THE IMPACT OF REPATRIATION ON THIRD CULTURE KIDS AND THE ROLE HIGHER

EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PLAY IN SUPPORTING REPATRIATING STUDENTS: A

TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Kylee Rae Spangler

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand, as a lived experience, the impact of repatriation on Third Culture Kids (TCKs). For this study, repatriation was generally defined as the transitional process of an individual moving from a host country back to the home country to attend college. The central research question for this study was aimed to gain insight into the lived experiences of TCKs whose lives were impacted by repatriation for higher education. The research sub-questions were designed to gain an understanding of the perceptions TCKs have about the preparedness of higher education institutions to meet the needs of repatriating students. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Berry's (2003;2005; 2006) acculturation theory. Berry 's (2003) theory was based on TCK attitude towards the home culture and host culture. Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests the individual's TCK upbringing in a host culture impacts values, beliefs, and identity. Berry's (2006) theory suggests that the level of acceptance from the host society will impact the repatriation process. There were 12 adult participants who participated, all over the age of 18 and who have spent a minimum of four years living in a host country before repatriating for higher education to the United States. Data collection included a screening questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, a single focus group interview, and personal artifacts. Data were analyzed using NVivo to create themes based on repeated words and phrases from the collected data. Five themes emerged: (1) TCK Benefits, (2) Social Repatriation Challenges, (3) Personal Repatriation Challenges, (4) Cultural Repatriation Challenges, and (5) Services and Supports. Several sub-themes also emerged from this study.

Keywords: acculturation, higher education, repatriation, services, supports, third culture kids

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Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs)

Missionary Kids (MKs)

Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)

Relational-Cultural Therapy (RCT)

Third Culture Kids (TCKs)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Returning to the United States to begin higher education can be a challenging transition for Third Culture Kids (TCKs). Chapter One introduces information about repatriation and highlights the need to provide adequate supports and services for repatriating TCKs. Historical, social, and theoretical contexts of repatriation provide a background related to the phenomenon of the study. I will also provide insight as to my motivation for this study. Chapter One also details the problem and purpose statements and includes the significance of the study and definitions to help provide clarification on important terms used within the study.

Background

TCKs are individuals who move from their home country to live in a host country during childhood because of missionary work or employment (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Understanding the lived experiences of repatriation by TCKs can provide insight into this phenomenon and serve to inform higher education institutions about the challenges of repatriation and services and resources to help ease the burden of repatriation. Research indicates there are many challenges associated with repatriation and that specific supports and services could help ease these repatriation challenges (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Currently, many higher education institutions do not provide transitional supports and services for TCKs who repatriate to the United States to begin college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). With advancements in globalization and technology, the TCK population continues to increase, which leads to increased importance for higher education institutions to provide repatriation supports for TCK students (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Studies have been conducted to better understand TCKs from a historical, social, and theoretical

context (Cranston, 2017; Kadam et al., 2019; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Melles & Frey, 2017; Nehrbass, 2018). Also, effective coping mechanisms and supports for TCKs can help them repatriate successfully (Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Sterle et al., 2018).

Historical Context

John and Ruth Useem were married American anthropologists who first used the term "third culture kids" in the 1950s after their second year-long trip to India to describe children they were studying who spent a significant portion of their developmental upbringing living in a host country and culture (Useem, 1967). They used this term to help depict the behaviors and perspectives within this new cultural group characterized by their unique multicultural upbringing. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, there is an increase in TCKs (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). According to Kortegast and Yount (2016), a TCK's experiences within a multicultural upbringing can impact identity formation and sense of self. Furthermore, the TCK experience within multicultural communities, often in socioeconomically disadvantaged or vulnerable countries, can cause TCKs to experience trauma such as violence, sense of loss, and feelings of grief (Kim et al., 2019).

Repatriation is a unique part of many TCKs' lives; it is the process of returning home after spending significant time living within other countries and cultures. Often, repatriation to the home country occurs when the individual reaches adulthood and will begin post-secondary education. Many students face challenges when transitioning to college (Smith & Kearney, 2016). TCKs have the added difficulty of repatriation, and his transitional period is often a time of many challenges and difficulties stemming from the TCKs' acculturation to the other cultures during their upbringing (Berry, 2005). Being aware of the challenges of repatriation for TCKs

will be beneficial for higher education administrators and educators to be able to better understand this phenomenon and provide the necessary support for repatriating TCKs.

There have been several studies focused on the challenges and effects of a TCK upbringing (Bikos et al., 2014; Kadam et al., 2019; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Researchers have also found that many TCKs have difficulty with self-identity upon repatriation (Cranston, 2017; Lijadi, 2018). Many studies have indicated that there are often identity issues that occur during repatriation (Altweck & Marshall, 2015; Helsel, 2018; Kwon, 2019). Similarly, a lack of belonging and difficulty developing strong social relationships is common during repatriation (Hannaford, 2016; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Nehrbass, 2018).

The TCK upbringing increases the individual's ability to understand and appreciate unique cultures (Kadam et al., 2019; Melles & Frey, 2017). Still, increased cultural intelligence does not mean TCKs can better understand the home culture. Feelings of cultural displacement can create identity issues for repatriating TCKs (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Repatriation has proven to be a complicated process for many TCKs (Bikos et al., 2014; P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2014).

There have been numerous studies to identify the challenges of repatriation as well as effective coping mechanisms and supports for TCKs (Choi et al., 2013; P. Davis et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2017; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Sterle et al., 2018). Research has shown that acculturation can be more natural if the TCK feels connected to the host country or feels that the home community embraces cultural and ethnic diversity (Altweck & Marshall, 2015; Cranston, 2017). Still, there has been little research on how higher education institutions can help TCKs successfully repatriate (Murphy et al., 2010; Purnell & Hoban, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016).

Social Context

Repatriation is a particularly challenging time for many TCKs and can cause culture shock for many individuals beginning college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Martin (2007) studied TCKs returning to the United States and found that severity of culture shock is affected by several factors: exposure to American culture, amount of return trips to America during the time of living in a host country, and how frequently the individual had contact with Americans while living in the host country (Martin, 2017). Similarly, repatriation can cause psychological distress as TCKs to face sociocultural adaptation (Bikos et al., 2014). Psychological challenges are further illustrated in that TCKs often experience trouble with adjustment, identity, and culture shock when transitioning back to their home country (Kortegast and Yount, 2016). Similarly, repatriation can impact emotional development such as loss, adjustment difficulty, separation concerns, and self-protection issues (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). These psychological difficulties can exacerbate the social challenges many TCKs face.

TCKs often feel like they are members of a hybrid culture (Kwon, 2019; Poonoosamy, 2018; Swamidoss, 2016). Because of their unique upbringing, TCKs often feel a lack of belonging within the home community and that their non-TCK peers misunderstand them. Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014) noted that TCKs may feel social struggles stemming from cultural appropriateness differences within the host culture and the home culture. Awareness of popular music, movies, and celebrities may also cause challenges for TCKs who may have not had exposure to popular culture while living in the host country (Ferguson et al., 2016). This inability to recognize pop culture icons, popular media, and other elements of the home culture can lead to a decreased sense of belonging within the home community.

Change within the social context is common for TCKs as they often have a highly transient lifestyle. TCKs often feel a tremendous sense of loss and grief stemming from changes in relationships resulting from a transient upbringing (Choi et al., 2013; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Smith & Kearney, 2016). Repatriation is yet another period of transition and change for TCKs who have already have extensive experience with loss from frequent movement.

Family and faith can both serve as essential social foundations for TCKs (Bikos et al., 2014; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009; Rydenvald, 2015). Unfortunately, repatriation often occurs without the rest of the TCK's family. When TCKs return for college, the rest of the family often remains within the host culture, causing a great sense of loss (Choi et al., 2013).

When TCKs return from a host country to a home country to begin college, they tend to be drawn to other TCKs and desire to be heard and understood by others (Smith & Kearney, 2016). TCKs greatly benefit from membership in a TCK network (Colomer, 2018; Cranston, 2017; Kwon, 2019; Lijadi, 2018). In this way, online communities can help TCKs increase their sense of belonging (Hannaford, 2018). An active TCK community can be of great social importance and can provide a sense of belonging and support for repatriating TCKs (Colomer, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2018).

Theoretical Context

There are many theories related to TCKs and the challenges of repatriation (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Nehrbass, 2018; Melles & Frey, 2017). One subgroup of TCKs is Missionary Kids (MKs). MKs are defined as TCKs who are in a host country because of their parent's faith-based mission assignment, often associated with a church or religious organization within the home country. MKs have been studied to determine how their faith was impacted by the

experiences of a third culture upbringing (Melles & Frey, 2017). Other theories focused on identity development and how identity is impacted by a TCK upbringing (Kim et. al, 2017). Kortegast and Yount (2016) theorized that repatriation was a time of many challenges for TCKs after living abroad. Cranston (2017) found that reentry seminars can have a positive impact in easing transitions for TCKs. Similarly, Lijadi (2018) found that establishing and maintaining a network of other TCKs was instrumental in helping with repatriation challenges.

Klemens and Bikos (2009) applied Berry's (2003) acculturation theory to help gain insight on the psychological well-being and sociocultural adaptation of MKs, a subgroup of TCKs, repatriating to the United States for college. This theory also provides insight into the MKs' changes in values, beliefs, and identity because of their mission-based experiences (Klemens & Bikos, 2009). This theory can be more broadly applied to all TCKs to gain insight into the challenges of repatriation.

As such, this transcendental phenomenological study will serve to explore the phenomenon of TCK repatriation using Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theory as a theoretical framework for this inquiry. Acculturation theory suggests that, as a result of experiencing multicultural systems, an individual's values, beliefs, and identity are often impacted and changed. Berry (2006) explained that adaptation is multifaceted and involves psychological adaptation as well as sociocultural adaptation to ensure success in adapting to a new cultural context. Similarly, other factors can impact this success such as personal changes, life events, and social issues. In this way, gaining insight into the challenges of repatriation can help increase adequate support and services for repatriating TCKs within the collegiate environment.

