Latin American construction labourers in USA. The study covered many aspects of decent work provision, including working conditions, salary, health and safety and insurance, without referring to these as decent work indicators. In Asia, Frost (2004) carried out a similar study on the working conditions of migrant Nepalese construction labourers in Hong Kong. In Nepal, Adhikari *et al.* (2012) has studied decent work and the quality of working life and recommends better jobs and safety improvements for the eradication of poverty from the country. Decent work is an ambitious target for helping to reduce poverty at the regional level (Renwick, 2011) and globally (Bisom-Rapp *et al.* 2011 and Anker *et al.* 2003). Unfortunately a commitment to decent work is still needed to align national and international policies with decent work objectives (ILO, 2007). It should be noted that these studies were confined to some only of the decent work practice indicators without considering their cultural aspect.

Culture has been studied and compared in more detail than decent work practices. Hofstede (1980, 1991) pioneered national cultural studies and national cultural dimensions have been widely used in research projects, including some on marketing (Steenkamp, 2001), the business environment and the construction industry. However not many studies were found to have covered both local decent work indicators and national cultural dimensions. Mearns and Yule (2009) studied safety aspects in the Swedish and Danish construction industry using Hofstede's framework (1984, 1991) and Mohamed *et al.* (2009) applied Hofstede's framework of national cultures (1994b) for the study of safe work behaviour among the construction labourers in Pakistan. The present thesis explores multi national cultures, including those of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese labourers in the context of decent work indicators in the construction projects of the UAE. This research project therefore studies comprehensive decent work practice indicators specific to construction labourers and their national culture.

It is interesting to compare the national culture of migrant construction labourers in the UAE, their host country with their national culture in their respective home countries. Effective migration policies could be made with greater understanding of the indigenous decent work practice indicators and the culture of the migrant labourers, which could be helpful for both the sending and the receiving countries. The following section describes in particular the research problem, which establishes the foundation for the study.

1.2 Research problem and research question

The research gap has been described in the above background section. The study aims at the effective temporary migration of the construction labourers in the UAE by considering decent work practices and the national culture of the construction labourers who belong to different countries. This brings us to one of the main research questions:

How can we improve performance of projects and achieve effective temporary migration of the construction labourers with decent work practices in a cross-cultural context which benefits the migrant sending countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladeshi and China) and the receiving country (UAE)?

It has been established in the literature that culture affects the performance of the international construction projects and that its management in the cross-cultural context can result in a more successful completion of projects.

This main research question is addressed through sub-research questions which form part of each of the research papers included in this thesis. It evolved first from the need to identify the decent work practices of the construction labourers from their cultural perspective. This leads to the next research question:

What are the indicators of decent work practices in the construction projects of the UAE?

The construction labourers from each of the migrant home countries come to the UAE with different objectives carrying with them the responsibility of their culture. After having identified decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of UAE, it becomes relevant to introduce a national cultural framework in the construction projects of the UAE and understand its implications for the performance of construction projects. This can be done by addressing the third research question:

Why and how can differences in national culture be identified through communication as it affects the performance of construction projects in the UAE?

The varying ambitions of the construction labourers who come to the UAE from different countries bearing different national cultures are the reflection of their national culture. Hence it is important to know the national culture of the construction labourers in following decent work practice indicators specific to each of the migrant sending countries. For example, in the situation of migration debt, it would be interesting to see the cultural behaviour of the construction labourers in the UAE. This relationship between decent work practice indicators and national cultures is explored through the following research question:

What is the national culture of the migrant construction labourers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China in the context of decent work practices in the UAE?

The literature reveals that decent work practices affect the performance of the construction labourers. It will be interesting to see if the performance of the construction labourers is affected by their cultural behaviour when decent work indicators are followed. This would require the following research question to be considered:

What is the impact of a national culture on the performance of construction labourers when observing decent work practice indicators in the construction project based industry of the UAE?

Answering the above question will help to improve the cultural behaviour of the construction labourers, the prevalent decent work practices and formulation of the effective temporary migration policy in a way that will benefit both the home and host countries of these migrant workers. This establishes a loop of identifying the decent work practices, investigating the cultural behaviour of the labourers when following these decent work indicators, then planning to raise the standard of the decent work practice indicators according to the cultural behaviour of the construction labourers in the UAE.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in two parts. Part I is presented in the format of a research paper, which summarises all the research papers included in the thesis, starting with the introductory chapter, the literature review, methodology, findings and publication summaries and a conclusion chapter. Part II of the research thesis includes all the four papers accepted for publication in international journals, as attachments to the thesis itself.

Table 1. Structure of the thesis.

PART I

Research paper summarising all the papers included here

1. INTRODUCTION

Background, research problem and research question

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Decent work practice indicators, Hofstede's national cultural dimensions, organizational cultural dimensions, project management dimensions, performance of the construction labourers

3. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research, narrative research, case study, observation research, interviews, data collection, data analysis

4. FINDINGS AND PUBLICATION SUMMARIES

Decent work practice indicators, national culture and performance of projects, identification of national culture in the context of decent work practice indicators, a multi-cultural perspective on improving the performance of labourers in the construction projects of UAE, an overview of the papers, individual papers, the author's contribution

5. CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical contribution, managerial contribution, validity and reliability, limitations and suggestions for future research

PART II

RESEARCH PAPERS

Paper No. 1

Decent work Practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE

Paper No. 2

Effects of Cultural Assimilation on the Performance of a Construction Project – Evidence From UAE

Paper No. 3

Benchmarking National Culture and Decent Work Practice Indicators in Project-Based Industry: Lessons from United Arab Emirates

Paper No. 4

Improving performance of labourers in the construction projects of UAE: a multi cultural perspective

2 Literature review

This chapter of the thesis exposes the research gap in the literature, which validates the study and makes it more relevant. This thesis revolves around four dimensions of decent work practice indicators, taking account of national cultures, performance and the construction project based industry of the UAE. Each of these dimensions of the study is discussed in turn as it arises in the thesis.

2.1 Decent work practice indicators and the construction industry of the UAE

The word “decent” refers to the need for workers to have an “acceptable” amount of “adequate” work and suitable working conditions (Anker *et al.* 2003). The official definition of decent work was given by the ILO’s general secretary in 1999 as follows: “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work and productive work within conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity” (Anker *et al.* 2002). The present author considers that decent work means conditions in which the able-bodied members of a family work decent hours (8 hours per day or 48 hours per week) and earn enough to lead a decent life, provide education for their children and save an appropriate amount for the future (Khan, 2013a). Decent work, however, is still unknown in many places and a vague construct however due to the present economic recession and the need for social justice in the wake of globalization; decent work has thus become more important (Bissom-Rapp, 2011). The reason for this uncertainty may also be that there is no universal definition of decent work and no such definition can be found in the literature, other than in the publications of the ILO. Bakhshi and Kerr (2008) pinpoint this problem: “Given the ambiguity surrounding the definition and scope of the labour standards, a universal agreement on a common list of labour standards simply does not exist”. International labour standards (ILS) are legal instruments drawn up by the ILO constituents (governments, employers and workers). Anker *et al.* (2002) provide a basis for a definition of decent work indicators as follows: what is wanted is “Easily understood phrases and descriptions based on our feeling that ILO decent work indicators should be easy to communicate to the person in the street”.

Decent work is a universal concept with equal importance in every workplace. However, as regards workers in a foreign country, where the protection of labour is a challenge, the following section provides history of migration to the Middle East.

2.1.1 Temporary construction labourers' migration to UAE

The purpose of international labour migration to the Middle East has been to find opportunities to work and to earn better wages (Okruhlik and Conge, 1997). Ever since the oil boom signalled by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the 1970s and early 1980s (Zahlan, 1984 and Wells, 1996), the UAE has been a destination for migrant construction labourers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These temporary migrants have been a source of remittances to their home countries. Weiner (1982) mentions that in the 1970s migrants from the state of Kerala remitted \$500 million, enough to cancel the trade deficit for India. This shows how the Middle East has contributed to the economies of such south Asian countries as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Indeed, international labour migration has been going on for centuries. In the 20th century 350,000 Irish workers migrated to the British mainland between 1945 and 1959 (Castles and Miller, 1993). Germany received migration construction labourers from Turkey and Yugoslavia, France from the Maghreb. In Singapore, more than 70% of the construction labourers were from Malaysia (Weiner, 1982). Humblet *et al.* (2001) mention that 80% of all the foreign jobs from Asia to the Gulf are handled by private agents. Western companies also ventured to the GCC in the early 1970s due to the oil boom in the region, as these companies were facing a downturn in the West (Zahlan, 1984).

Weiner (1982) states that the migrant population has exceeded the indigenous population of the UAE ever since the birth of this country on 2nd December 1973. In 1975 out of a total population of 656,000, 202,000 were Pakistanis, 107,000 were Indians and approximately 120,000 were Arab migrants. In 2007, the population of UAE nationals was 864,000 against a population of 3.62 million expatriates. The leading construction companies used to pay \$6 to \$ 7 a day along with free accommodation and medical care, providing food at a subsidized rate or at no cost within the labourers' accommodation. Weiner (1982) finds that each of the construction labourers could send home \$100 per month, which was several times more than the amount these labourers could earn in India. Therefore the UAE has remained the favourite destination of migrant construction labourers who want to send money to their home countries.

International labour migration works on a demand and supply basis. Wells (1996) describes how, in the Middle East employers would visit different countries when they needed labourers, but that when the demand was low and supply was high, the employers would not even pay the agent's fees. Wells says that in the Philippines the auctioning of visas for jobs in Taiwan became common. The jobs

thus offered were also not confirmed and fictitious appointments were made which were revealed to the labourers only after their arrival in Taiwan. Zachariah *et al.* (2003) and Jureidini (2003) maintain that once the labourers were bound by a contract, they were not allowed to leave their employer and change to another. Zachariah *et al.* (2003) claim that, according to the UAE law, all the costs, including return tickets, were to be borne by the employers and stipulated in the contract. But in the employment of Indian construction labourers, about 40% of employers did not follow this requirement. The authors reveal that the sponsorship scheme was not effective: the labourers had to pay a huge migration debt for their jobs. Once in the UAE they found no job awaiting them and were left to the mercy of their employers, having surrendered their passports to their sponsor, even though the UAE law forbids confiscation of the passport. It also forbids employees to take work from anyone outside their employment. Shah (2005) tells us that 600,000 fictitious appointments were set up and in 2004 the UAE imposed a total of 11,600 bans on the violators of the visa rule. This reflects the efforts of the UAE to protect the rights of its migrant construction labourers. Indian visas were sold for as much as Arab Emirates Dirham (AED) 7,500 (\$2,042). Shah suggests modifying the sponsorship scheme in the UAE and greater awareness among construction labourers from their countries of origin. Next is considered importance of the construction industry of the UAE in attracting construction labourers to migrate there.

2.1.2 Construction industry of the UAE

International construction projects have been defined by Chan and Suen (2005) as “projects in which the contractor, the lead consultant or the employer is not of the same domicile, and at least one of them is working outside his or her country of origin”. The construction industry of the UAE is part of the Gulf construction boom. Gorgenlander (2011) shows that out of 125,000 construction cranes in the world, over 30,000 (over 24%) were working in the Gulf region. The UAE’s construction industry has a very high ranking when it comes to construction technology, coming 8th in the world; it leaves Germany in 16th place and is little below USA, which stands 5th in the world. Construction labourers are naturally attracted by the extensive construction activities in the UAE. As noted above, the UAE has been the favourite destination for many construction labourers ever since the birth of this country. The momentum to the construction sector of the economy has been rising continuously. Construction contributes 14% of the GDP, but about 50% of the projects are delayed, for various reasons (Faridi and El Sayegh, 2006).

Vine (2009b) mentions that the UAE's population growth from 1995 to 2005 ran at 74.8%, which was the highest in the world. The construction sector in 2007 alone grew by 25.6% over the previous year. In 2007, Dubai's Strategic Plan 2015 was announced, committing this country alone to AED 80 billion expenditure on infrastructure by 2020 (Gorgenlander, 2011). Construction labourers from South Asia are understandably attracted by the extensive construction activities in the UAE. The pervasive unemployment in their countries of origin and their desire for financial stability increases the appeal of the UAE, the hub of construction activity in the region, in the minds of these labourers.

2.1.3 Studies on decent work

Although decent work is a new concept, studies have covered various aspects of it. Decent work includes all areas of the economy and covers all kind of work, for example, the formal economy, unregulated workers, self-employment and home workers (Ghai, 2003). The purpose of identifying decent work indicators is to measure the movement of all nations towards the improvement of decent work practices. These indicators have been listed as employment opportunities, remunerative employment, suitable conditions of work and social security, which includes provision for future contingencies such as unemployment, sickness, maternity, disability and destitution in old age. Ghai (2003) names three types of social security: (1) primary health and education; (2) sickness, disability and death; and (3) against natural causes such as famine, draught, and earthquake. ILO studies are thought to have established the benchmark for decent work studies. Anker *et al.* (2002) suggest that the key indicators are Employment Opportunities, Unacceptable Work, Adequate Earnings and Productive Work, Decent Hours, Stability and Security of Work, Balancing Work and Family Life, Fair Treatment in Employment, Safe Work, Social Protection, Social Dialogue and Workplace Relations and the Socio-Economic Context are measured in their protection of these indicators.

One definition of decent work has been in use since 1999, when it was first introduced by the ILO. However decent work practices have been needed ever since the time when work was created.

One aspect of decent work practices is studied by Mearns and Yule (2009) in the Swedish and Danish construction industries, but this only one part of the whole. Proverbs *et al.* (1999) deal with the impact of overwork in shifts of longer than 10 hours on the performance of the construction labourers. Ailabouni *et al.* (2009) contend that, besides supervision, labour wages, social factors and harsh weather

conditions affect the performance of construction labourers. Thomas (1992) has studied the impact of over-work on the performance of construction labourers in the USA. Butcher and Sheehan (2010) consider health, safety and environmental care as indicators, since site accidents result in economic losses and social damage.

Decent work studies have covered various aspects of decent work and different nationalities. Frost (2004) has studied decent work practices in the construction industry of Hong Kong. The study reveals harsh working conditions, poor wages and in some cases non-payment of wages to these Nepalese construction labourers. They were required to buy their own personal protective equipment (PPE) and many failed to do so; about 54% of the construction labourers mentioned that they did not have toilet facilities; and 47% commented that they were not treated well by their management. The result of such work practices is that the labourers engaged in criminal activities, which could affect both the construction labourers, with their families, and the home and host countries.

Similarly, Torres *et al.* (2013) conducted study in a Western context. This study reveals that in Austin, a city in Texas, USA, which was named 'the town of cranes' in 2008, wages were low; construction labourers were not paid overtime or the minimum wage set out by the regulations; and were denied mandatory breaks during work. Medical insurance was also not provided to 76% of the surveyed employees. The construction labourers worked 70 hours a week and instances were found when labourers were paid neither for the work done nor for overtime. Wage theft was also possible in that some construction labourers were not paid the minimum wage, or were paid less than the promised wage, or no wage at all (Bobo, 2011), which is a criminal act according to the Texas penal code. The research revealed that 87% of the labourers did not receive paid sick leave and 77% of them were not given paid annual leaves. The impact of these work practices on the migrant Latin American construction labourers showed up as a higher number of fatalities in the construction industry than in any other industry. The construction labourers suffered sunstroke, lacking proper drinking water arrangements and breaks, which ultimately affected their performance and that of the project. If they were injured, the construction labourers were not covered by insurance, nor paid compensation by their employers, resulting in longer recovery periods, which in turn affected the overall performance of the construction labourers and the project itself. The management history of the construction labourers shows the need to draw attention to the importance of the workers' welfare if the construction projects were to succeed.

Decent work has been on the agenda of some international organizations ever since the launch of the concept in 1999. The objective of achieving specific decent

work was spelled out at Busan, South Korea, in 2006. In 2007, in Addis Ababa, the Arab and African countries committed themselves to the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) to accelerate progress in attaining the agreed international development goals. The constituents also committed themselves to the African Decent Work Decade for the period 2007–2015. The 35th Arab Labour Organization Conference (February 2008) called for the establishment of a Unified Arab Labour Law, Arab Tripartite Forum and an Arab Labour Market Information System. Jobs and Decent Work are the primary social demand in the Arab World. The objectives of decent work are specific to each national context, and their particular opportunities and constraints. The Arab world also has a problem with low productivity, besides that of the Working Poor (the number of those in employment but living on less than \$1.25 a day and under employment) (Renwick, 2011); these two are also considered indicators of a deficiency of decent work. The informal economy has a problem with low productivity and a serious deficiency of decent work.

Renwick (2011), in his study of millennium development goals of eradicating poverty and hunger and providing decent work in Southeast Asia, says that employment and access to decent work are vital for reducing hunger and poverty, now that world poverty is forecast to reach 15% by 2015. This shows the global aspect of decent work in helping to reduce poverty and improving the standard of living for workers. Mohamed *et al.* (2009), in their study of decent work practice indicators of safe work in the construction industry of Pakistan reveal that the workers are well aware of the risks associated with their jobs and hence have an environment of high uncertainty avoidance. The labourers show collectivistic and feministic behaviour at work, which encourages positive safety behaviour. In China, Hannan (2008) focused on the need to provide full wages on time to migrant rural workers. The study was based on the migration of the workers from the rural areas of China to urban areas. The study suggests improvements in the wages and working conditions of migrant workers in China.

Amjad and Havers (2007) study decent work in Iraq, with special emphasis on social security, because this could bring social cohesion to a war-torn country. This social security took the form of insurance, pension, old-age benefit, invalidity benefit (the long-term loss of at least 35% of a person's working capacity would entitle him/her to an invalidity benefit), survivor benefit, sickness and maternity benefit, work injury, common provision, and emergency payment. The above studies have shown various aspects of decent work indicators in different sectors at different levels in the countries under review.

The ILO under its Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) covers the implementation of this programme for member countries. For China, the DWCP's goals for 2006–2010 are maintained in the 11th five-year Programme for Labour and Social Security, 2006–2010. The focus of the plan covering the DWCP includes Employment, Social Security, Old-age insurance, Vocational Training, Labour Relations and a Legal Framework. The DWCP priority areas include (1) promoting employment; (2) promoting labour relations, institutes and laws; (3) the extension and improvement of social protection; and (4) promoting workers' rights and fundamental labour principles and rights.

Siphambe and Tlhobogang (2010) advise participation in unions for the sake of collective bargaining power to fix the minimum wage and thus avoid the exploitation of labour. Moreover, social networks helps in the use of manpower, but this means that those who are isolated or do not have a social network are at high risk of some form of labour under-use (Baum and Mitchell, 2011).

The ILO (2008a) says that decent work should include (1) Labour Standards and Fundamental Principles and Right at Work; (2) employment opportunities; (3) Social Protection; and (4) Social Dialogue. Decent work in itself can be a productive factor which contributes to overall development. A low wage rate is defined as the percentage of the employed population whose average hourly earnings are below half of the median of the distribution of an absolute minimum, or whichever is greater.

Rodgers and Kuptsch (2008) say that more research work could also be done in the area of labour migration, in particular on short term migration and its implications for individuals, families and communities. In the light of new forms of employment, it is not enough when assessing the capacity for representation to look at quantitative data such as unique membership. Therefore this thesis takes a fresh look at decent work practice indicators in the construction industry of the UAE.

2.1.4 Synthesis of ILO conventions and recommendations

The ILO is responsible for providing policies on labour issues in the form of conventions and recommendations. The difference between the conventions and the recommendations is that the conventions are binding obligations, whereas the recommendations are not. There have been a number of ILO conventions and recommendations concerning labour issues. However, some of the relevant International Labour Standards (ILS) (ILO, 2011a and Silva, 2004) are given in the following table:

Table 2. International conventions and recommendations on labour.

S.No.	No.	Year	Convention/Recommendation
1	29	1930	Forced Labour Convention
2	63	1938	Convention Concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work
3	81	1947	Labour Inspection Convention
4	91	1951	The Collective Agreements Recommendations
5	95	1949	Protection of Wages Recommendation
6	97	1949	Migration for Employment Convention (Revised)
7	98	1949	Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention
8	90	1951	Equal Remuneration Recommendation
9	100	1951	Equal Remuneration Convention
10	102	1952	Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention
11	117	1962	Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention
12	122	1964	Employment Policy Convention
13	129	1969	Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention
14	132	1970	Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised)
15	142	1975	Human Resource Development Convention
16	143	1975	Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention
17	144	1976	Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention
18	150	1978	Labour Administration Convention
19	154	1981	Collective Bargaining Convention
20	155	1981	Occupational Safety and Health Convention
21	156	1981	Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention
22	161	1981	Occupational Health Services Convention
23	160	1985	Labour Statistics Convention
24	163	1981	The Collective Bargaining Recommendation
25	167	1988	Safety and Health in Construction Convention
26	187	2006	Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention
27		1990	International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families

Convention No. 81, 122, 129 and 144 are considered the priority conventions (ILO, 2009a).

The implementation of decent work is being carried out by the ILO under the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). Among the Arab states, Lebanon, Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic, UAE and Yemen have labour administration and inspection targets which are technically coordinated with the ILO and are aimed

at improving inspection methods, developing data collection systems and training programmes and close participation of the social partners when reviewing labour inspection laws. At the ILO, the DWCP is studied by a Conference Committee which had a technical Committee preparing reports for the Conference. This technical committee later became the Committee of Experts, which is now a separate supervisory organ within the ILO in addition to the Conference Committee. The Committee of Experts is appointed by the Governing Body on the recommendations of the Director General. This committee helps member countries to implement the Conventions and Recommendation and provides information and reports on the measures taken by the member countries. It also examines reports submitted by the member countries and provides technical assistance in implementing the standards.

Bakhshi and Kerr (2008) find, however, that “unlike the WTO and other trade agreements, the ILO has no enforcement mechanism”. Moreover, Bakhshi and Kerr (2008) note that “the labour standards set for labour are conditioned by national circumstances such as the level of development, political ideology, social conditions and cultural norms”. Similarly the ILO (2008b) report suggests that decent work is essentially a national matter and should be the prerogative of national constituents to define the concept according to their specific context and priorities. Therefore the acceptance of decent work practices is conditional upon a country’s circumstances. Nevertheless, the UAE has been coordinating with the ILO on matters related to the formulation and implementation of the policy of having decent work indicators.

2.1.5 UAE and international conventions

The UAE has been active in ratifying the ILO conventions according to its requirements. The UAE ratified the Labour Inspection Convention 1947 (No. 81) in 1982; however, it has not ratified either the ILO convention on Migration for Employment 1949 (No. 97), or the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949, (No. 98) nor that on Migrant Workers, 1975 (No. 143), nor the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, 1990. The important international labour standards (ILS) include the Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Rights to Organize 1948, No. 87, the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949, No. 98 and the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, 1990. The home countries of some migrant

workers – from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China – have ratified neither the ILO Convention on Migration for Employment 1949, No. 97 nor that on Migrant Workers 1975, No. 143 (ILO, 2010). Nevertheless the UAE, on 21 and 22 January 2008 held the “Abu Dhabi Dialogue” (Abu Dhabi Dialogue, 2008), which aimed at discussing the need to protect migrant workers during the whole process of migration from the home to the host country, including their rehabilitation on their return to their country of origin. It was attended by the GCC, Yemen, Malaysia and Singapore. At the United Nations General Assembly (2010), 2008–2017 was declared the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017): activities and collaborative initiatives”. Employment and decent work conditions have often been considered one route to poverty eradication in the wake of the present economic recession.

ILO (2011a) highlights the efforts made by the UAE in addressing labour issues. It reports that three further departments have been set up, namely, the Workers Guidance Administration, Occupational Health and Safety Administration and Labour Inspection Administration. The Workers Guidance department informs workers through booklets, newsletters, symposiums and through the media. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration department is responsible for developing plans and standards, issuing technical instructions, monitoring the implementation of the health and safety rules in the workplace and accommodation within the country. Finally the Labour Inspection Administration department is responsible for the way that the Federal Labour Law is implemented, prepares reports and statistics, regulates inspections and helps inspectors to perform their duties according to the requirement of the convention.

Three offices for labour relations have been established in the local courts in addition to the offices in the Abu Dhabi and Dubai courts. For effective relations between the judiciary and the labour department, a committee has been set up to coordinate the work of the Ministry of Labour and the judicial department in Abu Dhabi. The implementation of an electronic salary payment system is reported, ensuring timely and full salary disbursement, maintaining confidentiality in cases of complaints over the non payment of salary. The inspector verifies the claim and acts accordingly. The report mentions that, according to order No. 367 issued by the under-secretary of the Ministry of Labour, confiscation of passports without judicial order is prohibited. Nevertheless Vine (2009b) mention that in 2007, a total of 122,000 facilities were inspected by the Ministry of Labour, resulting in 8588 penalties for the non-observance of working conditions and workers’ rights. In the Protection of the Rights of the Workers in the UAE Annual Report (2007), the

UAE government showed its commitment to the health and safety of labourers by passing and enforcing these laws for their protection (Gorgenlander, 2011).