Problem Statement

The problem of this transcendental phenomenological study was the impact of repatriation on TCKs returning to the United States for higher education. Often, there is a lack of support and services that higher education institutions provide for repatriating TCKs (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). As repatriation often occurs as TCKs return to the United States for college, higher institutions must be aware of the common challenges they face and provide supports to ease the burden of repatriation. Repatriation is a particularly challenging time for many TCKs and can cause culture shock for many individuals returning to college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016).

Similarly, repatriation can cause psychological distress as TCKs to face sociocultural adaptation (Bikos et al., 2014). Furthermore, TCKs may feel the need to adapt themselves to fit into the social and behavioral expectations of individuals within the host country (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). This study was necessary to provide higher education stakeholders with relevant information about repatriation challenges and meaningful coping mechanisms and supports which may help increase sense of belonging and affect student retention (Cranston, 2017; Strand et al., 2015). This study was aimed to discover valuable information about repatriation to provide insight for staff and administration of higher education institutions so they can provide essential supports for TCK students. By conducting a qualitative study using in-depth interviews with and personal artifacts from adult TCKs who went through the process of repatriation, this study provided greater insight into the challenges of repatriation, the effectiveness of different coping mechanism and supports, and how higher education institutions can provide successful services and supports for repatriating TCK students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand TCKs'
perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience. Specifically, in this study, I explored the types
of support that TCKs need to succeed in the college context. For this study, repatriation was
generally defined as the transitional process of an individual moving from a host country back to
the home country to attend college. All college freshmen must face transition as they move from
the expectations and familiarity of high school to begin their college experience. This transitional
process is intensified for TCKs as they are not only transitioning from high school to college but
are also transitioning from a host culture to their home culture. I used Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006)
acculturation theory to provide insight on the adaptations of a multi-cultural upbringing for
TCKs. Berry's (2005) acculturation theory relates to the changes in value, belief, identity
because of social and cultural systems. The experience of living in other cultures may impact the
values, beliefs, and identity of a TCK. This impact on values, beliefs, and identity from living in
another culture is often exacerbated when the TCK returns to the United States and interacts with
Americans, most of whom possess a monocultural, American-based social and cultural system
different from the multicultural TCK (Berry, 2005). Feelings of reverse culture shock are not
uncommon for repatriating TCKs (Poonoosamy, 2018). TCKs who return to the home country
after acculturating to another culture often feel a lack of belonging to the home culture because
of the impact of inheriting values, beliefs, and identity from the host culture. To help ease the
challenges of repatriation for TCKs, one must understand the common challenges and gain
insight about adequate supports and services to ease these repatriation challenges.

Significance of the Study

This study provides additional literature surrounding TCK repatriation. Similarly, this research study contributes to the literature surrounding Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theories. There is both empirical and theoretical significance related to TCK repatriation challenges and repatriation supports.

There is empirical significance in that TCKs have unique multicultural upbringings which allow them to have a broader worldview (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Rooney, 2018). Several other relevant studies explored TCK identity development (Cranston, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Lijadi, 2018; Nehrbass, 2018; Smith & Kearney, 2016). Many TCKs struggle with the geographical, cultural, and social aspects of their unique upbringing as it affects their identity (Kwon, 2019). Repatriation is often a challenging process for TCKs and can lead to psychological distress (Altweck & Marshall, 2015; P. S. Davis et al., 2013).

According to Cranston (2017), many TCKs feel their identities are tied to cultures and experiences rather than geographical locations. Similarly, research has been conducted about the cultural differences that occur from a TCK upbringing (Bikos et al, 2014, Kim et al., 2017, Smith & Kearney, 2016). It is a common challenge for TCKs to feel a lack of belonging (Emenike & Plowright, 2017; Fanning & Burns, 2017; Helsel, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Poonoosamy, 2018). Likewise, research has indicated that TCKs often struggle to form and maintaining social relationships (Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). TCKs may feel that they are discouraged from discussing their multicultural experiences with non-TCK peers (Barker & Cornwell, 2019). Their non-TCK peers may not understand or desire to learn about TCKs' unique experiences and upbringing, which can increase feelings of social

isolation (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). According to Choi et al. (2013), TCKs may avoid building relationships as a form of self-protection from grief or loss.

Similarly, researchers have attempted to gain insight into the effectiveness of coping mechanisms and supports for repatriating TCKs. According to Kim et al. (2017), TCKs tend to have increased coping abilities. Increased coping abilities may be a result of their multicultural upbringing and experiences with many changes (Sterle et al., 2018). Family can be an essential resource and support for TCKs (Bjornsen, 2020). Research has indicated the success of transitional programs such as reentry seminars (Bikos, et al, 2014; Cranston, 2017; P. Davis et al, 2010). Reentry seminars can help prepare TCKs for the challenges common with repatriation and provide counseling and training to help them repatriate (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Martin, 2017; Poonoosamy, 2018). According to P. S. Davis et al. (2013), reentry seminars can decrease anxiety, depression, and stress and increase skills for social and cultural transitions. Previous research has indicated that counseling services have helped to repatriate TCKs (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014; Melles & Frey, 2014; Murphy et al, 2010).

Counselors trained in helping TCKs repatriate can help them with the identity concerns and common transitional challenges (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2016; Melles & Frey, 2014). Counselors can help TCKs with a sense of belonging and help provide mental health supports (Cranston, 2017; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). Social supports and TCK networking are important in helping TCKs repatriate (Bikos et al, 2014; Cranston, 2017; Lijadi, 2018; Melles & Frey, 2017; Murphy et al, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016). Family and faith serve as important sources of support during repatriation (Bikos et al., 2014; Purdon, 2018). Gingrich (2016) noted that family can help provide support and help TCKs cope with the transitional process. Faith can

also serve as a support in which TCKs can seek guidance and comfort when faced with transitional challenges (Gingrich, 2016; Kim et al., 2017; Occhipinti, 2016).

The theoretical significance of this study relates to Berry's (2005) acculturation theory was first used to explore the impact of an MK upbringing on identity development and cultural acquisition. Acculturation theory suggests that an individual's values, beliefs, and identity is often impacted or changed because of experiencing multi-cultural systems. In this way, individuals, such as TCKs, who spend significant time living within a host culture will inherit certain qualities and values presented within the culture through the process of acculturation. This acculturation process often goes unnoticed until the individual returns to the home country and discovers that the values, beliefs, and identity traits of the home culture are not the same as those of the acculturated individual. These adaptations occur on both the psychological and sociocultural levels. As Berry (2005) explained, adaptation is multifaceted and involves psychological adaptation as well as sociocultural adaptation to ensure success in adapting to a new cultural context. Similarly, other factors can impact this success such as personal changes, life events, and social issues. This theory suggests that a TCK's multi-cultural upbringing will impact personal values, beliefs, and identity.

Furthermore, acculturation is often unnoticed until the person enters a culture that has values, beliefs, and identity different from the acculturated individual. Often, this cultural transition occurs when a TCK returns to the home country after spending significant time living in a host country. Reverse culture shock is a term often used to describe the lack of belonging and differences that a TCK feels when repatriating (Poonoosamy, 2018). Berry's (2005) theory of acculturation can provide insight into the challenges of repatriation as the TCK is facing a time of great transition when differences in values, beliefs, and identity may be most noticeable.

The practical significance of this study was to help provide insight into repatriation challenges and successful coping mechanisms and supports so that higher education institutions can be aware of and provide for repatriating TCKs. This research study contributes to the current body of literature about TCKs, repatriation, and higher education institutions providing useful services and support to cultural minority groups. The goal of this study was to gain insight into the process of repatriation and to discover services and supports that higher education institutions could provide to ease the burden of repatriation for TCK students within their higher education communities.

This research study also contributes to the current body of literature surrounding Berry's (2005) acculturation theory. Gaining insight into acculturation theory and how exposure to multicultural experiences can lead to changes in values, beliefs, and identity can help researchers better understand TCKs and the contexts that lead to repatriation challenges. Similarly, Berry's (2003; 2006) acculturation theories were highlighted in this study to explore how the attitudes of both the individual and the host culture impacts repatriation. The use of acculturation theory as a theoretical framework for this study could increase understanding of TCK repatriation in future studies.

This study enabled participants to share their unique repatriation experiences and enable higher education professionals to gain insight about repatriation by sharing their unique experiences (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Purnell & Hoban, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016). The study serves to contribute to higher education administrators and staff to gain insight about the common challenges and the necessary supports that TCK students need as they repatriate for college or university. Finally, this study serves to raise awareness about the challenges and adequate supports that TCKs experienced as they repatriated to the United States

by gaining first-person perspectives from participants who have personally experienced this phenomenon.

Research Questions

This transcendental phenomenological study was be guided by one central research question (CRQ) and three additional research sub-questions (SQs). The central research question was asked to gain insight on the participants' perception of repatriation. The three sub-questions were asked to discover the perceptions of participants focused on the role of higher education in the repatriation process.

Central Research Question

What are Third Culture Kids' (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience?

Increased globalization has increased the number of TCK students entering higher education in the United States (Kadam et al., 2019). TCKs face many psychological challenges that can impact their success at the collegiate level (Bikos et al., 2014; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). There are also identity challenges and emotional development challenges that often occur during this transitional process (Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). Higher education institutions that effectively embrace multiculturalism can have a positive impact on the success of a TCK's repatriation (Desilets, 2016).

Sub-Question One

What are TCK perceptions of higher education institutions' preparedness for repatriating students, as a lived experience?

Many TCKs repatriate to the United States to begin college or university (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Culture shock and identity issues are common for TCKs during this transitional period, which can lead to mental health concerns (Munn & Ryan, 2016). Counseling and health

services offered by higher education institutions can have a positive impact on TCK adjustment (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Munn & Ryan, 2016). Clubs and religious groups have also proven useful for TCKs within a higher education setting (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Heuvelman-Hutchinson, 2018). Higher education institutions can help TCK students feel understood and supported by promoting and embracing different cultures and providing opportunities to better understand students' unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Fanning & Burns, 2017; Poonoosamy, 2018).

Sub-Question Two

What are TCK perceptions of higher education repatriation support and service effectiveness, as a lived experience?

It is essential to be aware of supports, services, and resources that can ease the burdens associated with repatriation. Reentry seminars and counseling services can aid and support for repatriating TCKs (Cranston, 2017; P. Davis et al., 2010; Bikos et al., 2014). Social relationships and faith also play important roles in the lives of transitioning TCKs (Bikos et al., 2014; Cranston, 2017; Hannaford, 2016; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018; Starle, et al., 2018). Previous research has indicated the importance of college-provided supports and services for TCKs (Choi et al., 2013; Dillon & Ali, 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Purnell & Hoban, 2014).

Sub-Question Three

What are TCK perceptions of the process of repatriation to the United States for college enrollment as a lived experience?

TCKs often face challenges when repatriating for college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Many times, TCKs perceive the process of repatriation as laden with psychological distress for TCKs facing sociocultural adaptation (Bikos, et al., 2014). Similarly, Lijadi and van Schalkwyk

(2014) found that repatriation can impact emotional development. These repatriation challenges can cause hardship for TCKs. Furthermore, Berry (2001; 2003; 2005; 2006) employed acculturation theory in his research on MKs and the impact of a multicultural upbringing on personal identity, values, and beliefs. Similarly, Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014) found that TCKs often felt a lack of belonging or felt differently than others regarding values and beliefs.

Definitions

1. *Acculturation* -The psychological and sociocultural adaptation of an individual because of multicultural experiences (Berry, 2001).

2. *External Environment* -The social and physical environment surrounding an individual (Bandura, 1986).

3. *Faith* -The religious belief of an individual (Melles & Frey, 2017).

4. *Identity* -The internalized values, norms, and roles that an individual has to define oneself (Kim et al., 2017).

5. *Overt Behaviors* -The knowledge and skills that an individual possesses which allow for performance (Bandura, 1986).

6. *Personal Attributes* -The inner traits or drive of an individual (Bandura, 1986).

7. *Reentry Seminar* -A program that provides TCKs with training and preparation for the repatriation process (Cranston, 2017).

8. *Repatriation* -The process of returning to the home country after living in a host country (Kortegast & Yount, 2016).

9. *Reverse Culture Shock* -Psychological and emotional distress caused by returning to a home culture after spending time in another culture (Poonoosamy, 2018).

10. *TCK Network* -The TCK network is a community of TCKs which support each other through a shared TCK experience (Lijadi, 2018).

11. *Third Culture Kid (TCK)* -An individual who moved from his or her home country to spend part of his or her upbringing in a host country (Kortegast & Yount, 2016).

Summary

Being aware of the challenges of repatriation for TCKs will be beneficial to better understand this phenomenon and provide the necessary support for repatriating students. This study addressed TCK repatriation challenges and the supports and services that benefit repatriating TCKs. Chapter One included the background regarding TCKs, repatriation, and Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theory. My motivation for conducting this study of the phenomenon of repatriation was explained in Chapter One. In addition, Chapter One also included the problem statement, purpose statement, and significance of the study as well as the research questions and definitions of important terms that are instrumental within this research study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two highlights the current literature available on the topic of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and the process of repatriation. This chapter begins with a review of the literature on the theoretical framework of Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theory. This chapter includes literature about TCK repatriation, including common repatriation challenges and effective supports to ease repatriation challenges. Additionally, this chapter provides insight into the proposed study of repatriation and the supports and services that higher education institutions can provide to help ease challenges for repatriating TCK students.

Theoretical Framework

This study of TCK repatriation was framed by Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theory. Berry (2001) found that groups are often culturally defined by similar features in language, religion, status, and race. According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). Acculturation theory suggests that, because of experiencing multicultural systems, an individual's values, beliefs, and identity is often impacted and changed. These adaptations occur on both psychological and sociocultural levels. In this way, Berry (2003) suggests that individuals exposed to two or more cultures experience behavioral shifts as diverse as shifting speech patterns, clothing choices, self-identity. Berry (2003) also suggests that acculturative stress can affect an individual's psychological wellbeing which may manifest in increased anxiety or depression. According to Berry (2003), the acculturation process occurs at an individualized level by affecting a person's values, beliefs,

attitude, and identity as well as at a group level which affects social and cultural systems. Additionally, acculturation theory suggests that repatriation can be a time of significant challenges for TCKs because of their unique multicultural upbringing. In this way, Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests that an individual's TCK upbringing impacts the values, beliefs, and identity. Often these changes are unnoticed until return the home country and the American-based social and cultural system.

Berry's (2006) model suggests that there are four different ways that a host culture meets acculturating individuals: multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation, exclusion. Berry (2006) looked at how the society embraced diversity and how diverse groups participated in the larger society to develop this concept. According to Berry (2006), multiculturalism is when a host society values and welcomes diverse groups and fosters diversity by integrating the diverse groups through mutual accommodation. Melting pot is when the society seeks assimilation of the minority groups into the mainstream society rather than embracing the differences of the cultural groups. The goal in a melting pot society is that diverse groups are absorbed by the mainstream society. Segregation is the process of enforcing separation of the minority groups from the mainstream culture. Marginalization is the exclusion of the minority group by the mainstream culture.

The individual's attitude towards home culture and host culture plays an important role in acculturation theory. Berry (2003) found that there are four acculturative strategies individuals utilize when undergoing the process of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization. When an individual's attitude, the individual undergoes the process of integration, successfully incorporating aspects of both the home and the host culture. Assimilation occurs when the individual's attitude towards the home culture is negative while

having a positive attitude towards the host culture. Separation occurs based on an individual's

positive attitude towards the home culture and a negative attitude towards the host culture.

Marginalization occurs when the individual's attitude towards both the home culture and host

culture is negative (Berry, 2003).

Klemens and Bikos (2009) used Berry's (2003) acculturation theory to help gain insight

on the psychological well-being and sociocultural adaptation of Missionary Kids (MKs)

repatriating to the United States for college. Acculturation theory is used in this study to provide

insight into the MKs' changes in values, beliefs, and identity because of their mission-based

experiences (Klemons & Bikos, 2009). Nae (2019) noted that identity issues, feelings of

rootlessness, and grief are potential problems associated with a TCK upbringing.

Research indicates that the main difference between acculturation and assimilation is the

idea of integration (Helsel, 2018). Integration focuses on transformation and on gaining of new

rather than the loss of old. In this way, acculturation is the process of gaining insight from a new

culture as it pertains to language, practices, religion, beliefs, and values. Integration is different

than the concept of assimilation, which focuses on becoming something new while losing what

the old self (Helsel, 2018).

As a theoretical framework for this study, Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation

theory has a significant impact on repatriation as it is often a time of great change for a TCK.

Berry's (2003) research on the individual's attitude to host and home cultures can impact

emotional and psychological wellbeing. Similarly, the society's accepting of diverse individuals

and groups can impact the TCK's feelings of wellbeing and acceptance (Berry, 2006). As TCKs

often return to the home country to attend college, they are faced with acculturating back to their

home society. The TCK's attitude and the society's acceptance of the TCK play major roles in

the success of returning to the home culture. Upon repatriation, TCKs are often faced with many challenges stemming from their unique upbringing, precisely the idea that, based on their experiences, they may have very different values and beliefs (Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

Related Literature

Previous research has provided insight into the topic of TCKs and the challenges and practical strategies to help with repatriation. There has been little research about the readiness of higher education institutions in providing supports and services for repatriating TCKs who are returning to the United States to attend college. Understanding the specific challenges of repatriation and effective services and supports for TCKs can increase understanding of this phenomenon.

TCKs

Scholars note that globalization has led to an increase in TCKs (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). According to Kortegast and Yount (2016), the term "third culture kid" stemmed from the research conducted by John and Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s. The children studied by the Useems were unique because of their multicultural, transient upbringing.

P. S. Davis et al. (2013) noted that many TCKs emerge from their multicultural experiences with a much broader worldview. There are many possible benefits of a multicultural upbringing. According to Rooney (2018), the multicultural experiences of a TCK can increase their ability to understand unique cultural groups. There are several factors that may contribute to an individual's success in a multicultural capacity. The five predictors for cross-cultural competencies reported by Ibraiz and Weisbord (2013) include the length of their multicultural experience, the variety of their experiences, language diversity, family diversity, and the personality traits of the individuals.

Often, repatriation to the home country occurs when the individual reaches adulthood and returns for college. Being aware of the challenges of repatriation for TCKs will be beneficial for higher education administrators and educators to be able to better understand this phenomenon and provide the necessary support for repatriating TCKs. Although researchers studied the challenges of repatriation and effective coping mechanisms and supports for TCKs, there has been little research on how higher education institutions can help TCKs successfully repatriate.

Repatriation and TCK Challenges

Repatriation is the process of returning to the home country after living in a host country. According to Kadam et al. (2019), increased migration and the advancement of technology is at the heart of multiculturalism and has led to an increase in globalization. Repatriation is a particularly challenging time for many TCKs and can cause culture shock for many individuals returning to college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). There are many psychological challenges that TCKs face as they return to their home country (Kim et al., 2019).

Repatriation can cause psychological distress as TCKs face sociocultural adaptation (Bikos et al., 2014). Psychological challenges are further illustrated by Kortegast and Yount (2016), who found that repatriation often leads to adjustment difficulties, identity challenges, and culture shock. Scholars found that repatriation for college often leads to decreased psychological well-being and increased challenges with sociocultural adaptation (Kim et al., 2019).

Similarly, Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014) found that repatriation can impact emotional development and create negative feelings of loss, difficulties with adjustment, and feelings of separation anxiety. Furthermore, TCKs often leave friends, family, and the host country to return for college. As such, repatriation is challenging for TCKs as it often is associated with the breaking of bonds directly rooted in identity formation (P. S. Davis et al., 2013).