Beaudonnet (2005), cited in Gravel and Delpech (2008), comments that the incorporation of international labour standards into national law systems is rare. However, not only has national jurisdiction recently been given to international laws, but these laws also refer to local standards for people's protection and the maintenance of a decent work culture. In one case, a legal application was lodged against the government of France before the ILO by the Confédération Générale du Travail Force ouvrière (CGT-FO), one of France's largest trade unions. After referring to the Tripartite Committee, the case went to the Committee on Freedom of Association. The labour court decided in favour of the labourers and the decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal in Paris. After the court decision, the French government withdrew the law. Similarly the courts upheld international instruments on labour rights in Canada. This shows that not only have local courts started to accept international instruments, but international institutions also make reference to national laws.

The ILO (2007) report suggests that the ILO needed to reaffirm its status as the institution which provided clear and informative analysis of the world of work in all its aspects. The report further says that more than half of the ILO Conventions and Recommendations were related to Social Protection issues. Here there are three major divisions, each the province of a group of workers: (1) Social Security; (2) Conditions of Work and Employment and (3) Safety and Health at Work and the Environment. The report further calls for measuring the social indicators both qualitatively and quantitatively and claims a consensus on the view that social protection leads to decent work practices, productivity and development.

Rodgers and Kuptsch (2008) say that the globalization of the labour market is much faster than the globalization of labour protection. Globalization and the role of international organization in protecting the rights of labourers, with their limitations, are discussed in the following sections.

2.1.6 Globalization and decent work

Many efforts have been made to connect trade with fundamental rights. Bakhshi and Kerr (2008) mention that at a WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha in 2001, the European Union tried to connect trade to fundamental human rights but the developing countries would not agree because of the differences in per capita income and the political, social and cultural conditions of the member countries.

Moreover, these countries claimed that this was a matter of national sovereignty and should be decided by individual states. The authors believe that the Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining depends upon the level of development. The labour unions tend to play a role which undermines personal freedom when entry or exit from a trade union is restricted; wages are normally determined by the trade unions irrespective of the competency of the individual. Swinnerton (1997) also asserts that trade unions tend to act as monopolists working for a small group of people and thus opposed to individual freedom for many; at the same time, a large proportion of the workers are excluded, which contravenes the principle of perfect competition. This shows that the practice of trade unions can work against the freedom of association and that restrictions based on current labour conditions may turn out to be non-productive for the labourers themselves.

The ILO is not in favour of allowing implementation of labour standards as a protectionist measure (ILO, 1998). The OECD (1996), cited in Bakhshi and Kerr (2008), give as the reason for not connecting with labour standards and labour rules is that either the labour standards did not meet the WTO's technical requirements or the ILO does not have an enforcement mechanism. Bagwell and Staiger (1998) observe that if a country forbids market access according to the WTO requirements, by lowering labour standards, the country should provide trade concessions until it has reached the required level to access the market. This may not be helpful to the labourers, but benefits the developed countries which consume the finished goods. Maskus (1997) suspects that protectionist measures may have a negative impact on the humanitarian concern for the labourers and therefore it may not be advisable to establish a relationship between WTO rules and labour standards. Bakhshi and Kerr (2008) endorse the view that collective bargaining limits individual freedom and therefore find it difficult to establish that collective bargaining is a fundamental freedom. Therefore Rodgers and Kuptsch (2008) conclude that the focus should be on the protection of persons rather than jobs. Moreover, the ILO's Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944 states that "labour is not a commodity" (ILO, 2009a). The ILO (1998) went on to report that the Asian crisis of 1997 shows that social dialogue and social protection may even help workers in an economic crisis.

Stiglitz's view (2009) is that the slogan of "Buy American" is protectionism and disobeys WTO rules. While governments can bail out big companies in the USA, companies in the developing world have no level playing field. A fall in wages is a sign of depression and aggregate demand is lost in the subsequent deflation. Moreover, subordinating the social policies to economic policies is unlikely to

change people's lives (Rodgers and Kuptch, 2008). Stiglitz (2002) suggests that the most realistic definition of minimum protection is one generated from the bottom up. A voice must be given to those who live in zero protection situations.

The awareness of decent work and its role in removing global poverty has increased. Protecting the rights of labourers helps to secure human dignity (Bisom-Rapp *et al.* 2011). But this is effectively achieved partly through identifying the culture of the labourers.

2.2 Hofstede's national cultural framework

Culture is a complex construct. Many studies have sought to analyse its different aspects. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), cited in Macnamara (2004) identify over 300 definitions of culture. Culture is manifested only through actions and "If culture is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information, as anthropologist Edward Hall maintains, then communication is the foundation of the culture" (Harris, 2003) and culture and communication are inextricably intertwined (Loosemore and Muslmani, 1999). Culture is also "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Ralston *et al.* (1993) define culture as those beliefs and values that are widely shared in a specific society at a particular point in time. This definition adds not only context, but also a time line to cultural study. Rosenblatt (2011) says that culture is seen in interpretative schemes or codified patterns of meaning, which inform or constrain behaviour. Schwartz (1994a) defines values as beliefs and desirable goals transcending specifications and serving as standards to guide the selection and exclusion of behaviour, people and events, while Hofstede (1981) defines values as broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. These are all invisible aspects of culture manifested through cultural practices (Hofstede, 2001). In simple terms, culture means "things [that] are done around here" (Drennan, 1992). Finally Triandis *et al.* (1986) define culture "as a fuzzy, difficult to define construct". Mehta and Belk (1991) define assimilation as 'being absorbed into the dominant culture'. Culture plays an important part in the management of construction projects. Cultural differences have been observed to be the reason for business failures (Ricks, 1993, cited in Steenkamp, 2001) and they are a challenge in international construction projects where cultural diversity is unavoidable (Loosemore and Muslmani, 1999). Chan and Suen (2005) find that in international joint venture projects, more than 60% of the conflicts are due to unfamiliarity with the local cultural conditions.

This thesis is based in part on the national culture study by Geert Hofstede, who pioneered five national cultural dimensions: the Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism (IND), Masculinity (MAS), the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) and Long Term Orientation (LTO).

The Power Distance Index (PDI) has been defined by Hofstede *et al.* (2010) as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. A high power distance society accepts wide differences in organizations and in its organizations employees show a great deal of respect for those in authority. Titles, rank and status carry great importance.

Individualism (IND) is found, according to Hofstede (1994a), in “societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty”. Individualism is considered egoistic in China (Lu, 2003) and is therefore unwanted.

Masculinity (MAS) has been defined by Hofstede (1994a) as pertaining “to societies in which social gender roles are clear; feminine pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap”. Masculinity in this sense “is possible where the emphasis is more on achievement and fighting than on caring and compromise” (Hofstede *et al.* 2002).

The Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) is “defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations” (Hofstede, 1994a) and it is related to the stress produced by uncertainty. It describes how people within a country cope with the fact that the future is unknown (Prasnikar *et al.* 2008).

Long Term Orientation (LTO) is defined as the dimension which “focuses on the degree to which a society embraces a long-term commitment to traditional values” (Sandhu *et al.* 2009).

But it should be remembered that culture is also subject to change. China, even more certainly than Russia, is in an apparent transition to capitalism, as Ralston *et al.* (1997) note, citing Youzhou *et al.* (1996). China in its ongoing economic development is the latest subject of the topical discussions on cultural norms.

The need to study national cultures dates back to works by Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), Margaret Mead (1901–1978), Alex Inkeles and Daniel Levinson (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). In addition, Ng *et al.* (2007) maintain that the basis of

Hofstede’s study was an earlier study by Kluckhohn (1951). Nevertheless it was Hofstede who pioneered national cultural studies by conducting an employee attitude survey from 1967 to 1973 at the IBM, which was published as ‘Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values’. These national cultural dimensions include IND, MAS, PDI and UAI. About a decade later, the collaboration of Michael Bond with Hofstede (Hofstede, 1991) resulted in a fifth dimension, LTO in 1991, which was included in *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. The data were collected on the basis of the Chinese Value Survey (CVS), whose questionnaire was prepared by Chinese and Taiwanese and was administrated in 23 countries to 50 men and 50 women (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). Ralston *et al.* (1997) discuss the basis of Hofstede’s LTO, which uses Buddhism and Taoism in surveying Eastern culture and the Judeo-Christian religion in surveying the West, claiming that Western culture focuses on the good of the individual, as opposed to Eastern, which calls for the good of the group. The latest in the list of the national cultural dimensions is Indulgence versus Restraint, a result of collaboration between Michael Minkov, Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede which is included in the third edition of ‘*Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*’ (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). The following table presents the national culture score of the nations which the construction labourers left for their journey to the UAE:

Table 3. National culture dimension (adopted from Hofstede *et al.* 2010).

Country	National Culture Dimension				
	PDI	IND	MAS	UAI	LTO
India	77	48	56	40	51
Pakistan	55	14	50	70	50
Bangladesh	80	20	55	60	47
China	80	20	66	30	87
Arab Countries	80	38	53	68	36 (KSA)

Hofstede’s study was “force-fitted” into the distinctive categories of low, medium and high (Jacob, 2005), which could have resulted from the questionnaire method of data collection. Nevertheless his study has been used extensively in the research literature and for referencing purposes. His IBM study and subsequent work are undeniably the most prominent among cultural studies in this context (Scheffknecht, 2011). Eskildsen *et al.* (2010) have studied job satisfaction using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory and Jacob (2005) looks at the impact of

culture on project managers in different cultures. Migliore (2011) establishes a relationship between the personality traits of USA and Indian employees. The study shows differences in scores between the USA and India, when compared to Hofstede’s 1980 IBM and online panel data. The study shows change in the cultural values of the nations in a period of over three decades with respect to reduction in power distance due to ‘revolution in information and communication technologies; the reduction in the LTO score was attributed to the economic development in India and the willingness of employees to accept the late gratification of their material, social and emotional needs. Pheng and Yuquan (2002) study the national culture of Singapore-based construction companies operating in China. A summary of the scores of the Chinese and Singaporean project management teams in their Chinese projects is presented in the table below, comparing it with that of Hofstede *et al.* (2010).

Table 4. Comparison of China and Singapore national culture score.

Country	PDI	UAI	IND	MAS	LTO
Singapore	114/74	24/8	53/20	6/48	72
China	64/80	35/30	18/20	34/66	87

Note: The score is presented as Pheng and Yuquan (2002)/Hofstede *et al.* (2010). The LTO score of Hofstede *et al.* (2010) is presented.

The above score shows a difference in the national culture of the Chinese and Singaporean project management teams and a difference in the national culture score when compared with those in the study of Hofstede *et al.* (2010). This shows that there has been a considerable change in the national culture of the countries in a particular region. Hofstede’s work on national culture is, however, the most often cited in the literature. Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) cited in Steenkamp (2001) tell us that Hofstede’s study had 1101 citations during 1987–1997.

But Hofstede’s work has attracted some criticism as well. Blodgett *et al.* (2008) cite Kagitcibasi (1994), who finds limitations in Hofstede’s (1980) research framework since it is not applicable at the individual level. Harvey (1997) says that Hofstede’s study is a good indicator and representation of cultural values but not of practice. Ng *et al.* (2007) find that the results of Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1994a) were not congruent, since both the studies took individual and collective perspectives respectively. Jacob (2005) reports that Hofstede (1980) criticized Maslow’s hierarchy of needs construct and also (1991) criticized McClelland (1987) for maintaining a particularistic

view, but both studies were carried out in an American context and are therefore not generalizable to other cultures. Likewise Jacob (2005) claims that Hofstede's individualistic and collectivistic procedure is confined and particularistic. However the individualistic/collectivistic national culture study by Hofstede was replicated by the GLOBE study by House *et al.* (2004). Finding these limitations in Hofstede's work and making it the subject of interest, other commentators have started to present their own national cultural frameworks. These frameworks are briefly discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Other comparative national cultural frameworks

With globalization already firmly established in international business, the need for understanding national culture became a priority for business researchers. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), Schwartz (1992) and the GLOBE study (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) by Robert J. House is one of the leading studies on national culture. These relevant frameworks are discussed below:

Schwartz (1994a)

Schwartz conducted his study in Eastern European countries (Steenkamp, 2001) whereas Hofstede *et al.* (2010) included data from a number of different regions, namely, central/south America, South/South East Europe, North/North West Europe and the Anglo-Saxon World, Central/East Europe and ex-Soviet, Muslim world/Middle East and Africa, East Africa and South East Asia. Schwartz (1994a) questions whether the IBM score represents the national score and whether the items which help to measure national cultural dimensions have the same meaning in different cultures. For example, does anxiety express uncertainty in all the countries? What are the characteristics of the particular country that adds up to uncertainty avoidance? Hofstede *et al.* (2010) suggest a stable rate of suicides as a result of anxiety in a society. Ng *et al.* (2007) compare Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1994a), claiming that the former derived his framework empirically and the latter developed his framework theoretically, but both scholars examine their framework empirically. The validity of Schwartz's work was supported by additional data on 35,000 respondents in 49 nations in Schwartz (1999), which obtained consistent cultural dimensions. Steenkamp (2001) questions whether the data collected in Hofstede's study during 1967–73 are still valid, if the time

perspective on a culture is missing. Similarly questions have also been raised on the validity and reliability of Hofstede's work by Fontaine and Richardson (2005) and Spector *et al.* (2001).

Schwartz's model (1994b) is based on the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) of 44,000 respondents from the 1980s, which includes both students and teachers, unlike Hofstede's model (1980), which includes only IBM employees – although he and his colleagues extended this in their study of 2010. Schwartz's work was inspired by that of Milton Rokeach (1973); initially his data was compared at the individual level and then national cultural dimensions were formed (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). Schwartz's dimensions are observed at the individual level, comprising the 10 values of Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulating, Self-direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity and Security; and also at the cultural level, comprising the seven values of Conservatism, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy, Egalitarianism and Harmony. Steenkamp (2001) studied the national cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1994a) and brought out the following four dimensions: Autonomy versus Collectivism, Egalitarianism versus Hierarchy, Mastery versus Nurturance and Uncertainty Avoidance. The only new dimension of Egalitarianism versus Hierarchy, found by Schwartz (1994a), differs from Hofstede's dimensions (Ng *et al.* 2007). Ng *et al.* (2007) concludes that although Hofstede and Schwartz frameworks resemble they were not congruent for import and export studies.

Both Schwartz (1994a) and Hofstede (1980) offer better cultural frameworks for predicting international trade patterns between countries (Ng *et al.* 2007), while the present work seeks to predict the cultural behaviour of labourers in the construction projects of the UAE.

Drogendijk and Slangen (2006) bring in Schwartz (1994a) when raising questions on Hofstede's study (1980) as being neither exhaustive nor relevant, since his work was not aimed at finding cultural dimensions and its data are outdated, having been collected between 1967 and 1973. However Drogendijk and Slangen (2006) conclude that it is premature to dismiss Hofstede's work as outdated or unrepresentative of national cultures and to extol Schwartz's framework as superior. Therefore both Hofstede and Schwartz cultural frameworks may still be considered representative for studying national cultures.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998)

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner are disciples of Hofstede. The framework of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) defines Universalism versus Particularism, Sequence versus Synchronization, Specificity versus Diffusion, Individualism versus Communitarianism, Inner Directed versus Outer Directed, Achieved Status versus Ascribed Status and Neutral versus Affective as national cultural dimensions. Jacob (2005) refers to Fons Trompenaars' work (1993) as based on the leadership style of short-term and long-term time horizons, but the author clarifies that Trompenaars' long-time horizon is not identical to the Long Term orientation of Hofstede (1980). However, he finds conflict between Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), on the one hand, and find limitations in Trompenaars' work, on the other, because of its particularistic context of the US army, which suggests that the dimensions may not be applicable elsewhere. Jacob (2005) and Jackson (2004) discuss the limitations of Trompenaars' research (1993) from the perspective of data collection by employing a questionnaire item on two management styles. Their data were collected through the non direct method of observation common in all the research studies conducted. Hofstede *et al.* (2010) criticises Fons Trompenaars (1993) due to the non empirical basis of national culture. In the peer review of the study by Peter Smith and Shuan Dugan of the 9000 respondents from 43 countries, they found two independent dimensions, which also correlated with the individualism-collectivism and power distance dimensions of Hofstede. In the latest work by Minkov and Hofstede (2011), the latest of the national cultural frameworks is presented by House *et al.* (2004) and discussed in Minkov and Hofstede (2011).

GLOBE Project

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavioural Effectiveness (GLOBE) project presented 9 national cultural dimensions, namely, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Societal Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism, Gender Egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Performance Orientation and Humane Orientation (House *et al.* 2004). Javidan *et al.* (2005) note that the project involved 62 societies around the world and more than 160 social scientists and management scholars. The data were collected using surveys of about 17,000 middle managers in the banking, food processing and telecommunication industries.

The GLOBE project focused on cultural practices by answering questions that began “What is...” or “What are ...” so as to probe deeper by finding the desires and aspirations of the managers in the data collected. The study aimed to develop empirically based theories to describe, develop and predict the impact of the specific cultural variables on leadership effectiveness and organizational culture in a society. Likewise, it is hoped that the present work will help to predict the behaviour of construction labourers in the UAE and its impact on their performance and the projects themselves. Each globe dimension has a double nature, as a cultural practice “as it is” and cultural values as they “should be” representing the desire for cultural change. The cultural framework, in response to that of Hofstede, is presented in Javidan *et al.* (2005) and is discussed here to represent the current state of cultural frameworks. The research represents “desire for” a low PDI in the South Asian and Middle Eastern countries, whereas the collectivistic “desire” was not different from what was “practised” (‘as is’) in these countries. Practices are descriptive perceptions by the employee of aspects of the work environment (Hofstede *et al.* 1993). The study signified the “desire for” higher uncertainty among the labourers than was “practiced” in both South Asian and Middle Eastern countries, where the actual practice of uncertainty avoidance was in the medium range. The Chinese also “desired” high uncertainty avoidance from the medium “practised” level, but not as high as the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries did. Similarly, the future orientation of the South Asian and Middle Eastern countries showed a “desire” for higher long term orientation than the present “practice” of medium level long term orientation.

The assertiveness “desire” of the South Asian countries was towards a higher kind than the present “practice” of medium level, whereas the Middle Eastern countries “desired” a shift from the medium level of the “practice” of assertiveness to low assertiveness. China did not show a “desire” from the middle level of assertiveness “practiced”; moreover their “practice” of assertiveness was not more than in the South Asian countries. In the performance orientation, South Asia and Middle East “desired” higher ambitions than the present practice of but their “desire” for higher performance was lower than that in South Asia and the Middle East. Javidan *et al.* (2005) conclude that it is not the difference in the culture which creates problem; but rather it is the management of the cultural difference that creates them. In Javidan *et al.* (2005), the South Asian countries comprised India, Indonesian, Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. The Middle Eastern countries were Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar and Turkey.

The detailed comparative account of the GLOBE study is given in Javidan *et al.* (2006), which was written in response to Hofstede (2006). Hofstede (2006)

was in turn responding to House *et al.* (2004). The research included both good measurement and theory, as advised by Hofstede (2001). Javidan *et al.* (2006) explain the difference between value and practice. People may hold views about something when they observe it in practice and people do not behave in a certain way as it should be. In the present thesis the behaviour of the construction labourers when decent work indicators in the UAE are followed is predicted.

The GLOBE project recommends additional study to find why values and practices are different for some dimensions (House *et al.* 2004). Javidan *et al.* (2006) say that none of the factors chosen by Hofstede (1991) resemble those in the study by House *et al.* (2004). These authors suggest that when two cultures come into contact it is important to know which cultural dimensions in the relationship are more important. Hofstede *et al.* (2010) criticise the GLOBE project for using very abstract questions for one item, namely, “In this society, most people lead highly structured lives with few unexpected events” which was even difficult for expert social scientists to answer. The literature review shows that although the words for the national cultural dimensions are the same in Hofstede’s and Schwartz’s studies, the difference in framing questions makes it difficult to compare the results. But then the researchers have a different understanding of cultures, on an analogy with animals. According to Bertrand Russell, an animal behaves differently in different situations and is observed differently by experts from different cultures, as Hofstede *et al.* (2010) remind us. The important thing for a researcher is to emerge from ethnocentrism in cultural studies and look at a culture in the frame of references of the people being studied and not from their own cultural frame of reference. A synthesis of the national cultural dimensions discussed above is presented in the table below:

Table 5. Synthesis of National Cultural Studies.

Hofstede (1980/1991)	Schwartz (1994b)	Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998)	GLOBE (House et al. 2004)
1. Individualism (IND)	1. Conservatism	1. Universalism vs. Particularism	1. Uncertainty Avoidance
2. Masculinity (MAS)	2. Hierarchy	2. Sequence vs. Synchronization	2. Power Distance
3. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)	3. Mastery	3. Specificity vs. Diffusion	3. Societal Collectivism
4. Power Distance Index (PDI)	4. Affective Autonomy	4. Individualism vs. Communitarianism	4. In-group Collectivism
5. Long Term Orientation (LTO)	5. Intellectual Autonomy	5. Inner Directed vs. Outer Directed	5. Gender Egalitarianism
	6. Egalitarianism	6. Achieved Status vs. Ascribed Status	6. Assertiveness
	7. Harmony	7. Neutral vs. Affective	7. Future Orientation
			8. Performance Orientation
			9. Human Orientation

Hybrid culture (Jacob, 2005) is another possibility when a migrant is working in a host culture. He may hold both his inherent culture and the culture of the migrant country, a mixed culture. This could affect the national culture of the migrant labourers in the migrant country and also when he returns. Reference is also made to the societal culture, which refers to values, beliefs and assumptions learned in early childhood from one's society (Li *et al.* 1999).

Hofstede's national culture has its basis in the learning of culture at an early stage of the life, usually in childhood; it progresses as one grows in one's particular culture. Chinese culture has been the centre of study since it instigated its open door policy in 1978, and in particular since 1993, when it first invited foreign direct investment (FDI), the second largest influx in the world per year (Li *et al.* 1999). Moreover, Bellabona and Spigarelli (2007) find that China's 'go global' policy, which was officially announced in 2000, encourages Chinese enterprises to enter into global competition through an active process of internationalisation. Herbert *et al.* (2007) also state that China is "currently the most active internationalising economy among the developing countries". This is evident in the presence of Chinese enterprises around the world which are responsible for constructing mega projects in Pakistan, the construction of marine structures in the Middle East and infrastructure in Africa. International activities are influenced by national cultures and globalization needs inter-cultural management (Neelankavil *et al.* 2000). However, it is not the convergence of cultural values, but the economic interest of the countries concerned which pulls them together (Prasnika *et al.* 2008), since

successful economic development comes through understanding the culture of the host country. Shi and Chen (2009) also comment that for a successful international business the cultural environment and strategies of organizations are the most important factors. These factors are better understood through cultural integration. Chen *et al.* (2004) also recommend cultural integration on the part of multinational organizations in order to attain international business objectives.

2.3 Organizational cultural dimension

Harris (2003) defines an organization as “a collection of human objectives, expectations and obligations that structures human roles”. Harris (2003) quotes Fred Luthans, who said “It is culture within the organization which is important because the culture dictates what a person learns and how he or she behaves”. The impact of culture on the performance of organizations has lately been of interest to students. Ouchi (1998) was the first person to identify the differences in organizational culture between American and Japanese companies. Pinto (2010) finds that organizational culture can affect the management of a project, as well as the cultural differences of the employees, their goals and the evaluation of their performance.

The national cultural dimensions, as identified by Hofstede, have been compared with the organizational cultural dimensions proposed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) and Andre Laurent (1978) cited in Harris (2003) and Hofstede *et al.* (1990). The dimensions of organizational culture identified by Cameron and Quinn (2011) include adhocracy, clan, market and hierarchy.

Adhocracy reflects the flexibility of an organization and its leadership role in the market because of its creativity and culture of entrepreneurship; clan culture is again a flexible culture, but is focused internally on team work, employee involvement and corporate commitment to employees; market culture is focused on productivity and competitiveness; hierarchy culture is focused on efficiency, coordination and adherence to rules and regulations.

Laurent (1978) identifies four organizational dimensions: the political arena, role formalization, level of authority and hierarchical relationships.

Hofstede *et al.* (1990), for their part, identify six dimensions of organizational culture. These are process oriented vs. result oriented; job oriented vs. employee oriented; professional oriented vs. parochial oriented; open system vs. closed; tight vs. loose control; and pragmatic vs. normative.

The process oriented dimension emphasises technical and bureaucratic culture, while the result oriented emphasises the end product; the job oriented dimension

concerns the performance of the employees, while being employee oriented means stressing the welfare of the employees; professional orientation deals with the culture of self-identification through profession, while parochial prioritises the driving of individual identity through the organization; open and closed systems relate to the system of internal/external communication and the ease with which outsiders are admitted into an organization; tight or loose control in an organization reflects its structure and controlling culture; and finally pragmatic vs. normative concerns rigid or flexible ways of dealing with customers and/or clients (Hofstede, 1995). A comparison of national and organizational cultural dimensions is presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6. Comparison of national and organization cultural studies.