Researchers indicate that there are three forms of international mobility related to attending university: TCK repatriation, TCK transition, and international or foreign students' mobility (Quick, 2010). According to Quick (2010), repatriation involves returning to the home country to attend university, transition relates to attending university within another host country, and international or foreign students involve growing up in the home country and going to a host country to attend university (Quick, 2010).

Understanding the unique, diverse experiences of individual TCKs will increase the overall understanding of the repatriation process (Bikos et al., 2014). Altweck and Marshall (2015) found that individuals who felt connected to the culture in which they are acculturating, whether host or home country, would be more successful with the process of readjustment. Likewise, individuals who feel there is a conflict between the home culture and the host culture are more likely to have feelings of stress and anxiety which will worsen their psychological readjustment (Altweck & Marshall, 2015). Many TCKs feel a more reliable connection to the culture of the host country than they do their home culture (Quick, 2010). Therefore, identity and cultural homelessness may emerge when the TCK repatriates and feels a lack of belonging within the home environment (Quick, 2010).

Identity

Identity is not static; it is a dynamic and continuously changing concept that is impacted by the experiences of a person (Kim et al., 2019). Internationally mobile adults already have an established sense of self that is rooted in a clear sense of cultural identity and core relationships, whereas globally mobile adolescents have not yet developed an established sense of self (Quick, 2010). According to Quick (2010), TCK identity issues are exacerbated by cultural transitions occurring during the adolescent years when an individual usually develops their sense of

personal or cultural identity. Typically, this lack of identity development because of a highly mobile childhood does not become noticeable until the individual repatriates, often to begin higher education (Quick, 2010).

Researchers suggest a tridimensional model for identity in which personal, relationship and social aspects each have a role in forming an individual's unique identity (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015). A strong sense of identity is formed through these three different platforms. Similarly, acculturation success is rooted in the ability to adjust to cultural changes and, just as important, develop a strong sense of self within multiple cultural contexts (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015). Research suggests that individuals who acculturate successfully often develop an altered cultural identity based on their multicultural experiences (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011).

Resiliency also plays a role in identity for repatriating TCKs. Selby et al. (2011) researched the relationship between identity and resiliency for repatriating missionaries and found that high resiliency had a strong correlation to good mental health, whereas participants with lower resiliency had lower mental health and increased depression.

High mobility can lead to psychological and emotional distress such as anxiety, a sense of loss, grief, pain, and culture shock (Dixon & Hayden, 2008). Pollock and Van Reken (1999) developed a five-stage model of transitioning to provide a greater understanding of the transitional process. The first stage, involvement, is the sense of belonging that an individual feels toward their current environment. The second stage, leaving, relates to the feelings of discomfort and anticipation towards the transition. In the third stage, transition, the physical act of transition occurs. The fourth stage, entering, consists of the vulnerability and uncertainty the individual feels toward the new environment. The fifth and final stage, reinvolvement, consists of the individual's feeling a sense of belonging to the new environment. Often, it is in Stages 1

through 4 that the transitioning individual feels the highest sense of psychological and emotional distress (Dixon & Hayden, 2008; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999).

Cultural identity is closely tied to an individual's sense of belonging. As TCKs are often exposed to many multicultural experiences over a prolonged period, it is likely that their identity is impacted, creating a hybrid of the different values, beliefs, religions, and cultural expectations that they experience (Kim et. al., 2019). As a result of a multicultural upbringing, TCKs may form a blended identity, a hybrid between two or more cultures; whereas others may have shifting identities, the ability to compartmentalize different cultural identities (Moore & Barker, 2012). Regarding shifting identities, the TCK is capable of successfully alternating between different cultural identities and exhibit the ability to adapt to changing cultural environments (Moore & Barker, 2012). Unfortunately, the ability to identity shift does not necessarily allow TCKs to feel like a part of the community. According to Moore and Barker (2012), the ability to identity-shift does not always correlate with feeling a sense of belonging.

Repatriation is a problematic time for TCKs and presents unique challenges for this population related to identity. Many TCKs experience challenges associated with identity, transition, and relocation when repatriating (Kwon, 2019). According to Kwon (2019), the changes in location, culture, and society impact the identity development of TCKs. Regarding gender, repatriation is particularly difficult for women on a psychological level. P. S. Davis et al. (2013) found that women were more likely to report lower levels of psychological well-being and were at increased risk of depression, anxiety, and stress upon repatriation. Even so, both genders reported increased feelings of psychological well-being after attending a reentry program which provided support aimed at helping TCKs overcome repatriation challenges (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Ittel and Sisler (2012) studied the cultural adaptation of adolescent TCKs by

looking at the individual, family, peer, and social factors and found that females had less difficulty with sociocultural adaptation than did males, which suggests that females may have an easier time adjusting to new cultures.

Furthermore, cultural hybridity, the idea of an identity developed as a part of multiple cultures, is typical for TCKs (Poonoosamy, 2018). Bicultural competency, the knowledge of more than one culture's beliefs and values, is common among TCKs (Moore & Barker, 2012). Research indicates that sense of belonging or identity could be rooted in the TCK upbringing; the TCK upbringing is, in fact, a significant component of the individual's self-identity (Helsel, 2018).

Pratezina (2019) noted that in the same way that TCK identity can be formed on the premise of their multicultural experiences rather than a physical location, so can their identity be rooted in faith or religious beliefs. Faith can also impact identity. A lower level of identity status has been tied to low faith development and religious motivation, whereas a high level of identity status has been associated with increased levels of faith development and religious motivation (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Heuvelman-Hutchinson, 2018). Moore and Barker (2012) found that TCKs often embraced a multicultural identity but lacked a clear sense of belonging. Researchers noted that even TCKs who were capable of identity shifting often felt like outsiders and lacked a sense of belonging among non-TCK peers (Moore & Barker, 2012).

TCKs often feel as if they are part of a hybrid cultural identity created by multicultural upbringing (Kwon, 2019). Altweck and Marshall (2015) noted that mental and behavioral development was tied to their identity as TCKs. According to Kwon (2019), a transient upbringing may impact identity, sense of belonging, and relationships as TCKs become adults. Similarly, Kim et al. (2017) found that ethnicity impacts group affiliation whereas cultural

identity impacts an individual's identity related to culture, values, norms, and roles. TCKs often relocate and live in several places during their time within the host country. Lijadi (2018) found that TCKs often have difficulty with place identity. Identity challenges are further illustrated by Cranston (2017), who found that a multicultural upbringing makes it difficult for individuals to identify a national home.

Kim et al. (2017) found that identity is often formed during the developmental phase of childhood as children learn what behaviors are socially acceptable. TCKs often identify as a blending of multiple cultures rather than identifying as a member of one specific cultural group (Schmidt, 2017). Interestingly, Schmidt (2017) revealed that the blend of distinct cultural identities that are developed because of a multicultural upbringing allows TCKs to navigate multiple cultures seamlessly. TCKs may feel their sense of belonging is tied to a mosaic of different people, places, experiences, and memories; in fact, feeling at home is even more difficult as "home" is an abstract construct that is different for everyone (Poonoosamy, 2018). Identity challenges are particularly difficult for TCKs who look like most home-country peers. Visual identity can be different from the developed self-identity of TCKs who may have spent limited time within the home country and may feel more connected to the culture of the host country (Helsel, 2018).

TCKs who appear to be other than the cultural majority may experience other challenges associated with identity as they repatriate to the United States. Helsel (2018) noted that there are identity challenges that stem from racism and White ethnocentrism for TCKs who are visibly similar to cultural minorities within the host country. Similarly, Fanning and Burns (2017) noted that there was a connection between the self-identity of TCKs and how the home community acted in response to newcomers or outsiders. Furthermore, Helsel (2018) described the cynical

perspective that many Americans have about immigrants and how this connotation may affect repatriating TCKs, especially in areas of the country with less cultural diversity. This negativity may further exacerbate the challenges of repatriation for TCKs who look to be of a visible minority. In this sense, TCKs may experience challenges that relate to how they look, along with internal identity challenges that they may face when repatriating.

Many TCKs feel that they do not belong to their home culture, nor do they feel that they conform to cultural expectations (Emenike & Plowright, 2017), which makes belonging another issue faced by many TCKs. Previous research indicates that a sense of belonging and emotional connectedness can be firmly attributed to the physical location a person lives and, as such, location can be associated with a person's identity development (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017). The place of family origin as well as the places of residence can impact identity acquisition. Therefore, as Berry's (2003) acculturation theory suggests, a multicultural upbringing of TCKs can impact personal identity in that it can cause a feeling of emotional discrepancy as their experiences living in other countries is often misunderstood or disregarded by members of the public (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017). TCKs experienced cultural displacement, which can impact identity development (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). In addition, TCKs often spend many of their formative years in environments as cultural and racial minorities; however, identity issues may not be as apparent as transitional challenges and often overlooked until the TCK is exhibiting signs of severe emotional or behavioral distress (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). As TCKs repatriate, the sense of identity and belonging may become significant challenges due to their multicultural upbringing. Eliminating anxiety and stress can be accomplished by trying to remove the triggers associated with these feelings (Strand et al., 2015).

According to Cranston (2017), TCKs often find a sense of self within their community rather than individual identity. Identity challenges can become apparent as TCKs often repatriate alone and, as such, often lose the community which they associate as part of their identity. TCKs often feel that they do not belong to national cultures; instead, their identity is often tied to where they feel most secure (Cranston, 2017). Repatriating TCKs may experience a sense of loss associated with leaving a familiar community and in seeking a sense of identity away from the known community. Similarly, Kortegast and Yount (2016) showed that MKs must navigate new social and academic environments and often lose a sense of cultural identity. Likewise, Lijadi (2018) conducted a study to determine factors attributed to TCK identity formation and found that identity formation can be affected by stability as a child, a sense of belonging in adolescence, and a sense of direction in adolescence.

Furthermore, Dillon and Ali (2019) noted the importance of cultural acquisition and cultural retention as interdependent factors that help make up TCK identity. TCKs can gain aspects of culture within the host country while retaining aspects of culture associated with the home country. As such, their identity can be formed from the merging of these multicultural experiences.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences can also pose challenges for repatriating TCKs. Bikos et al. (2014) noted that the transient nature of the TCK lifestyle often impedes these individuals from forming strong, lasting relationships with schools or places they reside. Also, the level of American exposure TCKs had during their time in the host country is an indicator of how complicated the repatriation process will be for returning TCKs; individuals who have access to American books,

movies, pop culture, and the Internet have lower adjustment issues (Martin, 2017). Often, TCKs tend to feel culturally different from their home-country peers.

A multicultural upbringing can lead TCKs to reject specific cultural values and attitudes of one culture because of the experiences within other cultures (Kolcheva & Guzikova, 2017). Furthermore, researchers found that the faith-based ministry exposed MKs to poverty, political instability, war, racism, unique cultures and languages, and natural disasters that they would not have experienced without this multicultural upbringing (Bikos et al., 2014). TCKs may feel the need to adapt themselves to fit into the social and behavioral expectations of individuals within the host country (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). What is acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another culture. Similarly, TCKs may feel the need to formulate multiple realities between their past and present experiences (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014).

Identity is formed and reformed from experiences, and culture and language can be reliable components of identity formation (Abshir, 2018). Still, identity can be formed even through remote access to the home culture. Ferguson et al. (2016) discussed the ability for TCKs to be enculturated with their home country even when physically distant and living within a host community via indirect, intermittent exposure. Similarly, Hannaford (2016) found that the Internet served as an essential tool to allow for communication through social media platforms which allowed TCKs to connect with family and friends in other parts of the world. Music, movies, television, news, and social media can help TCKs connect to the home community. In this way, media can serve as an important catalyst to help bridge physical gaps between the TCK and the home country which, in turn, helps aid TCKs in gaining a greater sense of membership within the home culture (Ferguson et al., 2016).

Furthermore, cultural homelessness is a concept that causes significant challenges regarding TCK identity. Henderson (2016) noted that social and cultural mobility can make an individual feel a lack of belonging within a culture; this concept is exasperated by the feeling of being an outsider when within that community. According to Henderson (2016), TCKs can shift to fit into different multicultural or multilingual roles. Some TCKs may feel more at home within the host country than within their home, or passport country. Researchers have found that TCKs with higher self-efficacy had greater success in sociocultural adaptation (Ittel & Sisler, 2012).

According to Hoersting and Jenkins (2011), adults who had a multicultural upbringing were at a higher risk of cultural homelessness, which could impact the individual's self-esteem and emotional security. Hoersting and Jenkins (2011) found that one-fourth of the multicultural participants met the criteria for cultural homelessness compared to the 7.9% of the non-multicultural sample group.

Swamidoss (2016) noted the importance of home and the impact on identity development. In this way, there may not have to be a single home for TCKs to feel connected to culture. TCKs may feel connected to the hybridity of their multicultural experiences and, as such, form their identity around their multicultural upbringings (Swamidoss, 2016). Hannaford (2018) determined that sense of belonging and feelings of allegiance aligned with both the TCKs' home country as well as the host countries where they lived.

According to Sanfilippo-Schulz (2018), diversity brings richness to a population group through diverse characteristics and traits that are uncommon within the majority. Bikos et al. (2014) noted that TCKs often felt that their global experiences helped them gain a greater worldview and think in terms of a global context. Kwon (2019) found that TCKs appreciated their acquired cultural and linguistic skills gained from their multicultural upbringing.

Furthermore, the high mobility lifestyle of their parents is often continued by the TCK (Colomer, 2018). Language and cultural fluency are assets and allow TCKs to quickly adjust to new cultures and locations. Experiences within a multicultural upbringing can lead to increased open-mindedness of other cultures (Kolcheva & Guzikova, 2017). On the other hand, acculturation challenges that TCKs may face include academic differences as well as socio-economic differences (Alexander, 2016). Fechter and Korpela (2016) found that TCKs often experience very different socioeconomic, political, and regulatory circumstances as a result of their multicultural upbringing.

Academic Challenges

Academic readiness can also be a source of frustration for repatriating TCKs because they are often educated at international schools while living in a host country (Ibraiz & Weisbord, 2013). Some TCKs may feel equipped while others may feel inadequate about their received educational preparation before entering higher education (Bikos et al., 2014). High mobility can negatively impact the educational growth of a child, which is particularly concerning for TCKs because of their transient lifestyle (Dixon & Hayden, 2008).

Likewise, international teachers feel as though they are distinct from professional educators within their home country (Bailey & Cooker, 2019). Furthermore, international curriculum and pedagogy may not always align to the same standards or expectations. Brown et al. (2017) noted the importance of universal curriculum design to help alleviate these concerns. According to Bikos et al. (2014), the educational experiences of TCKs can be diverse and made up of homeschooling, boarding schools, local schools, international programs, and other educational environments with different curricula and standard levels. Along with the other

challenges of repatriation, TCKs may face academic challenges when repatriating for college as they have not had the same access to education as their host-country peers (Bikos et al., 2014).

The increase in students receiving education throughout the world has affected higher education in the need to adapt to different cultural contexts and ensure communication with individuals from differing levels of educational and linguistic abilities (Brown et al., 2017). Potential biases and assumptions are also present within the educational environment. Multilingual students do not often receive praise or encouragement about their linguistic skills and may even receive bias about their educational abilities if their first language differs from the primary academic language used within the classroom (Brown et al., 2017). These biases and assumptions may prove to be yet another challenge TCKs face as they repatriate for college.

However, because of multiple multicultural experiences, TCKs may adapt better to new cultures and develop more significant intercultural communication skills (Nurjihan & Schumacher, 2019). Methodology and pedagogy may need to be reconsidered with the increase of international and TCK student groups entering higher education (Kolcheva & Guzikova, 2017). Furthermore, language and academic gaps can negatively impact repatriating TCKs with specific deficits found in writing, communication, academic language, and self-confidence (Schmidt, 2017). TCK students beginning educational pursuits upon return to the United States may be academically prepared, but still lack confidence in their abilities upon repatriation; often, the lack of confidence is tied to language proficiency concerns, especially in the areas of written language and academic language (Schmidt, 2017). Academic challenges may stem from a lack of instructional availability and resources rather than ability level (Schmidt, 2017).

Many international schools have increased accessibility, added new curricula, and changed the instructional language to help prepare students for education after repatriation

(Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2018). International schools want to ensure educational standards similar to the TCK's home country. According to Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2018), academic concerns can relate to the language used to teach the material and the curriculum that is delivered within the classroom. Alexander (2016) noted that some international students immigrate to the United States specifically to take advantage of American education and the opportunities that having an international educational background can bring. Still, awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity are minimally understood; many American educators lack appropriate training about diverse cultures (Johnson & Bolshakova, 2015).

Relationships

The loss of relationships is a common challenge associated with TCK repatriation. According to Barker and Cornwell (2019), relationships with non-TCK peers can be impacted by the multicultural upbringing of the TCK. Some TCKs encounter difficulty in making friendships with other college peers who do not have any cross-cultural experiences and face social difficulties in which they would employ self-defense mechanisms or coping skills to protect against potential disappointment (Choi et al., 2013). According to Kortegast and Yount (2016), TCKs may feel socially isolated from their peers because their peers do not understand their host-country experiences and the unique aspects of living overseas. TCKs may find it difficult to establish social relationships as the TCK may lack a sense of belonging, have difficulty developing friendships, experience feelings of depression, and become dissatisfied with the university experience, which may result in transferring to multiple higher education institutions (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). TCK relationships with non-TCK peers may be affected by the cultural norms present within the host country and the expectations felt by the TCKs that are rooted in their multicultural experiences.

TCKs may have trouble forming relationships with non-TCKs because of the differences between how TCKs and non-TCKs develop connections. Quick (2010) found that TCKs may feel unable to connect to their home-country peers and that non-TCK peers are perceived as immature, tedious, or challenging to get to know. TCKs have had increased experience with meeting new individuals and have not always had much time to determine if they connect with the new person (Quick, 2010). On the other hand, Quick found that non-TCKs often have more experience with an extended amount of time to get to know their peers and develop connections at a slower pace. Similarly, this may be a cultural difference as TCKs tend to share a lot of information about themselves upon initially meeting someone, whereas non-TCKs often extend the process of trying to get to know someone by sharing information slowly over a more extended period (Quick, 2010).

Furthermore, a lack of belonging is a common challenge for TCKs (Kwon, 2019). According to Colomer (2018), the high mobility of TCKs during adolescence affects their identity, sense of belonging, and community attachments. TCKs often identify as cultural outsiders because of their multicultural upbringing (Colomer, 2018). Many non-TCKs experience a less mobile, more consistent environment which allows for more time to build peer relationships and gain detailed knowledge of the local area and culture (Picton & Urquhart, 2018).

According to Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014), TCKs feel a lack of belonging in the home country because they often look similar to non-TCKs but feel drastically different because of the multicultural upbringing which leads to values and experiences which differ significantly from those of their non-TCK peers. Social relationships can serve as an essential support system for repatriating TCKs. Similarly, Smith and Kearney (2016) determined to gain insight into the

experiences that TCKs go through as they return from the host country to college. The key findings of their qualitative study suggest that participants often struggled with cultural differences, forming relationships, and understanding of identity (Smith & Kearney, 2016). TCKs often struggle to form meaningful relationships with non-TCK peers (Choi et al., 2013; Smith & Kearney, 2016).

Family relationships can also be an important factor in repatriation success. According to Kim et al. (2017), MKs who identified more with Asian culture had a more exceptional coping ability, higher affective orientation, greater perception of family communication, greater verbal affection from the mother, and greater affectionate communication from the father. Coping ability may be impacted by family culture or by exposure to another culture. Likewise, the families of TCKs often have unique stressors associated with their transient lifestyle. According to Sterle et al. (2018), expatriate families face cultural changes, new languages, adjustment challenges, stress, loneliness, relationship changes, and many other issues stemming from their move which can lead to emotional distress or inability to adjust. Similarly, career changes, location changes, cultural adjustment, family member support, and other challenges can arise (Sterle, et al., 2018). Successful coping related to these challenges can increase open-mindedness, emotional stability, and social initiative, and even improve relationships between members of the family (Sterle et al., 2018). Families play an important role in easing transitional challenges and preparing TCKs for the repatriation process.