National Cultural Dimensions Hofstede (1994a)	Organizational Cultural Dimensions		
	Cameron and Quinn (2011)	Laurent (1978)	Hofstede et al. (1990)
LTO	Adhocracy	Political Arena	Pragmatic vs. Normative
MAS	Market	Role Formalization	Process Oriented vs. Result Oriented Open System vs. Closed System
IND	Clan	Level of Authority	Job Oriented vs. Employee Oriented Tight Control vs. Loose Control
PDI/UAI	Hierarchy	Hierarchical Relationship	Professional Oriented vs. Parochial Oriented

The above table shows the development of a relationship between the national cultural dimensions and the organizational cultural dimensions. Adhocracy is related to risk and LTO, showing that entrepreneurial companies would consistently take risks and make progress in the market; clan is related to collectivism; the market, productivity and completion are related to masculinity with a focus on mass production and competitiveness; hierarchy is related to both UAI and PDI, where rules and procedures are defined and each member of an organization is required to work up to their personal limits.

Youngwook and Karadjov (2001) state that organizational cultures are influenced by the culture of the societies in which they operate. Therefore it is

important to note that organizations change their culture to suit the changing environment and requirements of the countries where they operate or execute projects. However, the present thesis focuses on the impact of national culture on the performance of construction labourers and projects in the UAE.

The project management discipline takes responsibility for managing the cultural differences in a construction project. The following section discusses the project management dimensions which signify the importance of research at the execution phase of a project, where most of the project budget is spent.

2.4 Project management dimensions

A project is defined as a “temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result” (PMI, 2008). Wysocki (2007) sees a project as a consequence of unique, complex and connected activities having one goal or purpose that must be completed by a specific date, within budget and according to specification. Execution is one of the processes of the project management, besides Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Control and Closing (PMI, 2008). A large proportion of a project’s budget and time is spent during the execution phase of the project, in which people and resources are coordinated and integrated. When a project is successful, “effective communication creates a bridge between diverse stakeholders involved in the project, connecting various cultural and organizational backgrounds, different levels of expertise and various perspectives and interests in the project execution or outcome” (PMI, 2008). Most of the project time is spent on planning and communication. Aware of the complexities of a project, Sandhu *et al.* (2009) identify the cultural aspects of the project management dimensions of time, cost, quality, integration, human resources, communication, scope, risk and procurement in effective management of the projects. This study suggests that “a successful project needs a high degree of uncertainty avoidance,” irrespective of cultural differences. Stare (2011) finds that the organizational culture is best exemplified by the position of the project manager in the company and the attitude of the employees to the project. Therefore the success of a project depends upon the management skills and attitude of the construction project management team. This aspect of the project management is also explored in this thesis using a case study approach as its research methodology in which a Chinese project management team was executing two construction projects.

Redding (2005) notes that there is a scarcity of management talent in China, due to the Cultural Revolution, decades of subsistence level living and the weight of

the historic organizational roles of control, compliance and implementation rather than initiative. Bellabona and Spigarelli (2007) also find that Chinese workers frequently lack managerial skills and experience, that they find obstacles in the way of talent and that they lack the skills of risk management. But it must be admitted that our understanding of the behaviour dynamics of multinational project teams in construction is still in its infancy (Stare, 2011).

Stare (2011) draws attention to the significant number of projects that exceed in time and cost and consequently affect performance. The author also refers to Brown (2008), who says that organizational culture has an impact on project performance. Culture has been defined as the 'attitude arising out of a person's professional, religious, class, educational, gender, age and other background (Turner and Simister, 2000) and Project Culture has been defined as a general attitude to projects in a business environment. The culture affects strategic planning and implementation, project management and everything else (Cleland, 1999). Stare (2011) concludes that performance depends upon the top management's attitude and on having clear priorities in projects. Management styles have been studied by Trompenaars, as discussed above; however, it is pertinent to say that it may not be reliable to use the same management framework in the West as in the East. Likewise, if either task oriented or relationship oriented styles are present in some cultures, as identified by Trompenaars, the management styles in other cultures could be different altogether, as in case of India where task nurturant management style, a combination of task and relationship styles, is prevalent (Sinha, 1984). Tan (2002) cited in Mearns and Yule (2009) discusses the convergence of values such that managers in Singapore hold more American than Chinese values. It is a result of globalization that personal values are becoming similar the world over. However, Ngowi (1997) studies the cultural background of project team members before taking them on because this helps in creating a conducive environment for the effective management of the project and enhances its performance. Chinese people adhere to two distinctive and all-embracing systems: Confucianism and Taoism. Chan and Suen (2005) state that Confucianism was born in 551 BC and Taoism was born in 571 BC. These philosophies are not religions but ways of life. Confucianism calls for self cultivation and the aspiration to be a gentleman, who submits to authority, respects family traditions and finds a middle and amicable way for harmonious relationships to proceed. Taoism stresses harmony with nature, resulting in happiness and peace. Chinese companies are expected to reflect these philosophical traditions in their cultural behaviour in the workplace and should be assessed by these criteria in their projects. However, with the influence of globalization, these cultural values may change.

After discussing cultural and project management dimensions, the following section considers the performance of the labourers and projects in the UAE.

2.5 Performance of construction labourers/projects

The performance of the construction projects depends on the performance of the employees involved in these projects. However little research has been found on the performance of construction labourers, in particular those in the construction industry of the UAE.

The assessing of performance management started in the 1990s: there were 3615 articles on performance measurement between 1994 and 1996 and there was one book on performance management was published every two weeks in the USA (Neely, 1999). Chan and Chan (2004) define project success as the set of principles or standards by which favourable outcomes can be achieved within a set specification. Yang *et al.* (2010) consider the performance of a project across the horizon at the project level, at the organizational level and at the stakeholder level. They find that the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) model can be used at all these levels of project performance. However, for each project the KPIs are different and should be considered specifically for one project at a time.

Baccarini (1999) defines project success as the achieving of the product and project management objectives. These include product objectives as their goal and purpose and project management objectives as input and output in the management of a project. Kerzner (2006) specifies these objectives of project success as cost, schedule and quality/performance. But the success or failure of a project goes beyond these criteria and depends on the type of project and the trade between triple constraints of time, cost and scope, together with quality. Collins and Baccarini (2004) study how reducing the cost and time of a project can be a success for the contractor and add to quality for the sponsor. For example, if the contractor is to engage his resources to aim at another project, the completion of the project on a fast track basis may affect the quality of the work, which could not be of much help to the sponsor to make savings as well. Therefore, the project management and its performance has unique dynamics specific to each construction project.

Lam *et al.* (2007) mention time, cost, health and safety, quality, functionality (technical performance), satisfaction and environmental satisfaction as the performance criteria for construction projects. Wang and Huang (2006) maintain that, for a Chinese project manager, personal relationship (*guanxi*) is more important than cost, duration and quality criteria. Guanxi refers to instrumental-personal ties

which can range from strong personal loyalties through to what some Westerners perceive as corrupt practices (Berrell and Wrathall, 2006). Therefore for a Chinese project manager, success lies in establishing relationships and securing more work, but not through corrupt practices. Pinto and Pinto (1991) recommend that measures for project success should also include project psychosocial outcomes, which refer to the satisfaction of interpersonal relations with the project team. These are termed 'soft measures'. Pocock *et al.* (1996) further suggest that the absence of legal claims should be included as an indicator of project success. Similarly, Shenhar *et al.* (1997) include preparing for the future as one of the success criteria for a project and Anderson and McAdam (2004) consider long term orientation among the criteria of success. From the above literature, it is clear that the performance of a construction project is different for different people; however the role of the employees in the performance of projects is everywhere acknowledged. The present thesis looks into the research gap of performance by construction labourers and projects in the UAE.

2.5.1 Performance through decent work practice indicators

Mearns and Yule (2009) stipulate that the safety of construction projects could be improved through safe engineering design, safety management and the behaviour of the construction team. The study claims that high PDI (power distance index) militates against the free flow of communication on safety; collectivism opposes divergent views on safety; a combination of high PDI, IND (individualism) and MAS (masculinity) is sympathetic to risk taking, which should be discouraged in construction projects when the safety of the employees is properly considered. Mohamed *et al.* (2009) have studied the decent work practice indicator of safe work in the context of the construction industry in Pakistan; considering Hofstede's framework of national culture (1994b). The study reveals that Pakistani construction labourers in Pakistan were aware of safety requirements (high UAI) and showed low MAS and collectivistic behaviour (low IND) in the workplace. This represents safety culture at the workplace. Safety in the workplace is a pre-requisite for the performance of construction projects. Haupt (2003) tells us that considering the importance of safety in the workplace and establishing a relationship between safety and performance at the workplace in the USA is still a challenging task. One element of improving the performance through safety implementation is to motivate the construction staff and this can be achieved through open communication between the staff.

Butcher and Sheehan (2010) cite studies on key performance indicators and the research undertaken on each of these indicators. Besides the iron triangle, it included health, safety and environment as one of the indicators. Site accidents result in both social problems and economic loss.

This thesis focuses on the impact of the culture of the construction labourers on their performance while following decent work practice indicators of safe work, besides 11 other decent work practice indicators, as noted in the introduction section.

Overwork affects the performance of the construction labourers. Proverbs *et al.* (1999) conclude that working beyond 40 hours a week reduces productivity and does not add to the speed in completing the work. Similarly, Thomas (1992) found that working 10 hours a day instead of 9 reduces the efficiency of the construction labourers by 4%. Similarly working 12 hours a day reduces their efficiency by 7%-8%. This has partly been due to the unsatisfactory role of the inspectors. The role of inspectors in many parts of the world is not effective and this is probably because they are understaffed, unequipped, untrained and underpaid (Liao and Chiang, 2012). Ailabouni *et al.* (2009) say that the difference in culture with different management styles, adequate and timely wages and payment for overtime worked and qualifications have an impact on the productivity and performance of construction labourers in the UAE. The literature review shows that decent work indicators and culture have an impact on the performance of the construction labourers and the project.

The following section shows the impact on the performance of the labourers in different cultural contexts of the East and the West.

2.5.2 Performance and decent work practice indicators in construction projects in the East and West

South Asia, in particular Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, has witnessed tremendous economic growth, which is reflected in their construction industry. Frost (2004) studies decent work practices in the construction industry of Hong Kong, a city of skyscrapers. He reveals that the Nepalese construction labourers, who are in a minority and have citizenship status, face harsh working conditions, poor wages and in some cases non-payment of their wages. The study revealed that only 50% of the labourers wear PPE (personal protective equipment) no doubt because these men were required to buy their own PPE but preferred not to. The result of these decent work practices is that the labourers enter into criminal activities, which affects the labourers and their families as well.

Frost's study focuses on minority construction labourers from one country; this thesis instead covers four countries with most of the construction labourers coming from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China.

In the West, Torres *et al.* (2013) revealed that there were labourers in the city of Austin who were injured during the construction works and were neither given free medical nor compensated for the injury. Breaks for rest were not provided during the work (41% of the construction labourers surveyed), there was no drinking water (27% of the construction labourers surveyed). The Austin construction industry failed to match its sustainable development target, due to the inappropriate work practices. In the absence of safe work practices, no wages according to the law, no breaks during the work, no medical compensation, no proper drinking water facilities, the construction labourers were more than usually liable to have accidents resulting in fatalities. The construction labourers suffered sunstrokes in the absence of proper drinking water arrangements and breaks, which ultimately affected the performance of the construction labourers and the projects. Torres *et al.* (2013) say that in the event the sub-contractor did not pay salaries to the labourers and consequently the labourers would walk off the site when they chose, causing the completion date of the project to be delayed and affecting the quality of work as well. This could earn the contractors a bad reputation. Moreover injured construction labourers were not covered by health insurance and were not compensated by their employers, resulting in longer recovery periods affecting the performance of the construction labourers and the projects. The practice of these decent work indicators would have had both economic and social implications for the construction labourers. Torres *et al.* (2013) suggests improvements in the Austin construction industry by including 10–15 minutes break after each 4 hours of work. The study considered a leap towards neoliberalism based on the research action on the ground, rather than “from above”. This thesis also considers decent work practices and the national culture in action through the eyes of the construction labourers in the UAE. The study provides a practice-based context to cultural study through firsthand observational research as seen through the eyes of the labourers themselves.

2.5.3 Project performance measurement

In the wake of globalization, construction projects have been handled by project team members of different nationalities. These multi-cultural project team members possess different skills with the common purpose of improving the

performance of the project and making it successful. However, determining construction performance is a complex task and project construction performance is different for different people (Lam *et al.* 2007 and Chan and Chan, 2004), as discussed earlier. For example the construction of a port may need a triple constraint of time as the most important concern for the upcoming strategic business need. Conversely, for a hotel construction aesthetic appearance may be more important and thus like strength and promptness for a port construction. But hotel managements also prefer maintenance work to take place in the off peak season so as to seize business opportunities in the peak season. Moreover the performance of a construction project in the eyes of a client could depend on time (and quality) as a performance indicator and another contractor may see savings as the key indicator for the performance of a project. Therefore the performance and success criteria of a project are different for different people in the construction industry. Khan (2013 b) finds that the culture affects the performance of the international construction projects in the UAE. But a more inward and grounded approach is to concede that the performance of the project is affected by the performance of the construction labourers, the people who do the work of construction. Therefore there has been a shift towards employee satisfaction, health and safety, and environmental concerns, which directly affect the performance of the construction labourers, besides other decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the people engaged in the construction projects. Performance of the construction labourers in this thesis is measured through their economic, social and environmental impact while following the decent work practice indicators in a cultural context. This will, it is hoped, help in future to manage cultural impacts with increased awareness and to improve decent work practice indicators more effectively.

Project performance measurement is defined as the setting of parameters and their achievement. Neely *et al.* (2002) define performance measurement as the process of quantifying the efficiency and effectiveness of past actions in terms of parameters. Various models have been considered for the measurement of performance, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), the Balanced Score Card (BSC) and Key Performance Indicator (KPI). Bassioni *et al.* (2004) discuss measuring the performance of the construction projects in both financial and non financial terms. Mohamed (2003) uses Balance Score Card (BSC) for the development of construction safety performance indicators. However, with the increasing emphasis on human resources and corporate social responsibility (CSR), there is an increasing focus on client satisfaction, business,

health and safety and environment as parameters for construction performance (Yu *et al.* 2007), which ultimately leads to employee satisfaction. Lam *et al.* (2007) define project success as the degree to which project goals and expectations are met. The study recommends looking into the social aspects of the projects besides their economic and technological performance. Pinto and Pinto (1991) cited in Chan and Chan (2004) call for the satisfaction of the participants or the stakeholders in terms of their soft values. Similarly, Lin and Shen (2007) consider the environment, health and safety, human resources and participants' satisfaction as parameters for the project performance.

The emphasis on employee satisfaction for the success of a construction project is due to the impact of employee satisfaction on performance and productivity. Poor working conditions contribute to low productivity; high labour standards contribute to high productivity (Silva, 2004). Aziz and Najib (2010) and Cooke (2000) consider that performance encompasses the concepts of productivity, efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness. Aziz and Najib (2010) suggest that for productivity and profitability both people strategic and business strategic approaches have to be applied. One of the people strategic actions includes pay for performance, which could help achieve the business objective of the organization.

The productivity of organizations is affected when there is a difference between the interest of the employees and those of the employers. In a laboratory setting Cadsby *et al.* (2007) have found that the employee performance increases with pay for performance schemes. Aziz and Najib (2010) discuss productivity, which helps to reduce cost and maintenance and improves quality standards. This section has revealed a consistent shift in project performance from a purely econometric perspective to soft values resulting in employee satisfaction. This is now translated into the CSR at the organizational level. The performance of construction labourers is not only the focus at the organizational level, but holds centre stage at the international level as well. The following section highlights different aspects of performance and the relevant International Labour Standards (ILS).

2.5.4 International labour standards (ILS) and performance

This section suggests that international labour standards help to improve the productivity/performance of the construction labourers (Silva, 2004 and ILO, 2011a). The ILS and their relationship with productivity is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Synthesis of ILS and productivity/performance relationship.

S. No.	No.	Year	Convention/ Recommendation	Relationship with productivity/ Performance
1	87	1948	Convention	Dialogue between the employers and the workers establishes productivity. The workers become more productive when the work is executed in coordination between employers and workers.
2	98	1949	Convention	Higher productivity is achieved through gain-sharing schemes.
3	91, 163	1951, 1981	Recommendation	
4	94, 129	1952, 1962	Recommendation	Cooperation and communication between the works and the employees results in a productive work.
5	95, 100	1949, 1951	Convention	Share of workers from productive gains results in motivation for improved performance.
6	85, 90	1949, 1951	Recommendation	
7	122	1964	Convention	A cycle of increased profitability creates more work and increased employment for better economic growth.
8	130	1969	Convention	When the working conditions are safe and environmentally friendly, it creates more productive work. In the event of sickness/injury, medical care provides early recovery of the employees, resulting in more productive work.
9	97, 134	1953, 1969	Recommendation	
10	142	1975	Convention	Human resource development creates more productive work.
11	150	1975	Recommendation	
12	113	1959	Convention	Development of labour skills and training for more productive work.

This table shows that productivity and performance can be increased through employees and is achieved by labourer-employer engagement and by providing due incentives to the labourers for productive work.

3 Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the data collection at different stages of the thesis. The qualitative method of data collection was used. It was undertaken by recording the narratives of the construction labourers, observing their cultural behaviour at the construction sites and holding semi-structured interviews. The research methodology used in the thesis is discussed in the following sections:

3.1 Qualitative research

The qualitative research methodology of data collection helps researchers to understand a phenomenon more closely and deeply. Cultural studies are better engaged through this method of data collection. The qualitative data collected was, first, a series of narratives to identify decent work practice indicators in the construction industry of the UAE. Ghai (2003) suggests selecting the overall indices of decent work performance based on qualitative and quantitative indicators. But “it is more difficult to establish through quantitative analysis that decent work promotes high and sustained economic growth and social development” (Anker *et al.* 2002). Therefore, the decent work indicators should be identified qualitatively before quantitatively measuring them for correct and specified objectives (Ghai, 2003). In the present thesis, the decent work practice indicators for temporary migrant construction labourers in the UAE are identified in qualitative terms. The quantifying of these indicators is considered by giving weight to these indicators.

Ida Regalia in Rodger and Kuptsch (2008) says, “I believe that it is today much more important to qualitatively evaluate the real patterns of actions of the actors concerned, which opens up a formidable and fascinating area of research”. Similarly, the ILO (2008a) says that given the nature of the decent work as a multifaceted concept, progress towards its achievement cannot be assessed by standard numerical methods alone. The numerical indicators by themselves cannot adequately capture the wide ranging and inherently qualitative nature of many aspects of decent work. Social dialogue, a major DWCP indicator and application of ILS for effective labour market functioning, needs diverse research methodologies. Therefore a triangulation research method of data collection was adopted with qualitative data giving an in-depth understanding of decent work practices and national culture and the quantification of the data collected to give it measurable meaning. This is possible through an abduction technique of the

research management. The process of abduction is discussed in the practice of data collection and data analysis sections of this research study. This abduction into quantitative data helps to confirm an alternative hypothesis about the relationship between the different components of decent work (Kucera, 2001 and Majid, 2001). For example, what is the relationship between migration debt and the practice of over work in the construction projects? The qualitative research method also helps to assess if Hofstede's research framework is still applicable to migrant labourers in this context. Hofstede's items refer to work-related values, which may not completely overlap with the priorities of people in other roles (Steenkamp, 2001). This objective of the thesis was achieved at different stages of the research work. At each of the research stages a different methodology was adopted. This difference in the research methodology helped to improve the construct validity and reliability of the study. Varying methods of research at each stage provided a broad and detailed understanding of the material (Ulkuuniemi, 2003). Figure 1 presents different methodologies I used for data collection and analysis as the thesis progressed. These included narratives, a case study, observations and semi-structured interviews.

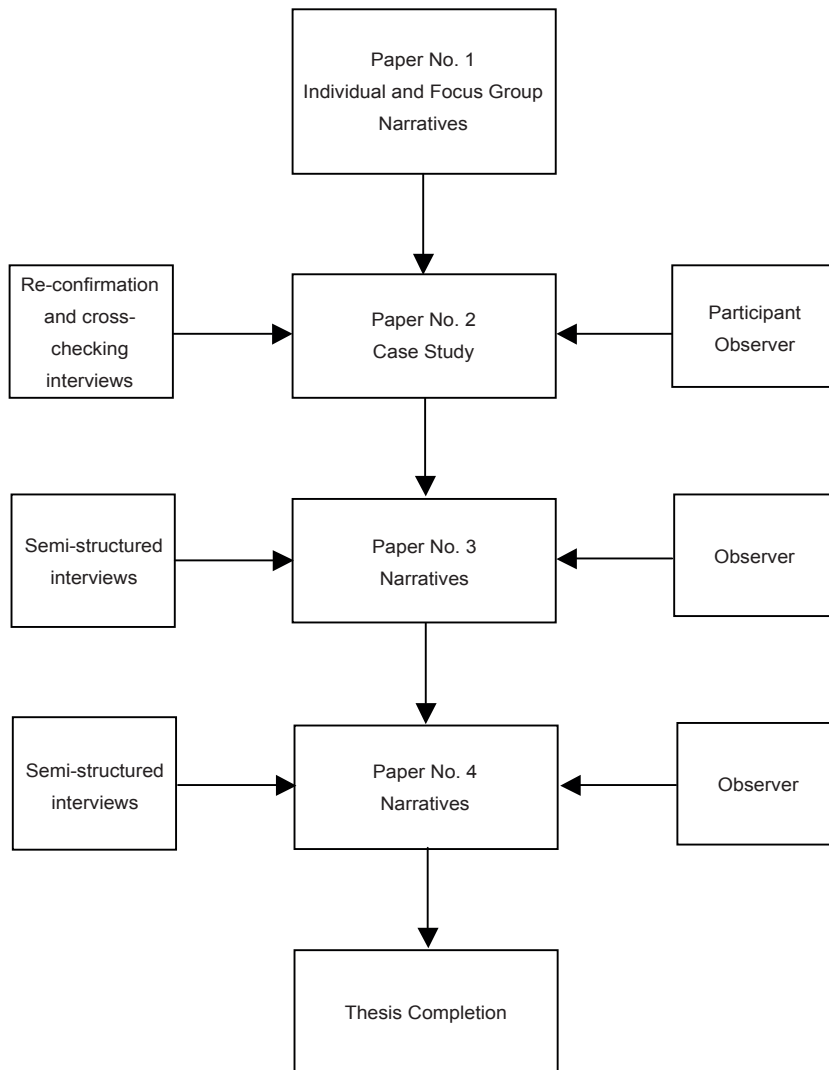


Fig. 1. Structure of the sequence of data collection for the thesis.

3.2 Narrative research

A narrative is the telling of a story. It “consists of a plot comprising ... casually related episodes that culminate in a solution to a problem” (Boje, 2001). This approach was taken in listening to the stories and experiences of the construction labourers in the research sample. The narratives reveal the cultural feelings and experiences of the construction labourers, which are difficult to obtain properly with other methods of data collection. Linde (1993) considers narratives to be the identification of the self. The construction labourers have their own stories; they reflect the workers’ experience of migrating for work to the UAE and their work and living experiences there. Each of the migrant construction labourers has his own story to tell, different from the others, a unique story. Hellriegel *et al.* (2007) define narratives as the unique stories, sagas, legends and myths in a culture. Boje and Dennehy (1993) state that stories “make experience meaningful, stories connect us with one another; stories make the characters come alive” and it would be interesting to see how the narratives of the construction labourers in the present study make the characters of the men themselves alive. The narrative method of the research study helps to construct a social reality based on individual experience, which is interactive in nature (Kuusipalo, 2008). Burr (1995) provides parameters for the narratives to meet the requirement of social constructivism: narrative is not a taken for granted knowledge; narratives are specific to a certain culture and time; its knowledge and social action go together. The purpose of using a narrative methodology for data collection was to achieve all the objectives of the research and this fulfils the parametric requirement as well. “The paradigm underlying narrative research is similar to constructivism in that human knowledge is not regarded as a coherent view of reality but as a plurality of small narratives, local and personal in nature, which are always under construction” (Kuusipalo, 2008). Berger and Luckmann (1996) highlight the popularity of narrative in everyday life, which enables us to make sense of what is going on around us and to construct social reality. The present research has ethnographic themes, expressing the culture of the migrant workers and constructing the social and economic conditions which have implication for their home and host countries.

The narrative research method was chosen because it can bring to light social and cultural aspects of the lives of the construction labourers in the UAE. Collecting data through the use of some other methods of research, such as questionnaires and structured interviews, was considered inappropriate, knowing that the workers were neither educated to respond to these questionnaires nor at ease with structured

interviews, for fear of being documented. In other words, the narrative style of research was, in contrast, considered by labourers themselves to be simply telling their life histories, helping them to bring out their personal accounts, traversing the events that everyone comes across in their daily life. The stories of the construction workers in the UAE are at the core of the above definitions of narrative and rich with their thoughts, feelings and personal views. The former are (in this case) the stories of the construction workers' hopes and aspirations which they talk about every day, while the macro stories are external to lives. A narrative study may also help to bring to light the moral issues underlying the area of study.

Much data on decent work practices are qualitative in nature, rich in the social and cultural values of the labourers. It is through the narratives of the construction labourers that their world can be understood and recorded in a research study. The narratives of each of the construction labourer can be different from the culture but also specific to the culture. This is because of the experiences of the labourers revealed in their narratives.

Auto-ethnography is another research methodology which is closer to ethnography, although here the researcher is part of the research study. This methodology has been used to study gender issues. The narratives of the labourers are at the heart of the qualitative data collection in this thesis and the case study research approach is the base of the cultural research application; it is discussed below.

3.3 Case study

The case study method of qualitative research was chosen as most suitable research approach for the present work. It is “an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth, within real life” and it acts as a bridge between the theoretical basis and the empirical data collection (Yin, 2009). Case study is designed to incorporate the views of the actors in the case under study and is used to understand complex organizational problems (Aziz and Najid, 2010). Aziz and Najid (2010) insist that the case study method involves triangulation in data collection, in its investigation, employing triangulation in theory and methodology. This thesis made use of these tools of the case study research method. Moreover, the relevance of the case study method of doing research is that it illuminates decisions or sets of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result (Schramm, 1971). The case study method of research comes at a stage after the data from the narrative method have been obtained and are

validated through the case study method. The case study methodology therefore helped in to ground the research structure for the thesis.

The case study research method is closer to the practice-based research method which involves personal experience. Anu (2012) describes her personal experience in investigating consumer practices. Arditi *et al.* (2010) maintain that the lessons learned from systems are management initiatives for organizationally oriented knowledge and therefore as lessons for success contribute to future projects. During the research, data were collected for the purpose of learning lessons from the project. The records of lessons learned were maintained since these affected the performance of the projects. These records of the lessons learned were obtained through participant observation and project records, which later became part of this case study. Lu (2003) adopted a case study approach for his study of the Chinese market, culture and management. Sandhu *et al.* (2009) collected data through “the communication management plan, frequent progress reports, a project website, regular meetings and a trend chart”. Wei (2007) also used a case study approach, including a questionnaire and interviews as his data collection methods. In his case study, after the data were collected, they were classified through coding, according to the grounded theory procedure. Triangulation was used in the data analysis of the case study. Grounded theory is often used with a qualitative research method. It involves a systematic set of procedures and inductively drives grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The present study coded the data; that is, it named and categorized various phenomena pertaining to Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions. After the data were coded, they were abducted to quantify the qualitative data. Data collection, as a result of the lessons learned, continued until the saturation level of the project’s success or failure was confirmed, that is, when it was realised that nothing more could be added to the accumulated data. To ensure validity and reliability of the coding, re-confirmation and cross-check interviews were initiated, which also helped to ensure that any bias was checked, controlled and corrected during the analysis of the data. In this way, every effort was made to understand the intended message (Prentice and Miller, 1999). But, before going into detail to describe the cases which were studied, it may be helpful to consider what the success or failure of a project entails, as has already been discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis. The case study method achieves the aim of providing descriptions, testing or generating a theory, according to Eisenhardt (1989), cited in Ulkuniemi (2003). The case study method has to achieve two purposes: exploring a phenomenon and at the same time testing the theory, which in the present case study is the phenomenon of the project

performance affected through communication, in line with Hofstede's national culture theory. Yin (1988), cited in Ulkuniemi (2003) includes documents, archival records, interviews, observation, participant observation and physical records as the sources of qualitative data. Ulkuniemi (2003) uses interviews as the most important source of data; she attended meetings as a participant observer and used the minutes of meetings and memoranda in the data collection. The other sources of data included project meetings, seminars and company documents.

3.4 Observation research

Scheuch (1996) and Jacob (2005) suggest that cross-cultural management is an observational science. Therefore before applying a management style, it is recommended that the culture of the people being managed should be observed at first hand. Jacob (2005) believes that long distance survey data collection methods for cultural studies, as used by Hofstede and Trompenaars, serve little purpose and the whole methodological approach based on a universal typology should be abandoned. In the present research, the labourers were also observed and interviewed to ground the construct validity by employing various methods of data collection and its internal validity was improved when the data were collected directly from the labourers.

It has even been argued that because one cannot study the social world without being a part of it, all social research is a form of participation observation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Therefore the participant research methodology is deeply entrenched in socio-economic studies. However, participant observation both involves emotional involvement and requires objective detachment (Tedlock, 2000). Participant observation is a method of ethnographic study which collects data in the field and needs the researchers' hands to get dirty. In this kind of research, the researcher enters the organization or the research setting and becomes a part of the work team (Sekaran, 2003). In the present thesis, participant and observational research methodologies were used to get closer to the social reality, which has both social and economic implications.

3.5 Interviews

Semi-structured, confirmatory and cross-check interview methods, also used for the data collection, were necessary for cultural understanding of "others". This helped to get some insight into the data collected during the participant and observation research.

Re-confirmation interviews were held to ensure that the data collected during the participant observation were correct about the culture of the management team and hence given the correct coding. Similarly, cross-checking interviews were conducted to confirm from a third person whether the data collected during the participant observation and re-confirmation interviews were correct and would lead to correct coding. However, Yin (1984) suggests open-ended interviews for greater depth of data and to increase the sources of information. After the observational study, in addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to confirm that the data had been collected according to the cultural frame of reference of the construction labourers.

Frost (2004) uses a questionnaire for collecting data from his sample of the Nepalese construction labourers working on projects in Hong Kong. The questionnaire was administered by hired Nepalese research data collectors, who had already worked in construction projects. But, even after being trained in data collection, the interviewers faced difficulty due to problems in locating the labourers. They were so reluctant to answer the questionnaire and supply reliable data that it took one hour to collect the data for a single questionnaire administered. These drawbacks in the data collection were alleviated in the present thesis.

3.6 Data collection

Data collection for this thesis was carried out in the course of building up the research, by: (1) identification of decent work practices; (2) introduction of national culture in the construction projects of the UAE and its impact on the performance of the construction project; (3) identification of the national culture of the construction labourers while practising the already identified decent work indicators; (4) and finally investigating the impact that the national culture would have on the performance of the construction labourers in decent work indicators. The decent work practice indicators were not limited to the choice of eating watermelon or apple, according to the typology in Jacob (2005), but were specific to the culture of the construction labourers identified through the narratives and observational studies.

At first, the research aimed at identifying specific the decent work practice indicators of the UAE construction labourers which were not the same as the general decent work practice indicators given by the ILO under the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). The decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the construction industry in the UAE was established as a basic research framework for the study and is presented in Figure 2, below.

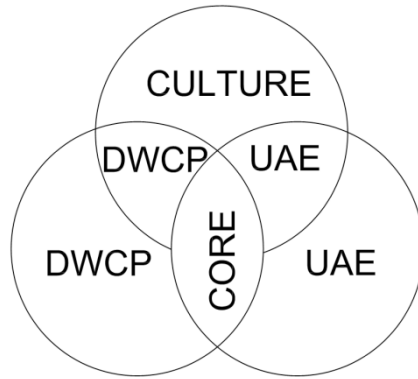


Fig. 2. Framework of decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the construction labourers in the UAE (from Paper 1).

To collect data from the construction labourers, they were approached in three labour camps and in the grassy fields outside the labour camps. The labourers were approached individually in the labour camps. Three focus groups were also arranged within these camps and three focus groups were arranged outside the labour camps in the fields. The construction labourers when approached individually in the labour camps were at first not open in their narratives. But the narratives showed increased levels of confidence and engagement when the construction labourers were approached individually in the labour camps. The confidence level in the construction labourers increased further when they revealed their life stories in focus groups within the labour camps and became even more engaged when the labourers told their stories outside their labour camps. The narratives of the construction labourers were also recorded in a research diary.

The decent work practice indicators of the labourers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were specific to their culture, without reference to cultural theories. The theoretical background is important in helping to define the scope of the thesis and answer the research questions. This theoretical domain was introduced in the construction projects of the UAE using the research framework presented in Figure 3.

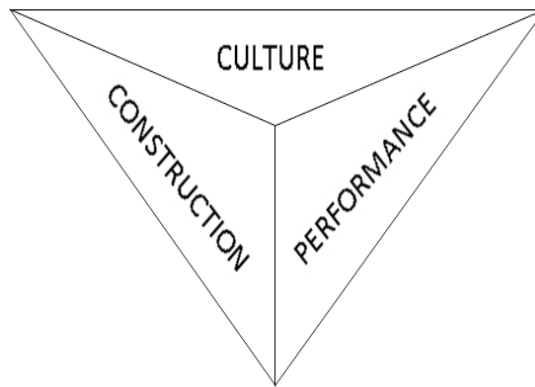


Fig. 3. Framework of culture and performance of construction projects in the UAE (from Paper 2).

The data for the research framework presented in Figure 3 were collected as part of the case study method of the research. Two construction projects were considered for case study. The project management team for both the projects comprised an Arabic speaking client, a Chinese speaking contractor and an Urdu/Hindi speaking consultant, the present author.

The data were collected for the purpose of learning lessons from the project. These records of the lessons learned were obtained through participant observation and project records, which later became part of this case study. Data collection, as a result of the lessons learned such as minutes of meetings and project correspondence, were collected until the saturation level of the data were reached, when nothing useful could be added. The coding was re-confirmed and cross-checked with the help of semi-structured interviews to ensure that any bias was checked, controlled and corrected during the analysis of the data. The aim was to retain the objectivity of a cultural study by retaining the cultural frame of reference of the construction team studied. As Hofstede's national cultural framework was chosen for this study, data were collected and coded into the national cultural dimensions of PDI, IND, MAS, UAI and LTO.

The research framework would help to gauge the impact of their culture on the performance of construction labourers belonging to different countries and on the construction projects in the UAE. The research framework was to assess culture in the construction projects at the project management team level, when the researcher was an observer. To investigate the culture of the construction labourers within Hofstede's cultural framework, the research framework in Figure 4 was introduced.

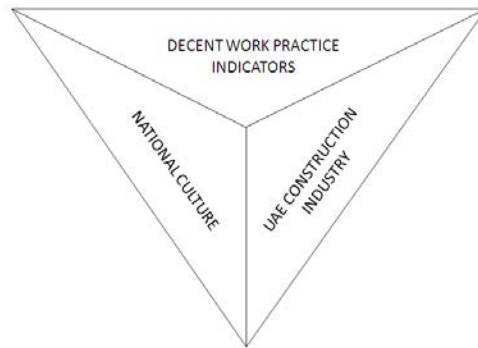


Fig. 4. Framework for determining the impact of culture under decent work conditions in the construction projects on the UAE (from Paper 3).

The data for the above research framework was collected using the observational research method of data collection. This observation continued for a period of over a year, counting as longitudinal observation for an ethnographic study. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to enrich the data collected. The researcher spoke Urdu and Hindi with the construction labourers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, but the interviews with Chinese construction labourers whose cultural values were observed during the project were held with the help of a trusted English speaking Chinese engineer who acted as a translator. These men were interviewed to confirm their cultural values and to get more insight into the subject as a whole. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with pairs of labourers from two different Chinese construction teams. The researcher also visited different states of the UAE to obtain more representative data. The target of the data collection for this purpose was the construction labour camps. Friday is a public holiday in the UAE and groups of construction labourers could be observed on Fridays relaxing and talking outside their labour camp buildings, in the streets and the fields. For rich and in-depth data collection, Friday evenings was considered the most appropriate time. A total of 18 groups of Indian labourers or individuals, 12 Pakistani groups or individuals and 11 Bangladeshi groups or individuals, were contacted and their stories recorded as narratives which helped individuals to express themselves and thus invite others to hear and give individual narratives. The narratives of the construction labourers were collected in the cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, representing about 78% of all investment in the country, according to the UAE industrial statistics report of 2004 (Zaneldin, 2006), as part

of the overall investment. Workers from the states of Sharjah and Ajman also contributed. Random sampling combined with the conveyance sampling method was used for data collection. The narratives reveal the social life of a group of people where the culture expresses itself through individual stories (Riessman, 1993).

The narrative method of yielding data was appropriate for the relaxing time of the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers. The researcher entered into their discussions by introducing himself as a construction employee. The migrant labourers were at first reluctant to narrate their life stories in the UAE, but once they got confidence that the researcher was not an outsider, but belonged to same industry as they did, they became less reticent and started narrating their life stories openly. The narratives were recorded in a research diary just after they were heard, in a car parked away from the view of the labourers. They were also voice recorded. They were collected in and out of labour camps, in the fields, and on the streets in town on Fridays where there is a holiday in the UAE, the day when construction workers can relax. The narratives helped these people to define themselves and find meaning in their actions (Kuusipalo, 2008). The present study includes triangulation in the data collection, involving the observation method, semi-structured interviews and the narrative method. Triangulation in the data analysis was also carried out when the abduction to quantify the qualitative data was initiated.

National cultural data were collected against each of the identified decent work practice indicators, for example, what the behaviour of the construction labourers was in terms of MAS, UAI, IND, LTO and PDI in the decent work provisions related to “migration debt”. This was the action-based contextualization of the cultural study. The score on the national culture was collected on a scale of 1 to 3 from low to high. The purpose of selecting this simple scale of cultural score measurement was the ease with which the construction labours could relate their stories and the researcher could observe their behaviour.

Hofstede (1993) also categorised cultural data into low, medium and high, on the basis of the score received; however for the present thesis, the qualitative data were collected on a scale of low, medium and high with the scores accordingly 1, 2 or 3. Therefore the scoring of the data is depended on the description of the qualitative data. After determining the national culture of the construction labourers in the decent work conditions, the impact of national cultural behaviour on the performance of the construction labourers and the projects was determined. The framework to achieve this objective is presented in Figure 5.



Fig. 5. Framework for determining the performance of construction labourers in the construction project based industry of the UAE (from Paper 4).

Data for the above framework were collected during the course of a construction project which lasted two and a half years, involving Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese construction labourers. The researcher was able to communicate and record the narratives of construction labourers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in their commonly spoken languages of Urdu or Hindi. To confirm the observations of the behaviour of the Chinese construction labourers, four semi-structured interviews with Chinese construction labourers were conducted with the help of a trusted Chinese and English speaking engineer. The data were also collected from the narratives of the labourers in their labour camps and in the fields and streets of the towns. After gaining the trust of the construction labourers, by convincing them that the researcher was not an outsider but a construction worker like them, the narratives were recorded in a research diary just after they took place, in a car parked hidden from the workers. The narratives were also voice recorded. The data were collected from the narratives of 42 Bangladeshi construction labourers, 25 Pakistani construction labourers, 20 Indian construction labourers and four Chinese labourers in total, working in the states of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Ajman.

A summary of the data collection methods, the sample size and location of the sampling carried out in all four papers is presented in the following table:

Table 8. Summary of the data collection method, sample size and location of data collection.

Paper No.	Data collection method	Sample Size	Location
1	Individual and focus group narratives	9	Data collection within the labour accommodation camps and outside labour accommodation camps
2	Case study	Project team	Data collection in the form of the lessons learned, with documents involving a longitudinal study for a one year duration of the project.
3	Narratives	41	Data collection from labour camps, town streets and surrounding fields
4	Narratives	87	Data collection from labour camps, town streets and fields

Note: The data collection was also carried out through observation while executing a construction project and from semi-structured interviews.

In this thesis, the narratives were analysed in their cultural context to see their relationship to the performance of the construction labourers. The drawback of the language difference in the case of Chinese labourers in the observation method was compensated for by the use of semi-structured interviews and the narratives of the construction labourers collected in their leisure time in the labour camps, in the street or the grassy fields when the labourers were free to relax. This was done to avoid biased narratives due to the consciousness of hardship, or the workers' unwillingness to tell their stories from a suspicion that the researcher was an outsider. After talking together in their own language about the construction work at the site, the construction labourers started to tell their stories to the researcher and were recorded either by voice recorder or by notes in the research diary immediately after data collection.

In this thesis, before analysis, the data collection was carried out through narratives, participant observer, observations, semi-structured interviews and the case study research method. The following section describes the data analysis which involved triangulation of the collected data by various methods.

3.7 Data analysis

In the qualitative method of data collection, analysis of the data is a continuous process. The analysis of this data collection was carried out in the course of the data

collection for building up the thesis. The following sections discuss the analysis of the data collected during each of the research papers:

3.7.1 Decent work practice indicators (Paper No. 1)

The data on the decent work practice indicators was collected in the form of notes. After the data were collected, they were analysed. In this analysis themes were picked and placed together. These themes, when collected again, formed the decent work practice indicators. For example the labourers complained, “we do feel homesick”, “how can I talk? I have not had money for the last two months. I have not been paid my salary for the last two months”, “I feel homesick because I worry how my parents will eat”. The underlined themes once collected resulted into decent work practice indicator of homesickness. This decent work practice indicator is a result of open coding. Similarly the narrative, “we are not given a day off. We have to work on Fridays too. If we got Friday afternoon off, it would be better”, results into the decent work practice indicator of overwork. These themes are further discussed in the chapter on findings and the summary of the individual papers. The results of this analysis are presented in the form of a table in excel sheet format. As these indicators were specific to the culture of the construction labourers, without reference to a cultural theory, national cultural theory as presented by Hofstede was introduced in the construction projects of the UAE.

3.7.2 Application of the case study method of data collection (Paper No. 2)

The coding of the data began after the data had all been collected. To arrive at the meaning of these data, Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions (1980, 1991) were taken as the cultural framework and observations recorded in the ‘lessons learned’ diary were coded and categorized according to Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions of PDI, IND, MAS, UAI and LTO. For example the Chinese construction manager said “a variation order to the Contract was signed by the CEO without taking the project management team into consideration”. This shows high PDI. Similarly the Chinese project manager, displaying masculine behaviour, stated in a loud voice at a meeting, “ If we don’t start dredging operations from 23 July, the Contract should be terminated”. An example of low UAI is that one morning a ship was offloaded on the beach side in the project area and was being repaired. The Chinese project manager was asked, “whose ship is this and why is

it being repaired at the site without the Engineer knowing”. The project manager replied, “It is the ship of my friend and I allowed him to repair it at the site”.

At first the data were coded into the dimensions of the national culture. This was the first time in the research project that the national culture had been introduced with its impact on the performance of the projects. A simple method of adding together the scores against each of the dimension was adopted.

The data were further re-confirmed through individual interviews and further cross-checked through interviews by other members of the same project execution team to ensure that the coding had been done correctly. It should be noted that the data analysis started after the data collection in the form of ‘lessons learned’ had been completed and the data had started to make sense for the study of the performance of the two construction projects in the context of the national cultures.

As the data were collected throughout the project execution period, they also contributed to a longitudinal study. This made it possible to understand the sequencing of the dimensions for their assimilation into the local culture of the UAE for the success of the project. This assimilation can also be called ‘cultural adaptation’ where there is an increasing level of fitness or compatibility in the new cultural environment (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984) as there was in this case by the Chinese project management team. It forms common values and norms for the effective management of international projects in a foreign country, which is possible through the understanding, adjusting and learning of the host culture. Moreover, for strengthening personal relationships in the execution of international projects, it is valuable to learn the language, customs and culture of the people (Broster, 1976). The results are presented in the form of a table in excel sheet format in the chapter on findings.

3.7.3 Validation of decent work practice Indicators and identification of national culture in the context of decent work practice indicators (Paper No.3)

Decent work practice indicators for the Chinese labourers were not identified during the development of the framework given in Figure 1, which was identified with the use of the research framework presented in Figure 5. This also helped to validate the decent work practice indicators for the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers, as identified in Research Paper 1. The researcher was an observer in the project and would record observations after collecting data. For example, Chinese labourers would try to avoid the sun as much as possible and

would cover their heads with wide caps under their helmets, would open their shirts to feel the breeze in hot weather and would give hand indications of being very hot. Chinese labourers narrated through a translator, a Chinese engineer who spoke English, “we would like to do over time and to be paid extra, but it is too hot to do work here”. This indicates that the high temperatures of the UAE are considered decent work practice indicator for Chinese labourers. They could observe a labourer doing his work wrongly but the foreman or the engineer could be seen not to use strong language to reprimand him. Moreover, it was confirmed by the engineer that the labourers were made responsible for their actions through signing to confirm that they had use of the approved construction methods and labourers could be observed signing papers (method statements) on site. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the help of the Chinese engineer to translate to and from English to confirm that the data collected during the observations and specific to the other decent work practice indicators, such as migration debt or extended families, accorded with the culture of the construction labourers. For example, Chinese labourers narrated through a translator, a Chinese engineer who spoke English, “we paid 6,000 yen (AED 3,500) as security deposit to come to the UAE which is refundable in two years time, with 50% released after one year and the remaining at the end of the second year”. This shows that the Chinese labourers paid security deposits and not the non-refundable migration fee paid by Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers. This is a reflection of high LTO before coming to the UAE and after being in the UAE. The following semi-structured questions were asked to Chinese labourers for confirmation of the data collected during observation: Did you pay for the migration fee to come to the UAE? Are you paid for overtime? Did you confirm to your parents before coming to the UAE? Do you have insurance/health cover in the UAE? Have you been abused in your work place? What was your objective for coming to the UAE? The data were presented in the form of a table in excel sheet format and used for the identification of the national culture of the Chinese labourers when the decent work indicators were investigated.

A Pakistani labourer coming to the UAE narrated, “I paid 110,000 rupees to come to the UAE. I have been in the UAE for 15months, I worked for only nine months and my per month salary was 700 AED. I have not been able to recover migration fee because of no work and no salary”. This is a reflection of low LTO against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt, because he did not know when the company would get work so he could to recover his fee. Similarly a Bangladeshi construction labourer revealed, “I paid 200,000 Takka to come to the

UAE, but have not been able to recover my migration fee as there was no work with my company. I work outside my parent company and earn about AED 50 per day, but can not find work for the whole month and health insurance is not provided". This shows low LTO against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt. An Indian construction labourer narrated, "If we work properly, we will not be abused". This is low MAS behaviour against the decent work practice indicator of Abuse at Work when compared to Pakistani construction labourers who narrated, "If I am abused, I will respond in the same way".

Table 9 provides an example of how the data was collected on national cultural dimenhe data was collected through observations, while executing a construction project, through narratives of the construction labourers in their labour camps, within grassy fields and in town streets, and through semi-structured interviews to confirm if the cultural data collected through observations was through cultural frame of the construction labourers. A simple method of data analysis was adopted. The empirical score was collected on the scale of 1 to 3 with 1 as low and 3 as high. The scoring method was chosen for its simplicity and the ease with which the construction labourers could relate and respond. Hofstede (1993) also used scale of low, medium and high to categorise the data collected on national culture.

Table 9. National data collection against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt.

Migration Debt				
	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
LTO	<p>Collected loan of about rupees 70,000 to 100,000 (AED 6600) in India as visa and travel fees to come to the UAE for a better future. This is a long term focus. However, in the UAE the salary paid is about AED 800, so the recovery of migration debt in the two years of the visa term is not possible. Therefore the national cultural dimension of LTO against the local decent work indicator of migration debt is low in the UAE, though it was high in India.</p>	<p>Pakistani labourers were also paid about rupees 150,000 (AED 6000). However, while in #UAE their salary was higher than their Indian counterparts' (AED 800–2000) and the currency exchange rate was also favourable. However higher prices for the basic commodities made it difficult to save much. LTO was therefore low to medium.</p>	<p>In Bangladesh, getting a loan for work in “Dubai” is easier than getting loans for business in the home country, according to a construction labourer. Paid about Takka 200,000 to 250,000 (AED 11,000) as migration fees. The low salary of about AED 600 has forced the construction workers to engage in the illegal short term activities of selling pirated DVDs, mobile phone cards, tobacco items such as “paan” (betel leaf containing tobacco) and “gutka” (areca nut with tobacco) and arranging gambling games. Therefore the national cultural dimension of LTO against the decent work indicator of migration debt is low.</p>	<p>Chinese construction labourers narrated through a trusted translator that they did not pay anything for their visa and travel. However, they paid AED 3500 as a security deposit refundable in two years' time. Therefore the LTO was high before their entry into the UAE and remained high in the UAE since the amount was returned and the salary was AED 3000 per month.</p>

Migration Debt				
	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
IND	Collectivist. Loan is paid by the whole family, which includes the core family (husband, wife and children), parents, mothers, sisters and other relatives. Therefore the national cultural dimension of IND against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt is low.	Collectivist. Loan is paid by the core family, parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives. The national cultural dimension of collectivism was narrated in the context of migration debt.	Collectivist. Loan is paid by the core family, parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives. Therefore a collectivist national cultural dimension is shown against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt.	Chinese do not have a family culture as Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis do, where a family comprises more than the core family. In China the family includes the core family only. Therefore if a loan is required it would be paid by the core family only. Therefore individualism is high.
MAS	In India women are allowed to work outside their home and this helps to reduce the impact of migration debt. MAS is therefore low.	In Pakistan women are not encouraged/ allowed to work outside home. The impact of the migration debt is high. Therefore the national cultural dimension of MAS is high against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt.	Women are allowed to work outside home in Bangladesh and therefore the migration debt impact can be reduced. MAS is low.	In China women are allowed to work outside the home. Therefore the national culture of Chinese construction labourer against the decent work indicator of migration debt is low.