Another challenge related to relationships is that TCKs may feel that their experiences are not understood or appreciated by their non-TCK peers. Non-TCK university peers may even assume that TCKs are boasting or conceited by talking about their international experiences (Quick, 2010). According to Quick (2010), TCKs can benefit by trying to accept non-TCK peers,

thus gaining a better understanding of them through active communication, and by taking time to build relationships. Gaining experience with the values and cultural expectations of the home environment can also help to develop relationships. For example, sarcasm is a typical American aspect of communication that may be unfamiliar for returning TCKs and, as such, TCKs may assume the non-TCK individual is being rude or disrespectful rather than attempting to use humor within the conversation (Quick, 2010). In this way, gaining experience about the cultural values and norms within the home culture can help TCKs develop positive relationships with non-TCK peers.

Relationship problems within the family can also be an area of concern for TCKs. P. S. Davis et al. (2013) noted that parents of TCKs may feel the pressures of transitions and minimize or dismiss their child's feelings of grief or loss, thus failing to provide their children with the support they need. Also, the cultural expectations of the parents can impact an individual's ability to express emotion and feelings of security. Bjornsen (2020) noted the importance of caregivers providing emotion-regulation to children to help them overcome stress and feel secure, even when faced with outsider stressors. Similarly, cultural expectations can impact the degree to which parents provide emotional support for children (Bjornsen, 2020). Parents and caregivers of TCKs are instrumental in allowing or denying the child to feel emotionally regulated responses to stressors. The parent-child relationship and capacity for emotional-regulation affect the child into adulthood. Children who are discouraged by parents to display emotion may have problems with intrapersonal relationships in addition to emotional estrangement within the family (Bjornsen, 2020).

Grief and Loss

Feelings of grief and loss are also challenging for many TCKs upon repatriation. These emotions can be exacerbated by the fact that they often leave their friends and families in the host country when they repatriate (Smith & Kearney, 2016). TCKs tend to experience loss with each move: from home country to the host country, from one host country to the next host country, and from the host country to repatriating back to the home country. Each move means a loss of residence, parental career changes, and loss of relationships (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017).

Grief and loss can also be tied to the loss of culture. According to Munn and Ryan (2016), TCKs many feel a sense of loss related to their former cultural setting (e.g., food, customs, music). TCKs tend to be familiar with feelings of grief and loss as a result of highly mobile lifestyles. According to Kwon (2019), it is difficult for highly mobile TCKs to develop meaningful, deep relationships because of their transient lifestyle.

Gitterman and Knight (2019) noted that social constructs affect what types of grief are understood and supported and what types are ignored or minimized. Similarly, grief that is not socially recognized can be even more difficult because it is not supported or understood. TCKs often experience feelings and emotions that arise from the death of a loved one. Gitterman and Knight (2019) revealed that TCKs may feel emotions such as anger, sadness, self-blame, and guilt over their non-death loss of relationships, possessions, or community.

TCK grief over non-death loss is often misunderstood or overlooked by counselors who lack experience dealing with TCKs. According to Gitterman and Knight (2019), counselors must be able to help TCKs with feelings of grief and loss so they can overcome the stressors of repatriation. Delayed grief occurs when an individual does not deal with the grief at the time it

occurs. Unresolved grief can emerge later in life and come out in destructive ways (Quick, 2010). TCKs must be validated and provided with support to ensure there is no unresolved grief.

Furthermore, Kortegast and Yount (2016) found that TCKs often feel a tremendous sense of grief and loss because of their high mobility, which can feel like a loss has accumulated over years of relationship changes. Family can be an important support system for TCKs. Kim et al. (2019) found that maternal verbal affection had a positive effect on TCK's coping abilities. Family is often the only constant during multicultural transitions. According to Kim et al. (2017), a positive parental relationship can influence well-being during the repatriation process. Unfortunately, TCKs are often geographically distant from their parents who often remain in the host country during repatriation (Bikos et al., 2014). The key findings from the study Lijadi (2018) conducted included three emerging themes: high mobility experiences, current social relationships, and future life of the TCK. Lijadi (2018) focused on developing intervention strategies for TCK adolescences that may help alleviate the challenges that are specific to the TCK population.

TCK transitions can lead to a sense of loss and unresolved grief attributed to multiple experiences of high mobility which leads to repeated losses of relationships and familiar environments (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). TCKs do not always get an opportunity to process the impact of these feelings and experiences and, sometimes, processing occurs decades after returning to their home country (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Parents and family members can contribute to feelings of loss or grief by reacting negatively or by minimizing or dismissing these feelings. According to P. S. Davis et al. (2013), TCKs may have unresolved grief and experiences with adults who did not effectively help them resolve their grief by providing a safe, emotionally sensitive and validating environment.

TCKs also experience grief and loss related to non-human relationships. Loss can also apply to feelings of safety and the loss of meaningful possessions, both of which can cause severe emotional reactions (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Similarly, other non-TCK individuals may not understand why these TCKs are grieving these losses and, as such, there is a lack of support and understanding. In turn, these feelings can result in unresolved grief.

Faith

Researchers have found that missionary work is not considered a migratory movement but, instead, faith-based service or developmental aid (Lucassen & Smit, 2015). Missionaries may experience identity concerns related to loss of status or position when they leave the mission field. Missionaries invest much in their position on the mission field and often develop an identity around this profession. Missionaries may feel dehumanizing effects and lack of identity because of losing their missionary role (Selby et al., 2011). According to Selby et al. (2011), repatriated missionaries are stripped of the missionary title, thereby losing the community's perception of being unique because of their missionary role. The loss of the missionary role can exacerbate identity issues for individuals who are not as resilient (Selby et al., 2011). Loss of status and identity is a common challenge of TCKs who feel established within the host culture (Quick, 2010). Bikos et al. (2014) explored aspects of career and educational development for repatriated MKs and found that faith heavily interacts with and impacts personal attributes, external environments, and overt behaviors. According to Melles and Frey (2017), religion is often central in the life and family of missionaries. On the other hand, repatriation can impact faith and some TCKs reject their natal faith (Bikos et al., 2014).

Melles and Frey (2017) explored intercultural competence and its relationship to religious attitudes among TCKs and found that intercultural competence was a significant predictor of fair

religious treatment for all. Similarly, Melles and Frey (2017) found that the differences between an MK's religious beliefs and the religious beliefs common within the host culture can influence their decision to leave their childhood religion.

Coping Mechanisms and Supports

Although there are many challenges associated with repatriation, there are also many strategies and supports that TCKs can utilize to help ease the challenges of repatriation. A review of the current literature shows the effectiveness of coping mechanisms and supports to ease the burdens associated with repatriation. Personal artifacts and creative expressions such as poetry and journal entries can serve as therapeutic expressions of experiences that TCKs had both during and after their time in a host country. Furthermore, artifacts such as poetry and journal writings can serve as valuable tools for TCKs to express themselves and share insight about the opportunities and challenges they face as a result of their unique TCK upbringing (Hopkins, 2015). Quick (2010) suggested that TCKs find coping mechanisms to help with anxiety and stress during repatriation. Similarly, a mentor can be a great way to ensure a positive, successful transition (Quick, 2010). Using technology and taking advantage of the resources offered by the home community and universities, TCKs can connect with individuals who have shared cross-cultural experiences (Hannaford, 2018; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Quick, 2010).

TCKs have many positive attributes that stem from their multicultural upbringing. According to Nae (2019), TCKs have the benefits of experiencing a multicultural, multilingual associated with an international lifestyle. Similarly, Desilets (2016) found that individuals with similar or shared experiences felt more connected than those who just shared common ethnic or national backgrounds. TCKs tend to have higher intercultural sensitivity, and the ability to modify behavior in culturally appropriate ways within diverse cultural groups (Lyttle et al.,

2011; Morales, 2015). According to Desilets (2016), a transient upbringing can result in repeated self-redefinition and social positions and, with repeated exposures to different cultures, the ability to maneuver successfully within the different cultural and social structures. On a sociolinguistic level, multicultural experiences can provide opportunities for learning new languages (Starr et al., 2017). Lyttle et al. (2011) found that TCKs often have increased social sensitivity rooted in their multicultural upbringing. Therefore, TCKs have an ability to read social situations better than non-TCK peers (Lyttle et al., 2011). Intercultural communication competency is also a benefit rooted in the multicultural experiences of TCKs (Moore & Barker, 2012).

With the necessary coping mechanisms and support services, the experiences of TCKs can help illustrate the importance of diverse cultural opportunities. TCKs are often versatile in multiple languages as well as cultural contexts. Starr et al. (2017) found that TCKs must be fluid in how they navigate sociolinguistic and multifaceted social environments. According to Sanfilippo-Schulz (2018), TCKs often have fluid identities and may relate more to shared experiences rather than shared nationality or ethnicity. TCKs often can adapt to or shift from one cultural paradigm to another to meet the unique needs or complexities within one environment to the next.

Furthermore, Westropp et al. (2016) noted that TCKs see themselves as having the unique ability to adapt to the sociocultural environment. Most TCKs feel that their upbringing has provided them with increased open-mindedness and a greater ability to understand different cultures (Westropp et al., 2016). Similarly, a multicultural upbringing can also impact career-related skills. Researchers have found that individuals with multicultural experiences can use

their extensive cultural knowledge and broadened worldview within their field of employment, especially in a multinational organization (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015).

TCKs are often able to adapt to different environments while, on the other hand, they may have feelings of rootlessness or may feel restless and isolated because of their unique multicultural upbringing (Westropp et al., 2016). TCKs often have multicultural or universalized perspectives because of their upbringing (Lyttle et al., 2011). Global mindedness is also often crucial for TCKs. Adult TCKs (ATCKs) are often drawn to international organizations, jobs that allow for global travel, or business opportunities with a global mindset (Westropp et al., 2016).