Migration Debt				
	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
UAI	Most of the UAE construction labourers come from India. The newly arrived construction labourer is more aware of the UAE's decent working practices and therefore the UAI is medium to high.	The population of Pakistani construction labourers in the UAE is lower than that of either Indians or Bangladeshis. The construction labourers admitted that they had become aware of the salary and possible expenditure only when they reached the UAE. Therefore they were not aware of UAE practices. It is therefore an uncertain situation for them in the UAE and the UAI is low against the decent work practice of migration debt.	Migrants were described as being aware of decent work practices in the UAE; however because of the need for food, they were forced to get loans by their relatives to go to the UAE and "try their luck". The UAI against migration debt indicator of decent work is medium to high.	The Chinese construction team claimed that they were not aware of the decent work conditions in the UAE; however, they were aware that they would be working in a Chinese construction company, under Chinese laws of decent work besides the UAE labour laws. Therefore the UAI was high.
PDI	Indian construction labourers recalled that they could talk to their parents about going to the UAE and the parents would not stop them. PDI is low.	Pakistani labourers also recalled that they could talk to their parents about coming to the UAE. The parents would not stop them. PDI is low	Bangladeshi labourers recalled that they could talk to their parents about coming to the UAE. PDI is low.	Most of the labourers mentioned that they would get permission from their parents; one said that he would simply inform his parents and one even said that he did not inform his parents. PDI is low.

Appendix 1 provides a table showing data collection against each of the decent work practice indicator. Appendix 2 provides a list of semi-structured interviews for the the confirmation of the data collection.

The score for the national culture against each of the decent work practice indicators is presented in a table format in the chapter on findings. This summary table shows the behaviour of the construction labourers in the given situation of

decent work practice indicators. The comparison summary of the national culture score between Hofstede's study and this study is presented in table format.

3.7.4 Impact of the national culture when following decent work practice indicators (Paper No. 4)

The national culture of the construction labourers cannot be challenged; it is the reaction or behaviour of the national culture in following decent work practice indicators. For this reason, the present work is a study of the contextualization of the culture. For example, the researcher observed that in one construction project Bangladeshi labourers were working illegally without due permit. Police caught them on their way to work and imprisoned the staff along with the owner of the company. The project works were suspended until the owner of the construction company paid a huge fine. The researcher observed that when the works re-started, the company owner employed a small number of staff, who worked overtime and this affected the quality of the works and the performance of the project. The guilty labourers were imprisoned for sometime and deported back to their home country. This would have a negative impact on the labourer and his family both economically and socially. Similarly, when the labourers spit "*paan*," what environmental impact will this have on the streets? What impact will this have on the performance of the construction labourers and projects if these labourers are working illegally in the UAE? If these labourers are caught by the police for working illegally, what economic and social impact will this have on the labourers and their families? These economic, social and environmental impacts are discussed in the section on findings and the summary of the research papers.

4 Research findings

4.1 Decent work practice indicators (Paper No.1)

In the qualitative and quantitative research methods of the present study, qualitative data in the early stages provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Decent work practice indicators specific to the national culture of the construction labourers are presented in table format. They derive from the narratives of the construction labourers in the course of their working day while relaxing in their labour camps or the surrounding fields and streets of the towns. The DWCP indicators were obtained from the literature by the ILO and are common to all the nationalities. These indicators are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. List of decent work indicators.

DWCP (cultural)	the UAE (cultural)	Core(DWCP+the UAE) (cultural)	DWCP	the UAE
			Employment opportunity	No money
Work that should be abolished		Work that should be abolished		No child labour
				Delayed salary
				Low salary
	Migration debt			
	Responsibility for parents			
	Responsibility for extended family			
Adequate and productive earning		No adequate earnings		No productive earning
	Overwork		Decent hours	
	No religious rights – work on Friday			
			Stability and security at work	No stability and security at work
Combining work and family life	Homesickness			

DWCP (cultural)	the UAE (cultural)	Core(DWCP+the UAE) (cultural)	DWCP	the UAE
	No entertainment			Isolation unaffordable life
	Abuse at work No proper food Absenteeism			
Equal opportunities and treatment at work				
Safe work environment	Injury at work	No safe work environment		
Social security	No social security Family issues at home	No social security		
Workers' representation		Worker representation		No worker representation

The above table shows that the decent work practice indicators, as given by DWCP, and the UAE cultural decent work practice indicators differ; this could be because of the cultural focus of the thesis.

4.2 National culture and the performance of projects (Paper No. 2)

The records of the lessons learned, after being coded into the national cultural dimensions of PDI, IND, MAS, UAI and LTO, are presented in Tables 11 and 12 for Project Alpha and Project Beta, respectively.

Table 11. National cultural dimension score for Project Alpha.

	Project Execution Team	PDI	IND	MAS	UAI	LTO
Contractor	Chinese	4	7	8	(- 28)	30
	Arabic Director		1	7		7
Client	Arabic		1	4	(-2)	11
	English					3
Consultant	Urdu/Hindi		1			1
	English		2	1		4
		4	12	20	(-27)	54

The above table shows that for the whole duration of the project the highest score is for LTO (54) and the lowest for UAI (-27). The UAI negative score is 50% of the LTO score. MAS and IND reach about the average of the LTO and UAI scores. The PDI is the lowest of the positive scores.

The high LTO score also reflects the management’s desire to keep the client happy for the sake of future projects and business. The medium score of MAS (8) is consistent with earlier studies. No high PDI score was observed between the management and engineers of the same company to reflect a spirit of teamwork. The high LTO score and improvement in the UAI score as the project progressed contributed to the success of Project Alpha.

Table 12. National cultural dimension score for Project Beta.

	Project Execution Team	PDI	IND	MAS	UAI	LTO
Contractor	Chinese		6	2	(- 15)	16
Client	Arabic		1			
		English				(-1)
Consultant	Urdu/Hindi					
	English				(-1)	2
			7	2	(-19)	23

The above table shows that the Chinese management team of Project Beta has the lowest negative score for UAI (-15) and the highest positive score for LTO (16).

Project Beta showed a medium to high score of IND (6), unlike the low score for Project Alpha (7) on the average of the five dimensional scores. This increase in

individualist behaviour (IND), reduction in LTO and no improvement in the UAI as the project progressed, resulted in the failure of Project Beta. The Project Beta team was working against their own Chinese national culture, the national culture of the host country and at a critical time of the project resorted to high MAS behaviour, which affected the performance of the project, which was terminated before its completion.

Thus Hofstede's theoretical framework of national cultures was established as the foundation for this thesis, just as decent work practice indicators established its foundation in Paper 1 for this thesis. In this, without reference to national cultural framework, the decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the construction labourers were observed through the narratives of the construction labourers. The national cultural framework of Hofstede was introduced when the researcher was an observer during the execution of the two projects in the UAE.

4.3 Identification of national culture in the context of decent work practice indicators (Paper No. 3)

The table below shows the score of each national culture against each of the decent work indicators for the construction labourers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China. The summary score is shown against each of the national cultural dimension for all the nationalities of the construction labourers and is presented at the bottom of the table.

Table 13 Score of national culture in the context of decent work practices in the UAE.

	INDIA						PAKISTAN						BANGLADESH						CHINA		
	LTO	IND	MAS	UAI	PDI	LTO	IND	MAS	UAI	PDI	LTO	IND	MAS	UAI	PDI	LTO	IND	MAS	UAI	PDI	
Migration			6.5					7.5					6.5					11			
Debt	1	1	1	2.5	1	1.5	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	1	3	3	1	3	1
Extended Family	2	2	8.5	1.5	1	3	1	11.5	3	2.5	2	3	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	1
Overwork	1	3	10	2	1	1	3	8	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2
No Religious Rights/Work on Friday			9					11					10					8			
Home sickness	2	1	11.5	3	1	3	1	12	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	2
No Entertainment	3	2.5	12.5	2	3	2	3	13	3	3	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	3	1	3	1
Abuse at Work	3	3	11	3	1	2	3	10	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	2	3	3	1	3	1
No Proper Food	1	1	7	3	1	1	1	7	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	3	-
Absenteeism	1.5	3	11.5	2.5	2	1.5	3	10.5	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	2.5	3	2
Injury at Work	3	3	13	3	1	3	3	12.5	2.5	3	1	1	3	2.5	3	2	2	3	2	3	1
No Social Security	1	2	7	1	2	2	1	9	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2.5	3	1	1	1
Family Issues At Home	3	1	9	3	1	1.5	1	7.5	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	3	3
	24.5	24.5	22	28.5	17	24.5	21	31	26	17	17	18	17	23.5	26.5	21	27	15.5	28	17	17
					(1.4)					(1.4)						(1.75)					(1.54)

The above table shows that the Bangladeshi construction labourers had the lowest score, 18, on LTO. This low score is due to the low score from having no religious rights, abuse at work, absenteeism and injury at work. The Pakistani construction labourers scored highest in MAS. The Indian construction labourers scored higher in UAI. The Chinese construction labourers exhibited individualist behaviour in the workplace. The comparison of the national score as determined in the present study and that of the earlier study by Hofstede is presented in the following table.

Table 14. Comparison of Hofstede’s findings (1991) and those of the present study (‘Khan’)

	India		Pakistan		Bangladesh		China		UAE (Arab Countries)
	Hofstede	Khan	Hofstede	Khan	Hofstede et al (2010)	Khan	Hofstede (1993) ¹	Khan	Hofstede
LTO	61	24.5	50	24.5	47	18	118	29.5	36 (KSA) ²
IND	48	24.5	14	21	20	17	20	27	38
MAS	56	22	50	31	55	23.5	50	15.5	53
UAI	40	28.5	70	26	60	26.5	60	28	68
PDI	77	17	55	17	80	21	80	17	80

Note: 1 Estimated, 2 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The above table shows that the Chinese were the highest for LTO in Hofstede’s study and they reflected the same behaviour in the construction projects of the UAE. The Indians gained the highest IND score in Hofstede’s study of all the nationalities, but in the present study, the Chinese construction labourers showed the highest of IND score, reflecting their low collectivistic behaviour. Similarly, the Indians show the highest score in MAS, although in the present study the Pakistani construction labourers show the highest MAS behaviour in the workplace. In Hofstede’s study the Pakistanis show the highest UAI, while in the present study the Indian and Chinese construction labourers show high UAI behaviour in their workplaces in the UAE. This is because of the prevalent security in India, the awareness of decent work practices in the construction project based industry among the migrant construction labourers and the acceptance of these decent work practices by the Indian labourers. The Bangladeshis had the highest PDI according to Hofstede’s study and this behaviour, although a result of the LTO behaviour, was repeated in the construction projects of the UAE.

4.4 Improving the performance of labourers in the construction projects of UAE – a multi cultural perspective (Paper No. 4)

The study reveals that in a situation of decent work practice indicators, labourers show varying cultural behaviours. These behaviours were measured in terms of LTO, IND, MAS, UAI and PDI and the impact of these behavioural actions on the performance of the projects was assessed in this study. The study revealed low LTO by the Bangladeshi labourers, high LTO by the Chinese labourers, high MAS by the Pakistani labourers and high UAI by the Indian labourers. Bangladeshi labourers were found working outside their parent company and selling things illegally in the markets, while a few Pakistani labourers were also observed collecting paper cartons from the dustbins, along with Bangladeshi labourers collecting bottles and cans from the dustbins. Unlike Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers, Indian and Chinese labourers were not observed working illegally outside their parent company. Absenteeism, working illegally and selling illegal items had an economic, social and environmental/health impact on the home and host countries and on the labourers and their families. The root cause of these activities, by the Bangladeshi labourers most of all, as mentioned by the labourers themselves, was migration debt, large family and parental responsibility. For the Pakistani labourers, besides migration debt and extended and parental responsibility, the family issues back home also caused stress among the labourers. The Chinese labourers were happy with their salary and had no migration debts nor any extended family worries compared with the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian labourers. The provision of good quality food also helped to make the Chinese labourers more satisfied. However, the hot weather of the UAE was causing them more discomfort.

The study reveals that to raise the performance of the construction labourers, their LTO should be increased by focusing on the benefits of migrating to the UAE as long as they followed the laws of the host country. Similarly the MAS behaviour of the labourers should be managed so as to increase their commitment to work, thereby avoiding homesickness and low MAS towards safety practices in the workplace. The research reveals that the labourers are not aware of some of their rights and responsibilities in the UAE. Therefore more information (high UAI) should be given to them about their rights and responsibilities, which would enable the labourers to plan for their future and focus on their long term benefits. Collectivism (low IND) is a common cultural behaviour in Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian construction labourers. This behaviour should be engaged to avoid homesickness and provide entertainment to the labourers. Collectivistic (low IND)

behaviour, along with masculinity (MAS) and short term orientation (low LTO) should be discouraged.

The difference between the earlier national culture score given by Hofstede and that given in this thesis could be because of the hybridization of culture that the migrants find themselves in. In the foreign culture, they retain their own national culture. This has been reported in South Korea, where both Japanese and American management cultures are prevalent besides the local South Korean culture of management and it is also observed in India, as a mix of Western and local culture.

4.5 Overview of papers

The following sections summarize the individual papers forming part of this dissertation. All the four papers help to develop the final framework through the identification of decent work practices in the UAE specific to the culture of the construction labourers, looking at these decent work practices within a theoretical framework, finding again the culture of the construction labourers while following these indicators and looking for the impact of national cultural behaviour while following these indicators. All the four papers are summarised in Table 15 below.

Table 15. Summary of the research papers included in the thesis.

Paper No. and Journal	Title	Research Question	Research Framework Building Block	Novelty	Result
No.1, International Journal of Business Excellence (IJBX)	Decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE	What are the indicators of decent work practices in the construction Projects of the UAE?	These Indicators help to identify the culture of the construction labourers in the UAE	New decent work practice indicators specific to a vountry, culture and construction project based industry.	Decent work practice indicators for Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers in the UAE.
No. 2, Benchmarking: An International Journal	Effects of Cultural Assimilation on the Performance of a Construction Project – Evidence from UAE	Why and how differences in national culture identified through communication affects performance of a construction project in the UAE?	Introduces national culture dimensions in the construction projects of the UAE and studies performance of construction projects.	National culture in an overseas country, its difference and assimilation with the local culture and its impact on the performance of the construction projects.	National Culture, its difference or assimilation plays an important role in the construction projects of the UAE.

Paper No. and Journal	Title	Research Question	Research Framework Building Block	Novelty	Result
No. 3, Benchmarking: An International Journal	Benchmarking National Culture and Decent Work Practice Indicators in Project-Based Industry: Lessons from United Arab Emirates	What is the national culture of the migrant construction labourers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China in the context of the decent work practices in the UAE?	Based on the decent work practice indicators (No. 1) and the national culture dimensions (No.2), national culture of the construction labourers are determined while following the decent work indicators.	National culture in practice in the construction projects of the UAE. Are the decent work practice indicators correct?	Weighted national culture score of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese labourers in the UAE.
No. 4, International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management	Improving the performance of labourers in the construction projects of UAE: a multi cultural perspective	What is the impact of a national culture on the performance of construction labourers when observing decent work practice indicators in the construction project based industry of the UAE?	National culture behaviour under the decent work practice leads to training and cultural management and at the same time improvement in the decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE.	Impact of the cultural behaviour of the construction labourers while practising decent work indicators.	Managing of national culture in international projects results into the effective temporary migration and successful projects, with positive social, economic and environmental impacts for home countries, host country and the labourers and their families.

From the above table it is evident that the relationship between all four papers is subsequently built up to form the research framework, the ultimate aim of which was successful short term international migration to the UAE for the benefit of the labourers, the home country and the host country

4.6 Individual papers

4.6.1 Paper No. 1 – Decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE

This was the first paper introducing decent work practices in the construction projects of the UAE. The paper established its foundation on the available literature on decent work practices within the domain of the ILO, an organization responsible for introducing and measuring decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE. The ILO has introduced a decent work country programme (DWCP) aimed at improving the decent work programme in each of the member countries. The DWCP and UAE decent work practice indicators were divided along cultural lines. For example, combining work and family life is the culture for decent work in Western countries, but it is not applicable in Eastern countries, when the migrant labourers do not have sufficient income to keep their family with them when they travel for work, or to keep a balance between the family and work demands.

The Middle East, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in particular, were the centre of international temporary migration after the oil boom in 1973 and with the investment of 8% GDP in the construction sector of the UAE, this place was an ideal for construction labourers, notably from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Many studies were conducted (Mearns and Yule, 2009; Proverbs *et al.* 1999; Thomas, 1992; Butcher and Sheehan, 2010; Frost, 2004; Torres *et al.* 2013; Siphambe and Tlhobogang, 2010; Rodgers and Kuptsch, 2008) on many aspects of decent work practices, however, no comprehensive study was found to include many of the decent work practices specific to the cultures of the countries.

In the following sections, we present the narratives of the construction labourers forming part of Paper no. 1.

Homesickness

Most of the construction labourers mentioned “We do feel homesick” and “We talk once a week to the family”. Others said “How can I talk? I have had no money for the last two months. I have not been paid my salary for the last two months”. “I feel homesick because I worry how my parents will eat, as I was the only source sending them money”, said one labourer in a very low tone.

Salary

One of the labourers said “I have a salary of AED 600 (US\$165) which is not enough to reduce my debt of AED 8,000 (US\$2,200) in the period of three years of the contract period”. He added, “We spend no money here and send it all home”. One labourer who was injured at work said “I got injured and have not been paid for the last three months and at the same time I have not been reimbursed for the medical treatment.” About the working hours they said “We have to work for 12 hours a day but are not paid for the extra 3 hours”.

When asked why then they were encouraging others to come here, one said “We have to feed ... our parents. There is nothing at home”, according to one labourer.

One of the labourers interrupted the discussion and said “If we are paid in full at the right time, we can do any kind of work” and hence there was no issue with the right skill and right job.

Conditions and Entertainment

The accommodation of the labourers was not spacious and one could observe beds built one above another. Some labourers mentioned that they were asked to work even on Fridays and on Eid (a Muslim religious festival) to meet the project requirements. The construction labourers also mentioned that they do not go out as the taxi fare was expensive. Some of the labourers also said that they would not go to the town because they did not have their relatives with them in the UAE. “In our room, we do not have any entertainment. Only the TV and with that we manage”.

Mismanagement and Abuse

A discussion started about the use of abusive language at work and after work. One labourer said harshly “Giving a curse is a routine matter”. One of the

labourers said “It is true that we are given curses but it is because we do not work properly”. An engineer in the focus group said “One of the supervisors in this camp used to beat the labourers”. During the narratives it was noted that men were not beaten often but abusive language was common. The general supervisor of the labourers who was also present in the discussion commented “If you do not show resistance, you will not get anything in return”. He went on, “I had an accident some years back and asked the company to pay me compensation for the injury. As I was not paid, I took them to court and since then I have been respected”.

Overwork

The general supervisor of the company said “We have to work for 12 hours a day but we are not paid overtime.” All with one voice said that the greatest issue of all is that “we are not given even one day off. We have to work on Fridays too. If we got the afternoon of Friday off, it would be better”. This was the time of the boom in the construction industry of the UAE, when labourers were forced to work overtime to achieve project objectives. However, in the recession of 2009, the labourers are no longer forced to work on Fridays. One labourer said, “We are not allowed to rest in the Eid holiday. We were called to work then, but we did not go”. About the food they said “We are given food for three meals, but it is not good. Most of the time it is vegetables and no meat”. One labourer said “I cook myself as I cannot eat this food”.

Right Skills for the Job

The labourer discussed the issue by saying “I am highly skilled at painting but was given an unskilled job, which doesn’t benefit me. Still, I have no problem with this. I only want my full salary to be paid on time and then work is not a problem.”

Productive Work/Social Security/Migration Debt

The labourers have very little hope of future growth and development. They do not see that their current and unpredictable duties will add to their skills. Moreover, the debt of coming to the UAE is a heavy burden. One labourer said “Living three years in the UAE will not lift the burden of debt on me. It is difficult to return money and at the same time pay for my parents’ food.”

Absenteeism

As the researcher entered the premises of the company, the supervisor complained that the labourers generally do not work much. He said “They come early, get their cards punched and do not work. These labourers go to their rooms and take a rest – they don’t work.” I asked the labourers if this was true; they said “It is true, we have not been paid for the last two months and we are not paid well. There is no leave on Fridays and even in Eid we have no holiday. How can we possibly work conscientiously?” One labourer said “We sometime deceive the supervisor and after arriving here, we slink out to work somewhere else and can easily earn 50 AED (US\$14) and ... we pay 10 AED (US\$3) to our group leader”. It seems that the committed employees can be more productive than underpaying the labourers and finding them absent from work. One labourer said “We are not allowed to invite friends, not even in Eid”. Further, living conditions there were not satisfactory. 18 people lived in the same room, with three bunks one above the other. This suggests that the labourer who live there may not be happy.

Social Issues at Home

To an enquiry about family life, one married labourer said “I have been here for the last ... two years and came here just after marriage... I got married because I thought I would be earning more... I have had no children so far and ... don’t know if I will have a baby boy....to look after my family.....I need 5 children to take care of my family’s problems.” “We do feel homesick”, was the complaint raised by everyone.

These decent work practice indicators were identified in 2008. Since then there has been a marked improvement in the decent work practice indicators in the construction industry of the UAE. The government of the UAE has made tremendous efforts to ensure that the labourers’ salaries are deposited in their bank accounts in time and in full. The labourers also mentioned that the inspectors have visited the sites more often and that the safety of the labourers in the workplace is considered significant.

4.6.2 Paper No. 2 – Effects of cultural assimilation on the performance of a construction project – evidence from the UAE

This paper builds up the foundation for the national cultural theory of Hofstede as a reference for studying construction projects in the UAE rather as paper 1 established the basis for the decent work practice indicators in the same country's construction projects.

The researcher kept a diary of lessons learned as the two construction projects proceeded. These records became part of the research data. The coding of the data started after all the data had been collected. To arrive at the meaning of these data, Hofstede's national cultural dimensions (1994a) were considered the existing cultural framework and the data were coded and categorized according to Hofstede's national cultural dimensions (1994a) and re-confirmed and cross-checked through interviews.

Two projects were considered for the case study: Projects Alpha and Beta of 12 months and three months duration respectively. Both projects were managed by two Chinese teams from a Chinese contracting company. The project manager of Project Alpha project was 28 years old and had had five years' experience of such work. The manager of Project Beta was 40 years old and had had 17 years' experience of this work in several countries.

The paper examines what caused Project Alpha to succeed and Project Beta to fail. The Project Alpha team scored 30 in LTO with a negative UAI of -28 in the 12 months' duration of the project, whereas the Project Beta team scored 16 in LTO and a negative UAI of -15 in the three months' duration of their project. Both the projects scored well in LTO, reflecting the Chinese national ideal of non deviant behaviour. However, the negative uncertainty left a situation which was felt to be ambiguous, risky and undefined (Neelankavil *et al.* 2000). This low score of UAI resulted from the communication gap between the Chinese project management team and the client/consultant teams which came from Asian and European countries or from the inability of the Chinese management team to write good method statements. Both the Chinese teams, at the start of the project, were working against their national culture of high UAI and also against the culture of the host country, but the Alpha team, after an initial learning curve, started to assimilate with national culture of their host country by raising the UAI in line with their hosts. The Project Beta team, in contrast, did not improve the UAI, knowing that the project would not last long and was led by a senior team. Moreover, as the Beta

Project progressed, the MAS of the team increased along with UAI, contributing to the termination of the project. Therefore not only did the difference in UAI and LTO have a significant negative impact on this international joint venture, as maintained by Yan and Zeng (1999), but an increase in MAS behaviour at a critical time in the project may have significantly affected the outcome of the project. Moreover, the culture of each nation also changes. For example, Australian managers differ from USA managers more than Hong Kong managers differ from USA managers (Westwood and Posner, 1997). The paper concludes with the need for training in international projects in order to understand the national culture of the migrant workers and of their host country, as successful projects require. Understanding can be gained through training in the home country of the project management team (Muller and Turner, 2007). The literature (Dong and Liu, 2010) suggests that inter-cultural conflict poses the greatest challenge to international business.

This paper contributed by studying the national culture of the migrant project management team in an overseas international project. It went on to compare the migrant national culture with the national culture of the host country and undertook a chronological longitudinal study of national cultural assimilation of one culture to the culture of the workers' host country, resulting in the success of Project Alpha and failure of Project Beta. Finally this paper established a national cultural foundation for Paper no. 3.

4.6.3 Paper No. 3 – National culture and decent work practices – lessons from the construction project-based-industry of the UAE

Decent work practice indicators for Chinese labourers were not identified during the development of the framework given in Figure 2. Therefore, in identifying the national culture of the construction labourers in decent work conditions, the decent work practice indicators for the Chinese labourers were identified as suitable for Paper 3.

Validating of decent work practice indicators for Chinese labourers:

The findings of this paper identify decent work practices for the Chinese labourers whose national culture was introduced in Paper no. 2.

The paper suggests that the Chinese construction labourer do not have the same decent work practice indicators as the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi

construction labourers do. In this regard, the very first finding was that the Chinese do not pay migration fees of any kind to come to the UAE, including both travel and visa costs. With no migration fees to pay, the Chinese labourers are debt-free in the UAE, unlike the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers who arrive in the UAE with a burden of debt.

Paper no.3 also revealed that “there will be no uncles in China”, as a construction labourer put it, because there are no brothers. The Chinese family system is confined to the core family only, comprising one’s parents, wife and one child. Therefore provisions for parental and extended families are not among the decent work practice indicators for the Chinese construction labourers in the UAE.

Abuse in the workplace is not a decent work practice indicator for the Chinese construction labourers. Chinese construction labourers mentioned that they were not abused the workplace, but they were fined if they did not work properly. During the course of the present data collection from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers, they did not speak of abuse in the workplace. This is an improvement in the decent work practices in 2011–2012 in the UAE over conditions in 2008 when the data were collected for Paper no.1.