Reentry Seminars and Transitional Assistance

Research has indicated that by reducing the common repatriation challenges through an effective reentry program, emotional distress and social difficulties can be decreased (Martin, 2017). To help aid TCKs suffering from grief or loss, a structured transitional program with understanding, supportive, and trained support staff can ensure that feelings of grief do not remain unresolved (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Furthermore, TCKs often experience reverse culture shock which is associated with feeling a lack of belonging when reentering the passport or home country (Poonoosamy, 2018). TCKs may face challenges in which they feel alienated or misunderstood as they repatriate. Similarly, reverse culture shock may be alleviated by helping TCKs prepare for cultural differences that may occur when the individual re-enters the home country (Poonoosamy, 2018). Reentry seminars may benefit repatriating TCKs by educating them on the reality of reverse culture shock and helping them understand that other TCKs have experienced similar feelings upon repatriation.

According to Kwon (2019), TCKs use their acquired linguistic and cultural skills to successfully navigate their academics and careers. Similarly, Cranston (2017) discussed the

importance of reentry seminars to help TCKs repatriate to the United States. Reentry seminars are used to help ease the burden of repatriation for TCKs by preparing them for common challenges they will likely face during the repatriation process (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Transition seminars can help individuals with social and cultural skill acquisition, decrease anxiety, depression, and stress; and increase self-perception of well-being (P. Davis et al., 2010). Being aware of common challenges that TCKs face when repatriating can help TCKs realize that they are not isolated or alone.

Counseling and Therapy

Researchers note that TCK counselors would benefit from being spiritually and culturally aware and readily accepting TCKs (Kim et al., 2016). TCKs need to develop and maintain a clear sense of self and be aware of their differences as compared to their non-TCK peers (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017). There is also importance in gaining insight into many TCKs' desire to maintain highly mobile lifestyles. This high mobility often stems from TCK experiences and the impact of these experiences such as increased cultural understanding and multilingual competencies (Kwon, 2019). According to Melles and Frey (2014), counselors trained to support TCKs helped them to identify hidden losses and overcome the challenges while focusing on the positives of repatriation.

P.S. Davis et al. (2013) found that TCKs are at heightened risk of attachment challenges, trauma, and identity conflicts because of their multicultural experiences. Therapy can be a vital resource for repatriating TCKs. According to P. S. Davis et al. (2013), emotional regulation is an important component of gaining resilience in times of stress. Process-experiential and emotion-focused therapy can support TCKs experiencing identity conflict and unresolved grief (P. S.

Davis et al., 2013). Counselors working with TCKs can help validate and empathize with their patients and provide support by helping them feel heard and understood.

Counseling and therapy can help TCKs express their feelings and voice their concerns. Melles and Frey (2014) found that TCKs benefited from counselors who helped them validate their sense of self and supported them with developing a strong sense of identity while also exploring personal values. Counseling and therapy give TCKs a safe environment with trained professionals to help work through the challenges of repatriation.

Cranston (2017) suggested gaining greater insight into the role self-help plays in identity formation and to increase understanding of the emotional registers of belonging. Lijadi and van Schalkwyk's (2014) recommendations included counseling of TCKs and their families. Furthermore, Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014) suggested that teachers and mental health workers may be helpful by aiding and supporting TCKs through the transition process.

Abe (2018) noted that there is a lack of research about the trajectory of ATCKs but found that ATCKs often had increased levels of multicultural engagement as well as higher resiliency, a higher sense of well-being, and increased adaptability related to cognitive and affective styles when compared to non-ATCKs. Similarly, Fanning and Burns (2017) found that TCKs may have a different perceptual lens from their non-TCK peers because of the unique experiences of their multicultural upbringing. Furthermore, Poonoosamy (2018) found that many TCKs may develop a stronger sense of international mindedness because of their multicultural experiences. Helsel (2018) noted that individuals who have multicultural experiences can gain critical, multiple perspectives because of their multicultural upbringing.

Melles and Frey (2014) explored the impact of TCK experiences and the effectiveness of relational-cultural therapy (RCT) to counsel ATCKs. Melles and Frey (2014) found that RCT

could be an effective strategy in working with ATCKs struggling with identity or relationship issues and recommended that RCT be explicitly used with parent inaccessibility concerns and emotional disengagement. Furthermore, P. Davis et al. (2010) found that TCK counseling was essential to help validate and empathize with TCKs and help TCKs construct a clear self-identity. To help TCKs with transitioning and identity challenges by addressing three areas: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and emotional transformation (P. Davis et al., 2010). Counseling can be an essential part of helping TCKs with repatriation.

Family and Faith

Family and faith are important sources of support for TCKs. According to Bikos et al. (2014), parents serve as an important source of support for TCKs. Similarly, parental involvement can also impact family relationships. According to Purdon (2018), parental involvement is impacted by parents' educational level, their workload, and their financial position. Similarly, parents' attitudes influence their children's choices (Purdon, 2018). According to Kim et al. (2019), parental affection strongly impacted a TCK's coping abilities and helped increase the sense of cultural and ethnic identity.

Upon repatriation to the home country, TCKs often face more psychological challenges than do their parents (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). According to Gingrich (2016), the family unit serves as an important support for TCKs, and specifically with MKs because it can sometimes be challenging to balance the demands of the ministry with the needs of the family. As such, it can be vital for sending missionary agencies to assess all members of the family to ensure attrition and longevity and to ensure that, psychologically, each member is healthy for international service (Gingrich, 2016).

The increase of short-term missions has given more individuals opportunities to experience multiculturalism through service work; however, these mission trips tend to be brief and are taken by individuals with little to no previous multicultural experience (Occhipinti, 2016). Missionaries and their immediate families often have immersive cultural experiences for extended periods. Family relationships are important to the success of missionary service, especially with the personal and family stressors that an international assignment can bring about (Gingrich, 2016). Similarly, family spirituality can serve as support in times of stress. According to Gingrich (2016), religious involvement can serve to help TCKs find purpose and meaning, especially during the challenges of repatriation.

Many MKs have added Christian culture as a sense of identity and community (Kim et al., 2019). Religion can serve as a critical resource in providing a sense of community for TCKs. Similarly, Christian groups can support TCKs by providing a safe environment and trained counselors who are both spiritually and culturally aware, in addition to an accepting community (Kim et al., 2017). Family and faith may help TCKs formulate identity and cope with the stressors of repatriation. Even though missionaries focus on faith-based work, there is a need to ensure bias and assumption are not impeding their work. Starcher (2019) noted the importance of a perceptual framework that accounts for possible racial identity and privilege and the importance of not being clouded by cultural assumptions or biases.

Relationships with extended family can also prove valuable. According to Rydenvald (2015), TCKs often remain in active contact with their parents' home culture and, as such, serve as a form of language maintenance for multilingual individuals. Often, this keeps multilingual TCKs rooted in the language of the home country. Similarly, multilingual TCKs may have

access to more occupational opportunities as a result of their linguistic capabilities (Rydenvald, 2015).

Furthermore, Lam and Selmer (2004) noted that TCKs tend to have strong family relationships. Peterson and Plamondon (2009) noted the importance of parents in an individual's ability to acculturate to life abroad. Similarly, positive family relationships were crucial in the successful cultural adaptation which conveys the importance of the dynamic family as a support system (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). Unfortunately, no parent can protect their child from all outside threats (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). Peterson and Plamondon found that negative experiences that occurred during their time in a host country had adverse psychological or physical effects on the TCK; however, parents can serve as buffers for TCKs to protect from possible harm.

Faith can serve as a support for TCKs. Immersion in multicultural experiences can increase reliance on personal faith and strengthen religious beliefs (Ma, 2016). Bikos et al. (2014) found that many MKs felt that God was present within their different environments and served as a source of direction and support. Furthermore, Bikos et al. recommended several supports to ease the challenges of repatriation: sociocultural adaptation, offering career support services for MKs, contextual or developmental approaches, and incorporating faith and spiritual calling.

Family and faith are instrumental in supporting repatriating TCKs, helping to create coping skills, and providing assistance and encouragement (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Furthermore, Korpela (2016) noted that some parents of TCKs embraced a multicultural living because they felt uncomfortable or disinterested in the values or practices within their home

country. Similarly, they felt more connected to the cultural and social practices present within the host country.

Regarding faith, Linton (2015) found that TCKs who attended international Christian schools were most interested in teachers who were highly trained, able to build useful rapport with students, and modeled a positive Christian lifestyle. Rockinson-Szapkiw and Heuvelman-Hutchinson (2018) suggested that colleges and universities provide opportunities such as counseling that focuses on faith development to help explore and develop identity. Similarly, Carr (2017) expressed the importance of children having a role in faith-based ministry. In this way, missionary families can feel united in their shared roles in the mission field, which may even strengthen family relationships (Carr, 2017). Faith can also serve as a source of identity for TCKs. Nehrbass (2018) found that missionary identity requires taking on the expected role of a faith-based identity. Therefore, religion or faith may help with identity development.

According to Sterle et al. (2018), expatriate families can face many challenges and, as a result, these challenges can serve to strengthen family relationships. Furthermore, the family can serve as a vital support system for TCKs and the challenges that the expatriate family faced during their cross-cultural experiences can serve as important resources for repatriating TCKs. They can utilize similar coping mechanisms for challenges that arise during their return home (Sterle et al., 2018). TCKs may benefit from increasing faith and religious experiences to increase identity development (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Heuvelman-Hutchinson, 2018).

Social media is another critical tool to help provide family support for repatriating TCKs by allowing easy access to friends and family during and after repatriation (Sterle et al., 2018). Hannaford (2018) found that a digital platform bridges physical distance by allowing fast and

efficient communication. Similarly, online communities can allow TCKs to connect with others who share the same interests and beliefs (Hannaford, 2018).