“The taste of food in the UAE is the same as at home” the Chinese construction labourers noted. Unlike the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers, who are not provided with good free meals, the Chinese labourers do not count food among the decent work issues.

Chinese labourers enjoy a two- to three-hour lunch break in both summer and winter. This is because of the difference in weather conditions of the UAE and China. In China the maximum temperature is about 34°C, but in the UAE it can rise as high as 48°C (Ailabouni *et al.* 2009). The paper reveals that because working in hot weather was difficult for the Chinese labourers, the temperatures in the UAE are a decent work practice indicator for them.

Finally, in the pursuit of validating the decent work practice indicators, the Chinese labourers insisted that there was no security problem in their country and hence they were not worried about the security of their family members back home.

After validating the decent work practice indicators for the Chinese labourers and at the same time confirming the decent work practice indicators for the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers, the national culture of the labourers was determined while practising these indicators.

National culture of the labourers while practising decent work indicators:

This paper looks into the cultural behaviour of the labourers while practising these indicators. This paper, therefore is built up on the results of Papers 1 and 2, where decent work practice indicators and the concept of a national culture were introduced.

The paper reveals that what Bangladeshi labourers do in the UAE in the face of the huge migration debt they must pay in the UAE. No study has been found to have covered the steps taken by migrant labourers in the UAE or in the wider Middle East when they find that their earnings are not high enough to pay off their migration debt, when they lose their job in the UAE in a recession or when they want to make more money in the new country.

The paper reveals that the Bangladeshi construction labourers paid higher migration fees to come to the UAE than the Indian and Pakistani labourers did and their salary in the country was lower than any other of the major migrant nationalities. Some Bangladeshi construction labourers said in their narratives that on a few Fridays they were asked to work against their will, which contravened their religious rights. They resorted to escaping from the company and working elsewhere to earn more money, which was illegal. This was an act of low LTO behaviour. The construction labourers were seen washing cars outside shopping malls or selling pirated CDs and tobacco items such as “paan” (betel leaf containing tobacco) and “gutka” (areca nut with tobacco). The paper also reveals that Bangladeshi construction labourers also scored less on IND, suggesting that they adopt collectivistic behaviour in the UAE. Bangladeshi labourers showed a higher PDI than did the Indian, Pakistani and Chinese labourers. The reason for this higher PDI was their need to repay their exceptionally high migration debt. This suggests that the PDI dimension of national culture is dependent on the LTO dimension of national culture.

Mohamed *et al.* (2009) was the only study found to have covered one aspect of the decent work practice of safety. Paper no.2, however, covers all the aspects of decent work practices for Pakistani construction labourers in the UAE. Pakistani construction labourers scored highest in MAS. Despite their migration debt, these labourers insisted that they would not want their women to work outside the home. The demands of migration debt and the extended family, according to the paper, become stressful when the male members of the family do not want to work or have no work in Pakistan. In the absence of other entertainment, Pakistani construction labourers play a local game called “kabati” or “kabaddi”, which needs strength and

agility. They claimed that though they were not abused on site, if they had been, they would have responded in kind. This demonstrates high MAS behaviour. The Pakistani construction labourers said that their parents control all the family affairs. However, they would not ask for annual leave or higher wages because they might then be asked to leave the job and be deported back to their home country. This shows that PDI in the UAE is influenced by LTO.

Paper no.3 reveals that the Indian construction labourers scored higher in UAI due to a higher score for abuse at work, no proper food, injury at work and family issues back home. Regarding overwork, the migrant construction labourers stated that they were aware of the probability of being overworked in the UAE. Asked about abuse at work, the construction labourers replied that so long as they worked properly, they were not abused. They were certain about this proviso and therefore UAI was high. Regarding family issues back home, the construction labourers declared that because their region was peaceful, they were not worried about their families in India. In contrast, Pakistani construction labourers stated that they were worried about their families in Pakistan because of the unsatisfactory state of law and order in their region.

Interestingly Paper no.3 says that Chinese construction labourers exhibit individualist behaviour in the workplace. They would not help or talk of helping fellow-workers. They would do their own work only, not interested in other people's work, and would say that the work of a fellow labourer is the work of the "other company". Chinese construction labourers showed the highest LTO behaviour. They consider work more important than rest for themselves. One labourer asserted that only the death of a family member would make them go back to China on emergency leave. One Chinese labourer mentioned that in the presence of others they would not tell their foreman that he was wrong. The construction labourers used to say that the "boss is boss". If they had no proper food or an injury at work, they would talk to the management; in this situation PDI was low. This shows that the national cultural dimension of PDI is influenced by the national cultural dimension of LTO.

The results of Paper no.3 were carried over to the next paper to build up the framework for the impact of cultural behaviour while practising the decent work indicators in the construction projects of the UAE. For example, given that Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers pay a migration debt, what is the behaviour of the labourers from these nationalities in the UAE?

The paper comes to different conclusions from those in the earlier study by Hofstede on national culture. The paper reveals that the decent work practice

indicators of Chinese labourers are not the same as those of the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers. This reinforces the validity and reliability of Paper no. 1 for identifying the decent work practice indicators specific to the culture of the labourers. The paper suggests that once the cultural behaviour of the labourers is known under their work practices, effective policy for the temporary migration to the UAE can be made, including the need to train the construction labourers in cultural awareness for the sake of cultural management.

4.6.4 Paper No. 4 – Improving performance of labourers in the construction projects of UAE: a multi cultural perspective

The following sections discuss the impact of the cultural behaviour of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, India and Chinese labourers in the situation of decent work practice indicators in the UAE.

Bangladeshi Construction Labourers, National Culture and Performance

Paper no. 4 reveals that the selling of tobacco items such as “paan” (betel leaf containing tobacco) and “gutka” (areca nut with tobacco) by Bangladeshi constructions labourers has an impact on their performance in terms of health, besides its economic, social and environmental impact on society. When the researcher sniffed one of these tobacco products, such was its impact that he felt dizzy and could not walk, but according to the labourers who were used to it, they did not feel dizzy. However, they mentioned that, as tobacco items, they have some impact on health. The researcher observed that in the areas where the pan was sold, the streets looked red, affecting the environment and the aesthetic appearance of the towns. This is a reflection of low LTO behaviour at the workplace.

The sale of pornographic films or music and dance videos is illegal in the UAE. Bangladeshi labourers sell these videos at night in their labour camps and in the cities. The sale of these items has an impact on the host society, for not only did labourers (mostly older men) buy them but youngsters also entered the camps for the same purpose. The labourers knew that if they were to be caught, they would be fined, imprisoned and/or deported. Therefore, as the researcher observed, as soon as the labourers noticed a stranger, they would hide their videos. This reveals that the sale of pornographic videos has not only a social and psychological impact, but an economic impact as well when the labourers are fined, imprisoned and/or repatriated for their illegal activities.

The paper also describes the labourers collecting empty beverage cans from the dustbins. The labourers mentioned that they earn AED 20 per day from selling these. One labourer seemed very weak and looked as if he had not been to see a doctor because he had no insurance and medical treatment cost a great deal. This shows that if the labourers cannot support themselves, health problems may result. These labourers were living together in one room; any infectious disease that they caught could infect others as well. This reflects the low LTO behaviour of the Bangladeshi labourers in the workplace.

The differences in national culture brought conflict between the labourers. The researcher observed two fights that broke out between Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers at the gambling site. In both the Bangladeshi construction labourers resorted to high MAS behaviours while the Pakistani construction labourers resorted to low LTO behaviours, which resulted in open conflict. For effective migration, therefore, it is important to manage the culture of the construction labourers. Such conflicts have an economic and social impact on all the parties involved.

The Bangladeshi labourers mentioned that they woke at 4 am to go to work and returned at 8 pm. This, the labourers mentioned, was tiring and stressful. The fatigue within the construction labourers may impact on their performance and could be a reason for accidents as well. Overtime is protected in Articles 66, 67, 68 and 70 of the UAE labour law.

The Bangladeshi labourers complained of feeling homesick and would have liked to talk to their family members more frequently. This is to reduce stress (high LTO) and resort to low LTO behaviour. Therefore, to control this behaviour, it would be helpful to reduce the cost of phone calls either from Bangladesh to the UAE or from the UAE to the major migrant country of Bangladesh. Within the labour camp area, calls could be subsidized and the companies could be obliged to supply free telephone cards to anyone working away from the labour camps. The construction labourers assemble in the cities of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah in large numbers to talk to each other on matters related to their families and to their work in the host country. Some companies provide the labourers with weekly transport to the town, but this is not very common. Such provision would increase the labourers' LTO in their commitment to the company and would reduce uncertainty (high UAI). Article 101 of the UAE Labour Law requires that the employers should provide entertainment facilities if the labourers are stationed in a remote area.

The Bangladeshi construction labourers narrated that their company does not provide food and said that they were not happy to cook their own because it was stressful. They would have liked to eat fish and rice. According to Article 101 of

the UAE Labour Law, employers are required to provide food for their employees if the workplace is remote from the nearest town. The companies can achieve high LTO for the employees' commitment to the company by providing good free meals to the labourers.

A large number of Bangladeshi construction labourers were observed working outside their parent company either because the company had no work for them or was paying them too little to let them pay back their migration debt, which reflects their low LTO behaviour at the workplace. The researcher observed that Bangladeshi construction labourers caught working illegally in a construction company were imprisoned and repatriated, affecting not only the progress and quality of the project, but profoundly affecting the labourers and their families socially and economically.

For example, washing cars in the street during and after working hours is illegal. A construction labourer confessed that he was doing this because of his low salary. In his view, this "affected the construction work as well because I am not committed to working well". But Articles 116, 122, 123 and 128 of the UAE Labour Law protect both the employee and the employer against arbitrary action by the other.

Bangladeshi construction labourers protect themselves in the workplace and were also aware of compensation in case of injury and occasionally resorted to going to court for compensation, a reflection of high LTO. However, their contract could be terminated after receiving compensation from their company, a reflection of low LTO. This is important for safe work behaviour. Article 91 protects employees against disease in the workplace, Articles 96 and 100 confirm the use of PPE and Article 144 requires employers to bear the cost of treatment of the labourers. A full chapter, Chapter V, of the Labour Law is dedicated to the monitoring of the Ministry of Labour regulations at the workplace.

In the private sector of the UAE, however, there is no pension policy, but an end-of-service benefit (gratuity) is provided under UAE law (Article 125).

Pakistani Construction Labourers, National Culture and Performance

Two Pakistani labourers narrated that for their last 15 months in the UAE, they had had to wait for 8 months for work. These labourers revealed that they had not had money to buy food in the host country, though their relatives in Pakistan were probably thinking that these young boys were enjoying themselves and not sending the extended family anything. This, the labourers admitted, was very painful.

However they mentioned that if they had had work in the UAE, they would have been happy with their monthly salary of AED 850.

Two other Pakistani labourers seemed happy to be able to send Rupees 10,000 (AED 400) to their family members in Pakistan and were satisfied with their life in the UAE. A labourer who got a job in the UAE through a reference by his brother said that he was very happy to have a salary of AED 1200 which allowed him to save some. These were cases of the successful temporary migration for labourers who had no migration debt to pay and a handsome salary. These construction labourers showed high LTO behaviour, not engaging in illegal activities in their host country.

Pakistani people live in extended families. The labourers living abroad spoke of the stress of being responsible for their whole extended family and having nothing saved for their children. Moreover, since not all male family members are employed and female relatives are not encouraged to work, the burden on them was huge.

The labourers felt happy to work overtime, but working a 12-hour day in the hot summer climate was difficult and gave them minimal time for sleeping. The labourers added that this affected their health, putting them under stress and possibly causing accidents at the site. Having to work on Fridays as well and return from work at 11 am was neither productive for the company nor for the construction labourers and they would have preferred to take a day's leave. Article 71 of the Labour Law prohibits working on two consecutive Fridays.

Pakistani construction labourers show high scores in LTO, MAS and UAI in the situation of no entertainment. They said that, even if sports facilities were offered, it was difficult to find the time to play games. The companies therefore should arrange transport to nearby towns once a week for the entertainment of the labourers, for this would increase their LTO for commitment to the companies.

The labourers included in their accounts not observing PPE at the site. This requires education and training to the labourers about the importance of safety at work.

They found cooking after a long day's work to be tiring and also a woman's job. Again, the employers could arrange to provide food to the labourers which would help labourers to rest completely for a while and enjoy good free food.

Absenteeism was also observed among the Pakistani construction labourers. They labourers were observed collecting paper cartons from the dustbins just as the Bangladeshi construction labourers were seen collecting cans from them. The labourers mentioned that they had been doing this work since they had lost their jobs. One labourer said of his friend that once he learned what he was doing in the

UAE, he decided to return to his home in the absence of proper work. The labourers knew that if they became ill while doing this work, they would be in a difficult situation since they have no insurance and the treatment in the UAE was expensive.

The ideal for the labourers would have been to find a well-paid job in the UAE and to have opened a shop in a town or start some other business on their return from the UAE.

Indian Construction Labourers, National Culture and Performance

Indian construction labourers paid higher migration fees than their Pakistani counterparts but lower than those from Bangladesh. Indian construction labourers revealed high LTO behaviour by not engaging in illegal activities in the UAE, even if the repayment of the migration debt takes longer than it does Pakistani workers.

Indian construction labourers do not have extended families as Pakistani labourers have. They have two brothers or sisters at most. Moreover the younger son inherits the house of his parents and he need not buy his own house. At the same time, the elder son may not continue to be responsible for the welfare of the family. In this position of shared responsibility, the stress on the Indian construction labourers is less than on the Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers.

Indian construction labourers also prefer to work overtime to earn more money. A 52-year-old Indian steel fitter stated that he was tired after working for 10 years as a steel fitter in the hot sun and his health would not allow him to continue. The labourer said that his job was risky and would prefer to work on easier tasks in India, commensurate with his age and health. This reflects that, despite the need to earn more money, labourers should not engage in the work which brings them social and economic problems.

Indian construction labourers use internet mobile phone cards to call their families in India. This is illegal; however it was cheaper than calling from a normal mobile phone. Meeting their relatives in the labour camps and the towns at weekends also gives the labourers some diversion and reduces homesickness (high UAI). These labourers should be given the opportunity to talk to their families from their labour camps in the UAE at subsidized rates; or the states in India which send a large proportion of their workers to the UAE should have low rates for families to call their breadwinners in the UAE. In this way uncertainty would decrease and the construction labourers would have high LTO behaviour in the workplace.

Indian labourers were observed singing religious songs in their rooms on weekends, drinking beer outside a big popular labour camp and participating in a

cricket series arranged by the government of Dubai in the May Day celebrations. The employers should arrange such games on a weekly/monthly basis, allowing the construction labourers to reduce their stress levels (high UAI) and raise their commitment to work (high LTO) by healthy pursuits. The employers should also arrange transport for the employers to visit towns.

Indian construction labourers were of a different opinion from other migrant workers about facing abuse at work. They mentioned that if they were abused in the workplace for not performing well and would not fight or respond in kind as Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction labourers did. Indian construction labourers continued to respect the law, resulting in effective periods of migration. In the event, high LTO turns into high MAS, resulting in conflicts in the workplace, in particular given the high MAS behaviour of the Pakistani construction labourers. The high LTO, high UAI, high IND and low MAS behaviour discourages conflict and make such periods of migrant work successful.

Indian construction labourers also show a desire to receive good free food and added that making meals after a day's work was tiring. Therefore to increase their LTO towards the companies, such stress should be reduced (high UAI) by providing good free meals.

It was rare to find Indian construction labourers working outside their parent company; however a senior labourer was observed working as a house cleaner. This labourer saw it as a loss to the company that experienced workers were leaving for better-paid jobs elsewhere. The company loses pace and suffers lower quality work, affecting overall performance. Therefore by providing better salary packages commensurate with workers' skills and experience, the commitment of the labourers could be improved (high LTO) and uncertainty (high UAI) removed, benefiting both the company and the labourers.

The Indian construction labourers would put on proper PPE to protect themselves against accidents on site, but would rather not complain if others were violating the safety code, for instance if a claim was not honoured by the employer. This behaviour of the Indian construction labourers was different from the Bangladeshi construction labourers who would prefer to take the matter to court. The companies should honour UAE labour law by providing free medical services and should enforce the safety rules on site.

Indian construction labourers mentioned that since the dirham-rupee exchange rate was not favourable to them and India had plenty of work, they would have preferred to go back to India. The labourers knew that the increase in the cost of food had exceeded the increase in their salary; thus sending home anything less

than AED 700 (10,000 Indian rupees) would take away the benefit of working in the UAE.

These labourers revealed that they are not troubled by issues of security at home. They did not feel the same profound anxiety about their family as was felt by the Pakistani construction labourers.

Chinese Construction Labourers, National Culture and Performance

Chinese labourers did not pay any of the migration fees that fell on Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi labourers. Therefore the labourers could save everything that they earned in the UAE, which is a reflection of high LTO. Moreover the labourers working in a company come from a particular region and thus in some cases even a security deposit of AED 3500 was not required and no formal contract was signed. This was a reflection of trust reducing the uncertainty between the employee and the employers.

As noted above, these labourers revealed that they did not have an extended family or more uncles in China; their family comprises of husband, wife and one child. Moreover the labourers mentioned that they needed only to inform their parents that they were going to the UAE and, since they were only responsible for their core family, they had much less stress than Pakistani construction labourers who took care of an extended family.

Chinese labourers accustomed to cooler temperatures were not comfortable in the hot weather of the UAE. They could be observed on site protecting themselves by broad hats, open shirts and by taking green tea in large flasks. The hot weather affected their performance and, with this in mind, their company provides a two-hour lunch break in winter and a three-and-a-half hour lunch break in summer, in compliance with the UAE Labour Law. This helps to achieve high LTO and high UAI for the construction labourers. It is important that both employees and employers should consider weather implications before reaching an agreement for working on international projects.

Chinese labourers specified that they had no religion and hence religious rights in the workplace were unknown to them. However, the labourers and the employer would celebrate Chinese New Year or May Day as official holidays. The Chinese labourers responded by being ready even on such occasions to work on urgent projects, a demonstration of high LTO, but the engineers said, they would not ask the labourers to work then because it might affect their performance.

The Chinese labourers stated that the company provides them with a telephone card worth AED 25 each month, which pays for calls to relatives. Moreover, all

the labourers come from the same region, giving them the feeling of an in-group and reducing the uncertainty of homesickness (high UAI). This low LTO from being able to save money and not worry about calling home was channelled into commitment to their company unimpaired by uncertainty (low UAI).

On the occasion of the Chinese New Year and May Day celebrations, games would be arranged by their head office in which all the site and office staff would take part. A weekly dinner outdoors was also arranged on the site, which was refreshing for the site staff. However, a construction labourer mentioned that they rarely went beyond the site office, although at the start and end of the project they would be taken on a tour of Dubai. These activities reinforce the commitment of the labourers to the company and raise motivation.

The Chinese labourers were not aware of abuse in the workplace (high LTO), but had to sign a copy of the working method to ensure that they were individually responsible for their work (ensuring high UAI). This suggests that high LTO, IND and UAI behaviour with low MAS behaviour constitutes effective temporary migration.

The Chinese construction labourers show high LTO and UAI behaviours from having good free food which tastes as it used to be at home. This cuts out the stress (high UAI) of having to cook their own meals on returning to the labour camp. This helps to move their LTO to commitment to the company, improving performance of their projects in the UAE.

Chinese labourers show high LTO behaviour in the workplace, making it unthinkable for them to leave the company and work with another one or move elsewhere for a higher salary. A site engineer once remarked that the work of one Chinese labourer was equal to the work of three labourers of other nationalities, here referring to the high LTO and UAI behaviour of the Chinese labourers.

One of the Chinese companies provided free medical services but not the other one. The labourers were asked to look after themselves and not engage in risky activities. Neither company reported accidents. It was also noted during the course of the project that the Chinese labourers would observe complete PPE. This compliance with safety requirements could be due to high UAI, high IND behaviour in the workplace and the low MAS behaviour there.

Chinese construction labourers revealed that they do not have special security concern about their families and therefore did not feel the same direct impact of family issues that the Pakistani construction labourers suffered.

The paper concludes that high LTO should be encouraged, which is consistent with the UAE laws. MAS behaviour should be managed to reduce homesickness

and safe work culture at the site. Similarly, low IND should be managed to reduce homesickness and provide entertainment for the labourers. The labourers should be given complete information (high UAI) about their rights and responsibilities while working in the UAE. High MAS, low IND, low LTO and low UAI should be monitored and training provided to the labourers in managing cultural differences. At the same time, after determining the impact of cultural behaviour in the workplace, Paper no. 4 suggests some improvements in decent work practices, in particular migration debt, acceptable salary conditions and good free food.

4.7 Authors' note

This thesis contributes to both theory and practice by helping the migrant sending and receiving countries in making effective temporary migration policies and to managers in management of the international projects involving cross-cultural teams. The thesis includes four publications-three international journal papers and one conference paper. This thesis is a result of working experience of the author in construction projects involving labourers of the major labour sending nationalities, namely, Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistanis. Chinese construction companies in their own way have also gone global.

5 Conclusions

The overall research question of the thesis is: How can we achieve effective temporary migration of the construction labourers with decent work practices in a cross-cultural context which benefits the migrant sending countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladeshi and China) and the receiving country (UAE)

The above research question is central to the thesis. It builds its foundation on the identification of decent work practices, a concept which is still nascent in the literature, except in the ILO's publications and reports. After determining the decent work practice indicators, the question of national cultures was introduced into the research process through the performance of the construction projects. The first two research papers helped build a stronger foundation for the cultural study and examination of decent work practices in the projects.

The study of decent work practices was a result of a qualitative study, helping to answer the research question by identifying the decent work practice indicators. However, identifying national cultures and their impact through cross-cultural communication in construction projects was possible through quantitative analysis, forming part of the empirical data. These empirical data, through coding, helped assess the reasons for the success or failure of two projects, answering the "why" part of the research question of Paper no. 2. Nevertheless, the qualitative part of the research question "how" found its roots in the qualitative analysis of the sequencing of assimilation of the national culture. With the confirmation of the influence of the national culture on the performance of the construction projects, as a result of Paper no. 2, both decent work practices and the national culture were introduced in relation to construction labourers. This is how a strong foundation of decent work practices and national culture was introduced into the thesis framework.

Decent work indicators are both a concept and a phenomenon in practice. Decent work indicators have been measured by the ILO under its DWCP programme, but this thesis is the first of its kind to not only find the culturally specific decent work practice indicators, but to refine these indicators by measuring them culturally in the construction projects of the UAE, as carried out in Paper no. 3. In this way the culture was also quantified in the construction projects of the UAE. The impact of cultural behaviour in determining decent work phenomenon was determined in Paper no. 4. Once the impact of the cultural behaviour while following decent work indicators was determined, improvements in the decent work practices could accordingly be effectively achieved. This becomes a continuous process, of finding the cultural behaviour and improving the decent work practice indicators.

The study found decent work practices in the UAE, with roots in the countries of origin of the workers. Migration debt, family issues at home and the extended family have a trickle-down effect on the decent work practice indicators which originate in the UAE. Similarly, the thesis demonstrated its ability to bring the national culture of the construction labourers to the UAE and finds its response while practising the decent work practice indicators in the construction projects of the UAE.

The study takes national cultures along with their bearers to a foreign country. It then compares the national cultures of the home countries with the national culture of the host country where the labourers execute the projects.

5.1 Theoretical contribution

The most successful theories are those which help resolve problems. This thesis helps in both adding to the body of knowledge on national culture, decent work practices, temporary migration, cross-cultural communication and the performance of construction projects in the UAE, but also helps to resolve issues related to these aspects of construction work.

The decent work practices were determined as specific to the varying cultures of the construction labourers in the UAE.

The study on the determination of decent work practice indicators went one step beyond the work by Hofstede. Hofstede studies focused on the employees of IBM in their own countries, using questionnaire surveys, but the present thesis in contrast studied the national culture of four sets of migrant labourers in a host country. Moreover, this culture was studied while pursuing decent work indicators, through the construction labourers who experience these indicators.

National cultures affect the performance of the projects. The impact of national culture on the performance of international projects in a foreign country is assessed in this work. The study revealed how low LTO affected the performance of Project Alpha and Project Beta, when this national cultural behaviour was unlike the national culture of the Chinese project team in the same foreign country and unlike the national culture of the UAE. This study, through this intuition, worked out the assimilation of the national culture by the of the Chinese management team of Project Alpha to bring about a successful project.

The thesis puts Hofstede's national culture dimensions into practice in a wider domain. Individual studies were found to have covered only one aspect of decent work practices through Hofstede's national cultural dimensions. This study,

however, covers all aspects of decent work practices specific to the culture of the construction labourers. It qualifies and improves decent work practices under the pressure of national cultures.

Empirical data on the phenomenon of decent work practices and national culture add meaning to the data collected and help in comparing decent work practice indicators on the one hand and the national culture on the other. Determining the increased MAS of the Pakistani labourers, low LTO of the Bangladeshi labourers, high IND of the Chinese labourers and high UAI of the Indian labourers could be compared through the quantification of the qualitative data.

Further, the study was extended to cover the impact of culture on the performance of the construction projects while following the decent work indicators. This is what leads to the specific national cultural features in the different nationalities in the UAE. The important thing here is not the culture but the cultural behaviour of the labourers since this determines the decent work indicators. It was noticed that under the decent work indicator of migration debt, for example, the Indian construction labourers did not exhibit low LTO behaviour, yet the study revealed that the Bangladeshi construction labourers resorted to low LTO behaviour by engaging in short term jobs, leaving their parent companies to do them. The thesis went further to study what impact this behaviour had on the performance of the construction labourers, in terms of economic and social concerns, which may have an impact on the performance of the projects in the UAE. The negative impacts (as a result of unlawful acts) of the cultural behaviour under these decent work practices can affect the labourers and their families as well. The macro level impact of this cultural behaviour could affect the relationship between the migrant sending and migrant receiving countries.

The methodological contribution can also be emphasised in that the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese labourers reflected consistent behaviour regarding the decent work indicators. It is possible that the labourers from different parts of Pakistan may have their own sub-cultures, but once in the migrant receiving country, these labourers showed consistent behaviour, most of all the Indian and Pakistani construction labourers. But the Pakistani construction labourers from one specific region, who collected paper cartons from the dust bins reflected a distinct sub-culture within the national culture of the Pakistani labourers in the UAE as a whole. Culture convergence theory as a result of globalization does not apply in the case of migrant construction labourers in the UAE.

This thesis helps with international migration policy making and keeping a balance between economic and social objectives. The home countries of economic

migrants should consider the culture of their own labourers and the migrant receiving countries should consider the decent work practices prevalent in the construction projects of the migrant sending country. Effective temporary migration policies are only possible through an understanding of the culture of the people at work and the culture of the people under whose responsibility the labourers are working, the companies in the migrant receiving countries. In this way, the study not only helps policy-makers, but staff recruitment workers, who should consider the decent work practice indicators in the workplace and the national culture of the labourers in the migrant sending country. This leads us to the next section of the thesis: its managerial implications.

5.2 Managerial contribution

The role of a project manager is vital in the success and failure of the project. Many projects fail because of the internal conflict between the employees at the workplace. Multi-culturalism is unavoidable in international projects. Therefore the success of a project depends on team work and the satisfaction of the employees. Development or management of a project team is possible through matching work practices and the culture of the people. Further, the reward system also depends on the culture of the employees. In Japan it could be the collective prize to the whole team that matters and not anyone's individual performance but in the US the reverse would be true. Therefore the present study invites managers to check the culture of the construction labourers in the interests of effective team management, with work practices in mind. Of course, the right training of the labourers and improvements in decent work practices will result in effective labour migration.

Managers may face a problem in managing projects in the labour receiving country because of the difference between its national culture and that of the and migrant receiving country. A project manager, who is successful in the home country may not be successful in the migrant receiving country because of this difference in the national culture. Done and Liu (2010) suggest that inter-cultural conflicts pose the greatest challenge to international business. This study suggests that projects carried out in the labourers home country are more successful than those carried out in a host country due to different environment. Jacob (2005) comments that Austrian managers are soft spoken and considered grand gentlemen, whereas quite the opposite is the case in Germany where communication is direct and open and subordinates may reprimand even project managers.

China is following a go global policy. For successful projects in a foreign country, it is important that a project team in a foreign country is aware of the national culture of the migrant workers, decent work practices, such as precautions against the high temperatures of the UAE, and the national culture of the UAE. Subsequent training of the migrant staff will result in successful projects and effective temporary migration. This also applies to companies from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and companies from around the world wanting to do business in the UAE.

This research helps managers more by its first-hand research observations, than would reliance on Western management theories in the construction projects of the UAE. The study contributes to the contextualization of the national culture by its study of the culture of the labourers, by the labourers and for the labourers, while the results of the study contributes to effective and successful project management, beneficial to all the stakeholders in a project. The project manager should manage the cultural differences of the labourers in order to improve overall project performance. For example the high MAS behaviour of the Pakistani construction labourers can be used for high productivity and safe work. Similarly low IND of the Bangladeshi labourers could be used for team work. High LTO behaviour of the Chinese labourers could be helpful for a high commitment work. The high UAI of the Indian labourers, once managed effectively could result in efficient work practice which adheres to the laws of the UAE. This shows that the different national cultures, once managed properly, could result in improved successful completion of projects and effective temporary migration of construction labourers.

Effective improvement in the decent work practices is possible through an understanding of the culture of the people operating in conformity with these indicators. Indicators are like a vehicle driven (i.e., 'practised') by a labourer with a specific national culture. The condition of the vehicle and the driving skill or culture of the labourers will result in a successful journey to the temporary migrant country and return home. Improvement in decent work practices will lead to the improved performance of the labourers and the over all improvement of construction projects. This is made possible by investigating the national culture of the construction labourers practising these indicators. Therefore, the managerial contribution is not limited to the improvement of the projects' performance only but also the improvement of the decent work practice indicators.

5.3 Validity and reliability of thesis

Validity refers to completeness and accuracy whereas reliability refers to consistency and precision. Now, quantitative data is more focused on reliability, attaining consistency and precision in the findings even if the research is carried out again and again. For example, in the processes of project management we would be happy to see the results received being consistent, ensuring that the process is working according to plan. However, completeness and accuracy in describing decent work practices and national cultures was possible in this study only through qualitative data, which, however, has its own rules for reliability.

Schwartz (1999) validated his research through the collection of additional data and found the same national cultural dimensions (Ng *et al.* 2007); however, a person is actually a conglomerate of several cultural identities and these identities are nowadays changing (Jacob, 2005) as a result of globalization.

The qualitative data of decent work practice indicators was collected through the narratives of the labourers. This data on the narratives was carefully coded to capture the themes forming decent work practice indicators. These decent work practices were verified in Paper no. 2 when the decent work practice indicators for the Chinese labourers were found, suggesting that their decent work practice indicators are different from those of other nationalities. This thesis therefore employed an internal mechanism for checking reliability which was helped by progressive research papers included in the thesis. In Paper no. 3, for example, the high LTO of the Chinese team were consistently found to be the same. Similarly Pakistani labourers showed high MAS behaviour, Indian labourers showed high UAI behaviour and Bangladeshi labourers showed low IND behaviour. These consistent cultural behaviours in their respective groups of labourers in the context of decent work practice indicators act as a reflection of the improved reliability of the data collection method and its analysis. Therefore, the thesis included the internal mechanism of reliability checking of the data. However, it is worth considering that the qualitative data result from individual internal assessment and therefore consistency cannot be ensured, but efforts were made to improve it as the thesis progressed.

The internal validity of the data was also improved since the data were collected directly from the labourers experiencing the decent work practices, including the data from all the four multi-cultural nationalities: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese. The external validity of the thesis was also improved when two projects Alpha and Beta were evaluated for their performance. The

thesis also included a study of the national culture of four nationalities India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China, comparing their cultural behaviours in respect to the performance of the projects. The construct validity of the data was improved through the multiple sources of data collection. The data collection methods included observation during the execution of the project, collecting and recording the narratives of labourers in labour camps, outside the labour camps, in the fields, in town streets when the labourers were at ease; on Fridays when the workers have a day off; re-confirmation, cross-checking interviews and semi-structured interviews to ensure that the coding was done as per the culture of the labourers themselves. With the use of these multiple methods of collection as the thesis work progressed and a longitudinal study over a two year period of observation of construction workers on an ongoing construction project, the validity and reliability of the research was improved.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Every study has limitations due to its focus on some particular area of interest and the limited time frame available. This study is the first of its kind on the constructs of decent work practices, national culture and performance in the construction projects of the UAE. Therefore, what is needed is a further research focus away from the data collection stage of decent work practices and to the performance of the construction labourers as it affects the performance of the construction projects in the UAE.

The data collection was limited to participant observation/observation during the execution of construction projects and the selecting of some labour camps and nearby streets and fields where many of the construction labourers gather to talk and relax. Therefore this thesis did not consider sampling frequency and arranging numbers in proportion to the number of construction labourers from each of the migrant countries. The sampling data could be increased to cover a large population of the UAE in a nation-wide project.

The study framework was limited to the national cultural dimensions covering the construction labourers in general, irrespective of the organization that the labourers work in. A separate study could be launched to study the decent work practices within the organizational culture and find where improvements are required in some of the organizations, based on best practice in the other organizations as a benchmark.

The national culture is treated a set of behavioural actions in response to the prevalent decent work practices in the construction projects. These cultural

behaviours of the construction labourers should be studied at the organizational level.

The national cultural dimensions as proposed by Hofstede are at the national level, irrespective of industry. It would be interesting to see if the national cultural behaviour of the migrants in other sectors of the UAE economy represents consistent behaviour.

This thesis considers the impact of the cultural behaviour of the migrants on the construction projects in terms of delayed, repeated and sub-standard work; however research should also be conducted to measure quantitatively the loss to projects while practising the decent work indicators.

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Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1. National Culture Data Collection Against Each of Decent Work Practice Indicator.

	Migration Debt			
	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	
LTO	<p>Collected loan of about rupees 70,000 to 100,000 (AED 6600) in India as visa and travel fees to come to the UAE for a better future. This is a long term focus. However, in the UAE the salary paid is about AED 800, so the recovery of migration debt in two years of the visa term is not possible. Therefore the national culture dimension of LTO against the local decent work indicator of migration debt is low in the UAE, though it was high in India.</p>	<p>Pakistani labourers also paid about rupees 150,000 (AED 6000). However, while in UAE their salary was higher than their Indian counterparts' (AED 800-2000) and the currency exchange rate was also favourable. However higher prices for the basic commodities made it difficult to save much. LTO was therefore low to medium.</p>	<p>In Bangladesh, getting a loan for work in "Dubai" is easier than getting loans for business in their country, according to a construction labourer: Paid about Takka 200,000 to 250,000 (AED 11,000) as migration fees. The low salary of about AED 600 has forced the construction workers to work for the illegal short term activities of selling pirated DVDs, mobile phone cards, tobacco items such as "paan" (betel leaf containing tobacco) and "gutka" (areca nut with tobacco) and arranging for gambling games. Therefore the national cultural dimension of LTO against the decent work indicator of migration debt is low.</p>	<p>China</p> <p>Chinese construction labourers narrated through a trusted translator that they did not pay anything for their visa and travel. However, they paid AED 3500 as a security amount refundable in two years' time. Therefore the LTO was high before their entry into the UAE and remained high in the UAE since the amount was returned and the salary is AED 3000 per month.</p>
IND	<p>Collectivist. Loan is paid by the whole family which includes core family (husband, wife and children), parents, brothers/sisters and other relatives. Therefore the national cultural dimension of IND against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt is low.</p>	<p>Collectivist. Loan is paid by the core family, parents, brothers/sisters and other relatives. The national cultural dimension of collectivism was narrated in the context of migration debt.</p>	<p>Collectivist. Loan is paid by the core family, parents, brothers/sisters and other relatives. Therefore a collectivist national cultural dimension is shown against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt.</p>	<p>Chinese do not have a family culture as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh do, where a family comprises core family. In China the family includes the core family only. Therefore if a loan is required it would be paid by the core family only. Therefore individualism is high.</p>
MAS	<p>In India women are allowed to work outside their home and this helps to reduce the impact of migration debt. MAS is therefore low.</p>	<p>In Pakistan women are not encouraged/allowed to work outside home. The impact of the migration debt is high. Therefore the national cultural dimension of MAS is high against the decent work practice indicator of migration debt.</p>	<p>Women are allowed to work outside home in Bangladesh and therefore the migration debt impact can be reduced. MAS is low.</p>	<p>In China woman is allowed to work outside the home. Therefore the national culture of Chinese construction labourer against the decent work indicator of migration debt is low.</p>

UAI	Most of the UAE construction labourers come from India. The newly arrived construction labourer is better aware of the decent working practices in the UAE and therefore the UAI is medium to high.	The population of Pakistani construction labourers in the UAE is lower than that of either Indians or Bangladeshis. The construction labourers admitted that they had become aware of the salary and possible expenditure only when they reached the UAE. Therefore they were not aware of UAE practices. It is therefore an uncertain situation for them in the UAE and the UAI is low against the decent work practice of migration debt.	Migrants were described as being aware of decent work practice in the UAE; however because of the need for food, they were forced to get loans from their relatives to come to UAE and "try their luck". The UAI against migration debt indicator of decent work is medium to high.	The Chinese construction team narrated that they were not aware of the decent work conditions in the UAE; however they were aware that they would be working in a Chinese construction company, under Chinese laws of decent work besides the UAE labour laws. Therefore the UAI was high.
PDI	Indian construction labourers recalled they could talk to their parents about going to the UAE and the parents would not stop them. PDI is low.	Pakistani labourers also recalled that they could talk to their parents about coming to the UAE. The parents would not stop them. PDI is low	Bangladeshi labourers recalled that they could talk to their parents about coming to the UAE. PDI is low.	Most of the labourers mentioned that they would get permission from their parents; one said that he would simply inform his parents and one even said that he did not inform his parents. PDI is low.
Parents Responsibility/Extended Family				
India				
LTO	Indian construction labourers narrated that they were responsible to their wife and children. In India it is responsibility of the younger son to take care of the parents and he owns the parents house. Therefore the construction workers were divided between having parents' responsibility and responsibility of their family. So the LTO score was divided between half. LTO score against the decent work indicator of parents and extended family responsibility was medium.	In Pakistan family includes parents, children and wife. Therefore, the responsibility falls of the whole family. This extended family responsibility brings the LTO score high for the Pakistani construction labourers.	Bangladeshi construction workers were observed to be youngest in the labour camps. It was NOTICED that above average the construction workers were unmarried. However, both married and unmarried construction workers showed responsibility to their parents, children and wife. Therefore the LTO score was high.	During the focus group Chinese construction workers narrated that they were not responsible for their parents. They were responsible for their children only. Therefore the LTO score against this decent work indicator was low. Hofstede study revealed that the Chinese are high in LTO, however when compared to the decent work indicator of extended family, the LTO score was low.
Pakistan				
Bangladesh				
China				

IND	<p>Construction labourers narrated that even if they were responsible for their core family (wife and children) only, then also they would give money to their other family members, if needed. The IND is therefore medium at this score.</p>	<p>Pakistani construction workers narrated that they lived in extended families and therefore the IND was low in their case.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi workers also narrated that they lived in a extended family and therefore it was responsibility of the construction labourer in the UAE to take care of his family. IND was therefore low.</p>	<p>Chinese labourers narrated in a focus group through a trusted translator that they were responsible for their family and not to the parents. Therefore at the work place if they showed collectivist behaviour, they were not responsible for their parents. Therefore the national culture dimension of Chinese against the decent work indicator of extended family is individualists and not collectivist as of the national culture.</p>
MAS	<p>Masculine but not high. Female work in India and therefore the responsibility of the parents can be shared by the wife of a construction labourer.</p>	<p>Pakistan scored 50 in Hofstede study. However female are not encouraged to work in Pakistan. This increases the responsibility of the construction labourer in the UAE. Therefore the national culture dimension of MAS is high against the decent work indicator of parents/extended family responsibility.</p>	<p>Female work in Bangladesh and therefore the responsibility of the construction labourer in the UAE is reduced. Therefore the national culture dimension of MAS is medium against the decent work indicator or parents/extended family responsibility.</p>	<p>China is a medium masculine country as per the Hofstede, and when compared to the decent work indicator of extended family or parents' responsibility, it shows low. Because in Chinese female is encouraged to work and earn money and this in turn helps reduce burden of the Chinese construction labourer in the UAE.</p>
UAI	<p>Indian construction labourers narrated about the purpose of coming to the UAE and it was for the purpose of a "house". This house will be his house only and his parents may live in their own house. The construction labourer may not be the youngest of the brothers as he would own the house of his father. But if his parents did not own house, then it becomes his responsibility to make one for his parents and his own family. Therefore the national culture dimension of UAI is low to medium against the decent work indicator of parents/extended family responsibility.</p>	<p>Pakistani construction labourers narrated about the need for having more land, house and investing savings. Therefore, the need for a migrating to the UAE as a construction labourer was not due to basic needs of life such as food, house or cloths. This long term investment objectives are related to the needs of the core family of the construction labourer and not to the parents. However the construction labourer lives in an extended family of brothers and sisters, the responsibility is increased. Therefore the UAI score against the decent work indicator of parents/extended is medium to high.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction labourers narrated that they came to the UAE for "rice", which means for the fulfillment of the basic need of the life. Therefore, the UAI was high against the decent work indicator of parents/extended family responsibility.</p>	<p>Chinese construction workers narrated through a trusted translator that they were having both house and food in China. They came here for the savings that they would spend in China on daily items of consumption. Moreover China is not extended family or parents responsibility culture country. The relationship between UAI and decent work indicator of parents/extended family responsibility cannot be established or UAI is low in this case.</p>

PDI	The labourers narrated that they live in the core family after their marriage therefore there is no influence of the parents. PDI is low.	Pakistani labourers narrated that they have extended family and the control on the family is of the parents or the elder brother, however they can talk. PDI is medium.	Bangladeshi construction labourers also narrated that their parents have control on the family issues, however they can talk. PDI is medium	No brothers or sisters and after the marriage they were responsible of the family issues. PDI is low.
Overwork				
India				
LTO	All workers like overwork if paid for the overtime. In the UAE the normal working ours for the construction workers are from 10 to 12 hours, six days a week. LTO IS low because overtime is not paid for these extra hours.	Again the Pakistani workers like to overwork for overtime compensation. However this is not paid, so the LTO is low in the UAE.	Again the Bangladeshi workers like to overwork for overtime compensation. However they work about 12 hours and the overtime is not paid. LTO is therefore low.	Chinese workers also preferred to work overtime for the additional amount, however this is affected by the hot weather condition in the UAE. In China the maximum temperature was about 30 OC from where the workers were brought to the UAE. Therefore were not willing to work at high temperature. LTO is therefore medium against the decent work indicator of overwork.
China				
IND	India scored 48 in the national culture study by Hofstede. However UAE has not ratified Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organize, 1948 and Convention No. 98 of Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949. The construction worker therefore would not resort to the unionised protests. Hence the national culture dimension of IND is high against the decent work practices indicator of overwork.	Pakistan has been defined has the high collectivist country in the Hofstede study with 14 IND score. In case of overwork and no payment the collectivist culture of the country would call for help to resist the overwork; however illegality of union controls such behaviour. IND is high in this case.	Hofstede's study did not included dimensions for Bangladesh. However during the narratives, it was informed that they live in extended families, which includes parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children. Therefore Bangladesh is collectivist country from the study of the construction labourers in the UAE. In case of overwork and no payment the collectivist culture of the country would call for help to resist the overwork; however illegality of union controls such behaviour. The construction labourers mentioned that they went to the court in a group. IND is medium in this case.	China is low IND culture country, as per the Hofstede's study. Most of the Chinese construction workers in UAE are sub contracted to the main Chinese contracting company in the UAE. These workers come from same area and are known to the owner of the subcontracting company in the UAE. Chinese avoid conflict and therefore would not resort to union action against the overwork. Therefore IND is high.

MAS	<p>India is medium masculine country as per Hofstede study. The construction workers work between 10 to 12 hours per day. In UAE summer noon break time is from 12:30 to 3:00 pm. This gives respite to the construction workers. Steel frame fitters narrated difficulty in working during summer time as their work involves no shade. The Indian workers perform all kind jobs in hot weather condition of the UAE. MAS is therefore high.</p>	<p>Pakistan is again a medium masculine country as per Hofstede study. It was observed during the study that the Pakistani construction labourer would prefer to shift trade to driving from existing manual construction labourer. It can be recalled that most of the taxi, heavy equipment, and construction equipment drivers are Pakistanis. The reason for this shifting was high salary and easy work. Therefore national culture at work place against the decent work indicator of overwork is medium masculine.</p>	<p>No national score for Bangladesh was identified by Hofstede. Bangladeshi construction workers perform all kinds of work during hot weather condition of the UAE. It was narrated by a construction worker once they were not paid for the overtime, four of the Bangladeshi construction labourers went to the labour court for a claim. The reason behind approaching the court was that the supervisor of the company refused to acknowledge that these employees belong to his company but other branch of the same company. This demonstrated high masculine culture of the Bangladeshi construction workers against the decent work indicator of overwork.</p>	<p>China is a medium masculine country. Chinese construction workers are not used to the hot weather conditions of the UAE, therefore both in summer and winter days of the UAE, lunch break of two to three hours is observed. Chinese construction team could perform all kinds of work and therefore is considered as medium masculine culture at the site against the decent work indicator of overwork.</p>
UAI	<p>Universal hours of work are 48 per week or 8 hours a day. This information may have been conveyed to the construction workers by their friends and relatives in the UAE. Therefore being sure of the working hours in the UAE, it helped reduce any kind of uncertainty at the work place. UAI was therefore medium. They came to the UAE because of being impressed by the narratives other migrant labourers visiting home country on vacations.</p>	<p>It may be possible that the manual construction labourers in the UAE are not aware of the working hours before coming to the UAE. Once the construction worker know and performs more hours of work than the informed or assumed in Pakistan, stress level increases in the UAE. This national culture dimension of UAI is low against the decent work practice indicator of overwork in the UAE.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction workers also narrated that they were aware of overwork of upto 12 hours a day for six days a week, therefore for them the national culture dimension of UAI was medium.</p>	<p>Chinese construction labourers narrated in the focus group that they employed for working one complete year without any break. Therefore, if Friday was off, it was good for them and the salary was paid, one group of the subcontractors mentioned while the other mentioned that they were not being paid for Fridays. Therefore UAI was low in the UAE. The construction workers also narrated that the working hours per day were same as agreed in China therefore the UAI was low, against the Chinese national culture of high UAI as identified by Hofstede.</p>

PDI	Labourers narrated that they would work for overtime if payment is made, otherwise would talk to the management. PDI is low.	Pakistani construction labourers narrated that they would talk to their boss if there was overwork. PDI is low.	Would continue doing the overwork. Otherwise would be asked to go home. PDI is medium.	Can delay not eating lunch because of the work, but will talk if this continues. PDI is medium.
No religious right – work on Friday				
India		Pakistan		Bangladesh
LTO	The UAE is a Muslim country. Friday and Eid festivals are a public holiday by the government. Therefore Muslims would not prefer to work on these days rather would prefer to spend time with their friends and in prayers. Non-Muslims, on the other hand, would prefer to work for overtime. LTO is therefore high.	A Pakistani construction worker narrated that they worked on Fridays and on Eid public holidays and were not compensated for being the urgent work. No complain was registered by these workers because they considered these as isolated incidents and it was good in the long term for them to work. This demonstrated high LTO for the construction worker in the UAE.	Bangladeshi construction workers narrated that they were asked to work on Fridays and on Eid holidays and it was not compensated. In this situation, the workers mentioned that they would prefer to bunk from the work and work outside for more money. This reflected that they were interested in recovering money through any means and did not want to ignore it for future relationship. This demonstrated short LTO behaviour by the workers against the decent work indicator of work on Friday.	All the Chinese construction workers do not believe in any religion. Moreover their commitment to work is for 7 days a week and without any holiday. Moreover Chinese do not want conflict at the work place. Therefore the LTO culture against the decent work practice is high. Chinese are traditionalist and they observe 1st May day as a public holiday and Chinese new year is celebrated with fun and holiday at the construction camps. This traditionalist behaviour is demonstration of high LTO.
IND	Religious activities are performed collectively at the religious places. The author found Hindu group of construction labourers singing religious songs in one of the room in the labour camp. However the number of Hindu construction workers performing these activities is smaller when compared to Muslims, mentioned Hindu construction workers from India. IND is therefore medium.	Pakistani construction labourers are Muslims. They participate in religious activities with more enthusiasm due to the availability of mosques in the labour camps. At the construction site also, Muslims would make special arrangement to go for Friday and Eid prayer at the designated mosques. The national culture of IND against the religious rights is collectivistic.	Bangladeshi construction workers also go for Friday/Eid prayer in groups along with other country fellow or other Muslims. Therefore the national culture dimension of IND is low against the decent work practice indicator of religious rights.	Chinese construction workers are indifferent to religious rights. However for them important is 1 May day and Chinese New Year. It is important that they celebrate these days. The Chinese workers are provided with fruits on these days. Therefore IND is low against the traditional rights of the construction workers.

MAS	<p>Religion is considered by the construction workers as a refuge against hardworking days in the UAE and that too without their families. Non availability of Hindu religious facilitates at the construction site and labour accommodation camps may not help in giving religious strength, mentioned a Hindu construction labourer. Therefore the national culture dimension of MAS is medium against the decent work indicator of religious rights.</p>	<p>Most of the Pakistani construction workers are Muslims. They prefer to pray regularly. A construction worker mentioned that praying five times a day gives them strength. Therefore the national culture dimension of MAS against the decent work practice indicator of religious rights is high.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction labourers also mentioned that praying gives them peace and strength as well. National culture dimension of MAS is high against the decent work practice indicator of religious rights.</p>	<p>Chinese construction workers do not have religion therefore did not attach any meaning to religious feelings. However they preferred to rest. Therefore the MAS score against the decent work practice indicator of religious rights is low to insignificant.</p>
UAI	<p>Due to non-availability of religious facilities at the labour camps, he was not happy, a construction worker narrated. The stress caused due to the non-performing of the religious practices, may cause stress and a reason for high uncertainty. But the labourers mentioned that they don't complain about having no religious place. UAI is therefore low.</p>	<p>For Muslim construction labourers, prayer facilities are provided within their camps and at the construction sites. The labourers mentioned that if they don't pray, it becomes stressful and would demand time and place for praying is provided. The UAI is high against the religious rights decent work indicator.</p>	<p>The construction labourers mentioned that being a Muslim they need to pray. National culture dimension of UAI is high against the decent work practice indicator of religious rights.</p>	<p>Against the national culture dimension of UAI the decent work indicator of religious rights is low to insignificant, because the construction labourers do not have any religion.</p>
PDI	<p>Friday work is beneficial because of the overtime. Therefore would work. PDI is low.</p>	<p>Can talk to the boss if he wants more work. On Fridays, return back by 11 am. The work is also optional. Also is paid for this. PDI is low</p>	<p>On Fridays, would prefer to go for prayer, but if there is work and boss does not allow, will do work. Because this will earn more money to reduce the debt amount. PDI is medium.</p>	<p>If there is work on May Day or the Chinese new year, will for work. Work is more important, but the management will not allow to have work on these days, narrated construction labourers. PDI is medium.</p>

		Homesickness			
		India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
LTO	Construction workers call their families through cheap but illegal internet mobile phone service. Construction workers do not have internet facility in their labour camps which can help them talk through popular search engines. They talk longer through cheap internet phone or shorter through their own mobiles once after 10 days. This helps them save money. Therefore, the LTO is medium against homesickness.	Pakistani construction labourers narrated that internet phone call was cheaper for Bangladesh and India. It was expensive for Pakistani and is charged at the same rate as of the normal mobile phone call, therefore they would prefer to call through their own mobile phones after 10-15 days for a short time. This, the construction worker explained saves money for them which they can send to their families in Pakistan. This shows medium LTO.	Bangladeshi construction labourers mentioned that they call after a week to their family members. Calling is cheap and spending once in a week was not a problem, as they feel homesickness. The LTO against homesickness was low compared to India and Pakistan.	Chinese labourers belong to same town or village, therefore the home sickness was low. At the construction camps they were provided Chinese food and the whole management is from China, therefore did not feel more home sickness. Moreover, they are provided by the company a mobile card of AED 25 each month for calling to their families. LTO against the decent work indicator of homesickness is low.	
IND	Most of the construction workers mention that they know at least one of their relative or friend from their home place and spend free time together to reduce homesickness. Therefore the national culture dimension of IND is low against the decent work practice indicator of homesickness.	At the construction labour camps it was observed that the rooms for Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi construction workers were separate. These construction workers would live in their groups. Therefore IND is low against the decent work practice indicator of homesickness.	Again for Bangladeshi construction labourers, IND is low as these live in groups in their labour camps.	For Chinese construction labourers belonging to the same village or town, live together at the construction camps. IND is therefore low.	
MAS	High Masculinity refers to strength. Oftenly in Asian culture it is mentioned "to be a man" to call for strength. Therefore, once it was observed that a construction labourer was showing pain while narrating he was not able to see his family for long, others encouraged with "be a man". This shows that MAS is medium to high in case of Indians as the construction labourer may have his relative or country friend in the camp, with whom he can share the homesickness and to control on it.	Pakistanis are comparatively less in number than construction labourers from India. Unlike Chinese construction companies, where the hiring in the UAE is only for the Chinese construction companies, hiring of the Pakistani labourers could be in any of the construction companies in the UAE and the chances are that these construction labourers are neither relatives nor friends in their home country and it is not easy to share close family matters with others of the same country as narrated by a construction labourer. MAS score against decent work practice indicator of homesickness is high.	For Bangladeshis MAS score is medium against the decent work practice indicator of home sickness as the construction labourers meet to gather and talk to reduce home sickness. Although these labourers may not be relatives to each other.	MAS is low against the decent work practice indicator of homesickness as most of the construction labourers belong to the same village or town.	

UAI	<p>All the construction workers are provided free air ticket and leave to visit their homes after one year of service. This in some companies is maturing at the renewal/termination of the contract.</p> <p>In both the cases the construction labourers made themselves aware of the practice of their company. Therefore the construction labourers are sure of and the UAI is high.</p>	<p>In case of Pakistanis also UAI is high against the home sickness as these construction labourers are aware of the days when they would visit their homes. Pakistani construction labourers also mentioned that they were provided leaves and tickets as per the practice of the company.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction labourers narrated that they were not provided leave and air tickets within time as per the company practice and this resulted into stress to them. The construction labourers wanted to make sure when they would be allowed to go on holidays to visit their families. However, the labourers mentioned that they did not make sure about this before joining their company. UAI is therefore low.</p>	<p>Similarly Chinese construction labourers also go on holidays as scheduled. Therefore, UAI is high.</p>
PDI	<p>Cannot talk to the company for leave and air tickets after one year of the service in the company. This could be because of the work and fear losing jobs. PDI is high.</p>	<p>No, not allowed to go home after one year. It is after 2 years at the expiry of the visa and cannot argue because would be asked to leave the company. PDI is high.</p>	<p>If will argue to go after one year, the employer may ask to leave the job. Therefore will not argue. PDI is high.</p>	<p>Can delay leave for two to three months because of work, but cannot cancel the leaves. PDI is medium.</p>
LTO	<p>The construction labour camps are located outside the town centre. The construction workers find it expensive to bear the cost of taxi and come to the town centre for entertainment. They would like to save money and not to travel to the town centre. This shows that the construction labourer would not like to spend money on entertainment. The government of Dubai arranged on 1st May cricket tournament within in the labour camps at the night time and this was well received. This shows that the construction labourers could participate in the games if the facilitates are provided. LTO against the decent work practice indicator of no entertainment is high.</p>	<p>No entertainment</p>	<p>No entertainment</p>	<p>China</p>
	<p>India</p>	<p>Pakistan</p>	<p>Bangladesh</p>	<p>China</p>

IND	<p>The construction workers find it difficult to spend alone for taxi fare, therefore they would go in groups and share taxi cost. The transport facility is available in the labour camps, and if these labourers would go to town or any other town to meet their relatives and friends, they would prefer to go in a group. It was observed in the labour camps that the Indian construction workers gathered in a room and entertain themselves by singing songs. But the number of the people entertaining by playing/singing songs is relatively small when compared to Pakistanis and Bangladeshi labourers. We may say medium to high IND in this case.</p>	<p>Pakistani construction workers would prefer to see their local game "kabati" in Dubai near Hayat hotel in Deira. The action again is collectivist, because they would try to meet their friends to re-energize. This they would do in a group. The labourers involved in this activity is smaller than Bangladeshis but higher than Indian. We can call this medium IND.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction workers would gather for a chat. In Abu Dhabi, Dubai and in Sharjah, many groups of the Bangladeshi construction workers could be seen talking and relaxing on the foot paths of the streets, within parks on Fridays and on public holidays. IND is low when compared to Pakistani and Indian construction labourers.</p>	<p>The Chinese construction labourers were not observed playing to gather, however from their practice of eating and watching tv together, it is understood that they are collectivist.</p>
MAS	<p>Singing songs for the entertainment does not demonstrate masculinity. Therefore from the entertainment behaviour of the construction workers, it is understood that they are medium MAS against the decent work indicator of not entertainment.</p>	<p>Playing kabati is a demonstration of high MAS, as the game involves both alertness and strength. Similarly the labourers would also be seen playing cricket game which is a high MAS behaviour.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi construction workers would be seen only talking. MAS therefore is low against the decent work practice indicator of no entertainment.</p>	<p>Did not see Chinese workers playing, but watching TV and eating together. MAS is therefore low against the decent work indicator of no entertainment.</p>
UAI	<p>The construction workers are well aware of the fact that they do not have time for the entertainment. So UAI is high in this case. They could play on Fridays or at the nights. But they would prefer to rest during this time as these are tired of working for 10-12 hours a day and they are certain about this. What they could do is to listen to music.</p>	<p>Again this indicator of UAI is high against the decent work indicator of no entertainment. The labourers wanted games to be arranged for entertainment and forgetting homesickness.</p>	<p>UAI cultural dimension is high against the decent work indicator of no entertainment. The labourers wanted games to be arranged for entertainment and forgetting homesickness.</p>	<p>UAI cultural dimension is high against the decent work indicator of no entertainment. The labourers wanted games to be arranged for entertainment and forgetting homesickness.</p>
PDI	<p>Will work on Fridays because of came to the UAE for money. PDI is medium.</p>	<p>Can sacrifice rest time for overtime. PDI is medium.</p>	<p>Will lose job if will ask for overtime or not working more than the required hours of work. PDI is medium.</p>	<p>Overtime is not paid, therefore no question for asking for overtime. Came for work, not for play. PDI is low.</p>

		Abuse at work		
		Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
LTO	During narratives of the construction workers it was observed that no abusive language was used against these workers by their foremen or the engineers. The workers narrated that this was due to their dedication at work. This demonstrates that the construction workers would prefer to work as per the company law and in this case LTO is high against the decent work indicator of abuse at work.	Pakistani construction workers mentioned that they were not given abusive words while at work. However, they mentioned that if the foremen would use abusive language, they would respond in the similar way. This demonstrates that the construction workers show medium LTO and would not care if fined or deported in this situation.	Bangladeshi construction labourers approached labour court on the reason that their company representative did not recognize them as the company employees. This was a risky step as the company would have paid them their outstanding dues and do not renew their visa. This was low LTO behaviour. However by resorting to this action, they got not only outstanding dues, but extension of contract. The result is therefore the long term benefit. But this behaviour is risky for losing job.	Chinese construction workers mentioned that they were not given any abusive words during the works. However mentioned that if they were not working properly, they would be penalized through the deduction in the salary. So the LTO was high against the abuse at work indicator.
IND	In UAE trade unions are not allowed. Therefore only individual actions are permissible, such as complaining against the action of the supervisors, if abused at the work. IND is high against the decent work indicator of abuse at work.	IND is high in this case also, as the labourers would go with the individually to complain against the supervisors.	IND is high in this case also. The labourers would not involve in strikes or group action against the supervisor.	IND is high because trade unions are illegal both in China and in the UAE.
MAS	Low MAS against the decent work practice indicator of abuse at work. The construction labourers mentioned that if they work properly, they would not be abused at the work place.	Medium MAS culture against the decent work practice indicator of abuse at work as the construction labourers mentioned that they would respond in a kind if abused at the work place.	By resorting to a court the construction workers demonstrated high MAS behaviour, and also mentioned that they would respond in kind if abused at the work place.	Low MAS against the decent work practice indicator of abuse at work, as the labourers were not aware of abuse at the work place.
UAI	The construction labourers made it certain that they would not be abused if they work properly. Therefore they are certain of this behaviour and UAI is high against the decent work indicator.	Pakistani construction workers mentioned that they were not abused at the work place, however would respond in the similar way. This shows that they would not accept being abused at the work place. UAI score is medium against the decent work practice indicator of abuse at work.	Bangladeshi construction workers showed low UAI behaviour at the site by resorting to the court in the event the situation arose and by accepting abuse at work place for the recovery of their debt.	UAI for the Chinese construction labourers was high as they were neither abused nor they wanted to change the status.

	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
PDI	Will talk to the boss if abused at the work place.	Will talk to the boss in case of abuse at work. PDI is low.	New man with hefty debt will not talk to the boss, because he may lose his job. PDI is medium.	Will talk to the boss if he abuses at the work place. But will not before others. PDI is low.
	No proper food			
LTO	The construction workers are not provided food; however they are paid for the food to arrange for themselves. The workers narrated that they were paid about AED 100 to AED 200 per month for the food, which was not sufficient. Moreover making of the food in the labour camps/construction site was extra stress, as they were already tired for working more than 10-12 hours every day, excluding Friday. LTO is low against no proper food as the construction workers are not happy.	In case of Pakistanis also the LTO is low as the construction labourers are not provided quality free food.	In case of Bangladeshi construction workers LTO is low against the decent work practice indicator as the construction labourers are not provided quality free food.	Chinese construction labourers are provided food of the same quality as that of their home and it is free of cost for them. LTO is high against the decent work practice indicator of no proper food.
IND	Indians prepare food collectively, in groups. Therefore IND is low against the no proper food. The construction workers are now allowed collective action if the food is not provided.	Pakistani workers also prepare food in groups and IND is low against the decent work indicator of no proper food at the site.	Bangladeshi workers also prepare food in groups and IND is low against the decent work indicator of no proper food at the site.	IND is again low as the Chinese construction workers are provided food and they eat together.
MAS	The construction workers mentioned that making a food is not a strength requirement, and therefore it is a low MAS activity after performing heavy duty works at the site. Therefore MAS was low.	Pakistani construction labourers mentioned that the making of the food was woman job, therefore they did not relate making of food to MAS. May be this is high MAS behaviour to say no to food making.	Bangladeshi construction workers would also relate the making of food to the womanly behaviour. Therefore MAS was low against the decent work practice of no proper food.	Chinese construction workers are provided free food at the site/their camps. Therefore were not able to relate to MAS behaviour. However, they mentioned that they would not prefer to make food. MAS can be regarded as low against the decent work indicator of no proper food.

UAI	The construction labourers are aware of the fact that the food would not be provided. However, preparing the food provided to them stress. Therefore UAI was high.	Again the UAI was high as they were sure the food would not be provided and at the same time were stressful in making the food.	Again the UAI was high was they were sure the food would not be provided and would prepare for themselves.	The construction workers narrated that the food is provided for free of cost and that they were happy. The UAI in this case also was high, as they ensured that good quality food to be provided by the company.
PDI	Food is not provided, and make vegetables of own choice. PDI is low.	Food is not provided instead the food allowance is paid. Will not talk for the food, as this is against the company policy. PDI is low.	The company does not provide food. What to talk. PDI is low.	Company provides food, therefore no need to complain or talk.
Absenteeism				
India				
LTO	A construction worker narrated while working as cleaner in the houses that he would prefer continuing cleaning in the houses as this provides him a good income, easy work and widened social contact. However this is illegal in the UAE. One can only work for the employer under whose name the work permit is issued. This behaviour is not very common amongst the Indian construction workers. Therefore LTO is low to medium against absenteeism.	Pakistani construction workers would prefer to work under their employers. The workers would not take the risk. However the researcher noticed Pakistani construction workers were observed collecting individually left over cartons from the dustbins. However the number of the construction workers engaged in these activities was observed to be low. LTO is therefore low to medium.	During the narratives of the construction workers, it was mentioned that they would either runaway from their employers and do other businesses, such as washing cars in the streets outside malls, selling of CDs, fruits and tobacco items illegal in the UAE. The construction workers mentioned that the doing of this side business was due to their low salary in the UAE and burden of migration debt. LTO is therefore low against the decent work indicator of absenteeism. It was also observed that the construction workers from other companies would come and join other companies without valid documents for a better salary.	Chinese construction labourers mentioned that they continued working under the same employer and would not show absence to work. LTO is therefore high.
Pakistan				
Bangladesh				
China				

IND	Absenteeism is individual action in case of Indian construction workers. Therefore the labourers show high IND behaviour.	Pakistani construction workers also narrated high IND behaviour against the decent work practice indicator of absenteeism. If Pakistani construction labourers were observed collecting paper cartons from dustbins, they were doing this individually and not in a group.	Bangladeshi construction workers would be observed selling DVDs, vegetables and tobacco items in groups in many places of the towns and within the labour accommodation camps. IND is therefore low.	Chinese construction labourers narrated that they would not leave their company even if they were paid more anywhere else. IND is therefore low.
MAS	Indian construction workers narrated that the steel fitter job was difficult and they would try to switch to some other roles if possible. However this does not mean that they would leave the job and go back to India for being a difficult job. This shows medium to high MAS against absenteeism.	Pakistani construction workers also mentioned of switching to driving roles because of high salary. However this was comparatively an easy role. MAS is therefore medium to high.	Bangladeshi construction workers did not narrate about hard work. Therefore the MAS score is high.	Chinese construction workers were provided two to three hours of lunch break in both summer and winter. However the construction workers narrated about the hot weather in the UAE and could be observed with their chest open during working hours. MAS is therefore medium to high.
UAI	Absenteeism is an illegal activity in the UAE and therefore is risky. Since very rare case of the construction workers were narrated absconding to work under other employers, the UAI is therefore medium to high against absenteeism.	Pakistani construction workers were observed collecting leftover cartons from the dustbins. However the number of the construction workers involved in this activity is very low. Therefore UAI is medium to high.	A considerable number of Bangladeshi construction workers could be observed selling CDS, vegetable, tobacco and mobile phone cards. Therefore UAI is low against the decent work practice indicator of absenteeism.	UAI is high because absenteeism is considered very bad by the Chinese construction labourers.
PDI	Work is more important and cannot leave the company. PDI is medium.	PDI is low. If required to work outside, why to get the permission.	PDI is low. No need to ask for the permission to work outside because the company boss will himself say go out and work because he does not have work. The boss then earns through the renewal fees of the visa. PDI is low.	Cannot think of going out without permission from the boss. But if urgent work, will talk. PDI is medium.

		Injury at work			
		India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
LTO	The construction labourers narrated a mix response. Majority of the construction workers mentioned that in case of accidents, the company would pay partially. The workers were not aware of the insurance requirement for the construction workers in the UAE. The labourers would not however complain as this was the practice. LTO is high. The construction labourers also narrated that the site safety is improved. However they were asked to procure and maintain proper PPE (personal protective equipment) at the work place. This forced them to wear outdated equipment, which could risk their lives.	Pakistani construction workers also mentioned absence of insurance and compensation in case of injury at the work place, however the number of the safety violations was less compared to narrations by the Indian construction workers. LTO is high, as these construction workers did not complain to any authority about the safety violations and as such were accepting the company practices.	Bangladeshi construction labourers mentioned that they were not compensated for an injury at the work place, therefore resorted to approaching the court. This shows low LTO behaviour by the construction workers as these could be fired after the compensation was paid. However the workers narrated that after the court decision, not only they were compensated, they were given respect and promoted to the position of foreman.	One Chinese construction team narrated that they would be provided free medical care in case of accident at the site. However the other construction team narrated that they would not be compensated in case of accident at the site, as they were advised to be careful about the site safety from the beginning. Therefore the LTO is medium against decent work indicator of injury at work.	
IND	Construction workers behaviour is highly IND against the decent work practice indicator of injury at work. As in case of accident would not demonstrate.	Again the behaviour is highly IND. As in case of accident would not demonstrate.	Again the behaviour is highly IND. As in case of accident would not demonstrate. A foreman injured at the work place narrated that he went himself to the court to claim for compensation, which was given by the company.	Again the behaviour is highly IND. As in case of accident would not demonstrate.	
MAS	Construction workers are physically strong people, however the construction workers would try to avoid risky works. Indian workers perform the most difficult part of the works, therefore show high MAS.	Pakistani construction workers prefer to switch to driving as this brings better salary package and ease. MAS is medium to high.	Bangladeshi construction workers would also do all kinds of works, however would prefer to avoid risky works. MAS is medium to high.	Chinese construction workers would avoid risky works because in case of accidents the company would not only be fined by the UAE government, but also by the Chinese government in China. Chinese construction workers would avoid working during the hot weather. MAS is therefore medium.	

UAI	UAI is high because the workers are aware of the fact that they would not be compensated and therefore would remain careful while at work. UAI is therefore high.	UAI is again high as the construction labourers made themselves aware of the policy of the company in the event the accidents happens at the site, would they be compensated or not.	UAI is again high as the construction labourers made themselves aware of the policy of the company in the event the accidents happens at the site, would they be compensated or not.	Chinese labourers were aware that if the accident happens at the site, they may not be compensated as this was their responsibility to take care of themselves at the work place OR if the labourers would be compensated and to what limit if accident happens at the site. UAI is therefore high.
PDI	If sick at the site, can talk to the management. PDI is low.	Will talk to the boss for reimbursement in case of accident. PDI is low.	The company may pay, but will deduct from the salary. So no need to ask. PDI is medium.	Will talk to the boss in case of accident. PDI is low.
No social security				
India				
LTO	LTO is low because the salary is low and the stay in the UAE may not be able to help them recover in full their migration debt amount. The construction workers in the UAE were not aware of the after service payments.	Pakistani workers mentioned about coming to the UAE for further investment back home. Low salary in the UAE may only be helpful, for example as narrated by a construction worker, to open a small size barber shop in the town. This objective seems achievable. LTO is therefore medium against no social security.	Bangladeshi workers narrated that since their salary was low, they would go for other businesses to generate enough money. This they mentioned was because of the low salary. LTO, therefore, was low against no social security.	Chinese labourers narrated that they had a house in China and the purpose of coming to the UAE was to make more money and to spend for the daily life needs. This shows LTO is medium to high.
IND	The construction worker has responsibility for his parents and children if he is the only and last child of the parents. Therefore it is medium IND against social security.	Pakistani construction labourer has the responsibility of the whole of his extended family including his parents, brothers, sisters and his core family members. IND is therefore low against the decent work practice indicator of no social security.	IND is again low in case of the Bangladeshi construction workers.	Chinese construction workers are responsible for their family and not for the parents or brothers and sisters (China is a one child policy country). IND is therefore high.
MAS	MAS is low against the social security as the women is allowed to work in India and this helps in reducing burden on the construction labours in the UAE.	MAS is high as the females of the construction workers are not encouraged to work and this increases economic burden on the construction labourers. MAS is therefore high.	Woman is allowed to work therefore MAS is low. This helps in reducing burden on the construction labourers.	Woman is allowed to work therefore MAS is low. This helps in reducing burden on the construction labourers.

UAI	UAI is low, because they knew they would not be able to save much in the face of migration debt and that they would not get their salary increased in the UAE whereas the expenditures have gone up comparatively in the UAE and India.	UAI is low, because they knew they would not be able to save much in the face of migration debt and that they would not get their salary increased in the UAE whereas the expenditures have gone up comparatively in the UAE and Pakistan.	UAI is low, because they knew they would not be able to save much in the face of migration debt and that they would not get their salary increased in the UAE whereas the expenditures have gone up comparatively in the UAE and Bangladesh.	UAI is low, because they knew they would not be able to save much in the face of migration debt and that they would not get their salary increased in the UAE whereas the expenditures have gone up comparatively in the UAE and China.
PDI	Did not talk for the salary increase and will not during the recession time. PDI is medium.	No benefit to ask for any benefit. Will not ask. PDI is medium.	No benefit to ask for any benefit. Will not ask. PDI is medium.	Salary is fixed, cannot ask for any benefit. PDI is low.
Family issues at home				
	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	China
LTO	Indian construction workers narrated that they did not need to worry about their families as there was peace in their areas. LTO was high.	Pakistani construction workers narrated that they were worried about their family members due to weak security situation in their areas, however were hopeful that their extended family should be able to face any challenge. LTO was low to medium.	LTO was high. Indian construction workers narrated that they did not need to worry about their families as there was peace in their areas. LTO was high.	LTO was high. Indian construction workers narrated that they did not need to worry about their families as there was peace in their areas. LTO was high, narrated labourers.
IND	Low IND because even if the construction worker was not responsible for home and daily life needs of his parents, he would still be worried about their wellbeing.	Low IND as the construction labourers are responsible for the wellbeing of their families and parents.	Low IND as the construction labourers are responsible for the wellbeing of their families and parents.	Medium IND as their parents are a separate family unlike in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
MAS	Low MAS. As woman is allowed to work and would be in a better position to approach to the authorities for justice, narrated by a construction worker.	High MAS. Woman is not encouraged to approach the authorities for justice since their extended family was available to take care of the family of the construction labourer.	Low MAS. As woman is allowed to work and would be in a better position to approach to the authorities for justice, narrated by a construction worker.	Low MAS. As woman is allowed to work and would be in a better position to approach to the authorities for justice, narrated by a construction worker.

UAI	High UAI. The construction workers narrated that since there was peace in their areas, they were not worried about their families. Moreover their female members could approach the government departments for justice. The laws are there to protect them.	Low UAI. The construction workers narrated that due to the weak security situation in their areas, they were uncertain and worried about the wellbeing of their family members.	High UAI due to peace and encouragement for women to approach for justice and laws are there to protect them.	High UAI due to peace and encouragement for women to approach for justice and laws are there to protect them.
PDI	If any issue at home, will ask for leave. PDI is low.	If any issue at home, will ask for leave. PDI is low.	If any issue at home, will ask for leave. PDI is low.	If someone is dead, then will ask for leave otherwise not. PDI is high.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2. Semi-structured Interviews for the Confirmation of Data Collection.

Following list of questions were asked to Chinese construction labourers to confirm the data.

1. Did you pay for the migration fee?
2. Are you paid for the overtime?
3. Did you confirm to your parents before coming to the UAE?
4. Do you have insurance cover in the UAE?
5. Have you been abused at the work place?
6. What was the objective of coming to the UAE?

Original papers

- I Khan A (2013) Decent Work Practice indicators in the Construction Projects of United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Business Excellence* 6(4): 409–424.
- II Khan A (2014) Effects of Cultural Assimilation on the Performance of a Construction Project – Evidence from UAE. *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 21(3): 430–449.
- III Khan A & Sandhu M (2014) Benchmarking National Culture and Decent Work Practice Indicators in Project-Based Industry: Lessons from United Arab Emirates. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*. In press.
- IV Khan A (2014) Improving Performance of Labourers in the Construction Projects of UAE: A Multi-Cultural Perspective. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*. In press.

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