TCK Network

A TCK network is a group of former or current TCKs who form a community. TCK networks provide important support and research indicates that such a network effectively helps TCKs feel supported and feel connected to others who understand them (Lijadi, 2018). Cranston (2017) found that a network of TCKs can help alleviate feelings of loneliness, grief, and insecurity. TCK networks give TCKs a supportive sense of community. According to Lijadi (2018), the community is developed through shared customs, values, and traditions. TCKs who become actively involved in a community within the home country will have greater acculturation success (Chan, 2015).

TCKs feel a greater sense of belonging within a community that has members who have had similar multicultural experiences (Quick, 2010). According to Quick (2010), cultural imbalance, identity problems, and a sense of belonging are common challenges TCKs face when adjusting to university life in a new culture. TCKs often look like their non-TCK peers, but because of their multicultural experiences, they think differently and have a different sense of values and beliefs (Quick, 2010). In this way, TCKs as global nomads often feel trapped between two different worlds and may not feel a clear sense of belonging to any group. According to Quick (2010), TCKs do not fit in with their non-TCK peers because of their multicultural upbringing but do not necessarily fit in with the international students because they may not feel a sense of belonging based on shared languages or shared ethnicities. In this way, TCKs often feel the highest sense of connection with other TCKs who have had similar experiences and upbringings (Quick, 2010).

Many TCKs express a strong desire to develop relationships with other individuals with similar migrant backgrounds. Scholars suggest that TCKs find other international students or students who have had cross-cultural experiences (Quick, 2010). There are shared interests and similar experiences, which allow for a sense of greater connectedness between TCKs and individuals with migrant upbringings (Kwon, 2019). Colomer (2018) found that TCKs often identify themselves as a community distinct from other migrant groups because of their multicultural upbringing. Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2015) found social media was a helpful platform to connect with hard-to-reach participants, such as TCKs. Platforms, such as Facebook, can be used to gain insight from highly transient participants and other individuals who may be challenging to reach using other methods. Often, TCK networks allow individuals to feel a sense of belonging by a shared sense of multiculturalism (Colomer, 2018).

TCK networks can mimic the social environment of international schools in which the majority have had a multicultural upbringing and highly mobile lifestyles which, in turn, can provide them with a sense of belonging and comfort (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2018). TCK networks can help ease identity and relationship challenges for TCKs by giving them a support network of peers with similar experiences. Similarly, Smith and Kearney (2016) found that many participants were drawn to other TCKs through a strong desire to be heard and understood. Quick (2010) expressed the importance of maintaining an identity that accounts for an individual's TCK upbringing and to find belonging with others who value their multicultural experiences rather than individuals who minimize or discredit the unique upbringing of TCKs.

The importance of technology and social networking is reiterated by Hoersting and Jenkins (2011) who found a secure connection between group membership with a sense of identity and sense of belonging. Technology has allowed access to social support and increased

means of communication for TCKs (Nardon et al., 2015). According to Hannaford (2016), social

media and technology have enabled TCKs to develop and maintain relationships as well as an

unaltered environment even if the TCK remains transient. Similarly, this digital space can give

them a sense of belonging and help them create valuable connections with others (Hannaford,

2016).

Social media can also be an important tool to aid in TCK adjustment (Nwaorgu, 2019).

Social media and the internet have allowed for greater connectedness and ability to gain

information that can bridge physical location gaps via a digital pathway (Nurjihan &

Schumacher, 2019). Quick (2010) suggested that TCKs find online communities such as

TCKid.com, militarybrats.com, missionary-kids.blogspot.com, and other websites that promote

TCK connections and serve as valuable TCK resources. The digital world enables TCKs to

connect and gain a greater sense of belonging within online communities (Hannaford, 2018).

College Services and Supports

Many TCKs repatriate to the home country to attend college (P. S. Davis et al., 2013).

Adjusting to university life is difficult for most students and is impacted by an individual's

personality and ability to adapt (Vanstone & Hicks, 2019). According to Vanstone and Hicks

(2019), coping strategies and personality traits influence a student's ability to adapt successfully

to university life.

The home community can help ease repatriation challenges that TCKs might face by

embracing multiculturalism; additionally, international cuisines, artwork, and other elements that

convey an appreciation of other cultures can have a positive impact on feelings of belonging

(Desilets, 2016). Quick (2010) found that college orientations can be an excellent opportunity for

TCKs to gain insight into university life. Similarly, international orientations are encouraged for

TCKs to gain insight into the culture of the home country (Quick, 2010). Colleges and universities often offer various programs and clubs that can help TCKs develop friendships by finding activities that individuals enjoy or have in common (Quick, 2010). Many TCKs, upon return to the United States, experience culture-shock that directly affects their mental health (Munn & Ryan, 2016). Counseling services at schools can help TCKs with the transitional process (Morales, 2015). University health services are essential for repatriating TCKs as they are considered a high-risk group related to adjustment problems (Munn & Ryan, 2016).

Many students who attend international schools are academically prepared and are successful in diverse careers (Rooney, 2018). Furthermore, TCKs tend to have strong linguistic skills, adept in multicultural experiences, are open-minded and flexible, and tend to be both tolerant and accepting of diverse people groups (Lam & Selmer, 2004). According to Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2017), the TCK's ability to develop a clear sense of purpose impacts success in life, relationship, and career. Higher education institutions could provide support services to help TCKs with finding purpose. Higher education institutions can help TCKs with identity challenges by providing opportunities to explore faith and religion. According to Rockinson-Szapkiw and Heuvelman-Hutchinson (2018), higher education institutions can support by encouraging participation in religious clubs and local religious organizations to foster a sense of community.

Educational institutions can catalyze encouraging and promoting cultural diversity and increasing opportunities for both teachers and students to share their unique cultural backgrounds. Poonoosamy (2018) noted that encouraging cultural differences can be beneficial for schools; institutions can promote multicultural and multi-ethnic students and staff to display their unique identity backgrounds and experiences. Fanning and Burns (2017) noted the

importance of teaching and embracing diverse cultures to help broaden student perspectives and the positive impacts this had on developing students into well-rounded young adults. Similarly, encouragement of cultural and ethnic diversity within the educational environment promotes the integration and acceptance of unique backgrounds and helps reinforce students' sense of identity, increases cultural awareness, and fosters a greater acceptance of diverse values, beliefs, customs, and ideas (Poonoosamy, 2018).

Higher education institutions can help aid in the transition process in other ways. According to Bikos et al. (2014), TCKs believed that repatriation assistance provided by higher education institutions were supportive and effective in helping ease the burden of repatriation which can increase student retention in higher education environments. Similarly, belonging is an important factor in higher education retention. As TCKs repatriate, the sense of identity and belonging may become significant challenges due to their multicultural upbringing. According to Kim et al. (2017), MKs share similar repatriation stressors as TCKs, and higher education institutions can provide supports such as MK campus programs to increase awareness of and reach out to international MKs and provide TCKs with information about both their school and transitional resources and supports. Dillon and Ali (2019) discussed the importance of school as a microculture environment that can impact personal perception.

School can serve as an important factor in acculturation and can significantly impact culture. According to Choi et al. (2013), higher education institutions often overlook TCKs and their unique characteristics and needs. Schools could provide services and supports to help TCK students who are repatriating. Choi et al. found that college TCKs were often more connected with international students because of similar experiences with other cultures and a globalized

worldview. TCKs often faced similar cultural and social barriers to international students and had similar cultural transition challenges (Choi, et al., 2013).

One suggested service that higher education institutions could utilize to help with social challenges is to connect TCKs with international students because of their shared multicultural experiences (Choi et al., 2013). Furthermore, TCKs could benefit from being provided with information about how to live in the United States along with scholarship and financial aid support offered for international or TCK students (Kim et al., 2016). TCKs' emotional and mental health is affected by pre-repatriation preparation, repatriation stressors upon returning home, and social integration after repatriation (Purnell & Hoban, 2014). Similarly, TCKs who feel supported and are socially engaged have improved emotional and mental health (Purnell & Hoban, 2014).

Unfortunately, there is minimal research on how higher education institutions can provide support for TCKs. Researchers have indicated the importance for academic communities to increase supports and knowledge of TCKs because of its growing population because of globalization to help TCKs successfully transition (Moore & Barker, 2012). Additionally, this benefits higher education institutions through increased student retention by ensuring that TCK students feel a strong sense of belonging within the collegiate community (Cranston, 2015; Strand et al., 2015). Similarly, many TCKs come from diverse geographical, psychological, and academic backgrounds, and, as such, will need appropriately different services and supports to help aid in the transitional process. As repatriation often occurs as TCKs return to their home countries for college, higher institutions must be aware of the common challenges they face and provide supports to ease the burden of repatriation. This proposed study is necessary to provide higher education stakeholders with relevant information about repatriation challenges and

effective coping mechanisms and supports. This study will reveal valuable information about repatriation to provide insight for staff and administration of higher education institutions so they can provide important supports for TCK students.

Summary

Repatriation challenges are common and encompass identity issues, cultural differences, academic challenges, relationship problems, feelings of grief and loss, lack of family support, and faith issues (Bikos et al., 2014; Choi et al., 2013; Cranston, 2017; P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Dillon & Ali, 2019; Kadam et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014, 2017; Melles & Frey, 2017; Nehrbass, 2018; Sterle et al., 2018). Current literature has suggested effective coping mechanisms and supports which include reentry seminars and transitional assistance, counseling or therapy support, family connectedness, reliance on faith, and TCK networks (Bikos et al., 2014; Choi et al., 2013; Cranston, 2017; P. Davis et al., 2010; P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Dillan & Ali, 2019; Kim et al., 2016; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Melle & Frey, 2014; Munn & Ryan, 2016; Purnell & Hoban, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016; Sterle et al., 2018). Providing proven and appropriate supports for repatriating TCKs can help these individuals overcome the challenges that are brought about by this transition.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the Third Culture Kid's (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience. For this study, participants were individuals who have lived a minimum of four years in a host country before reaching adulthood and who have repatriated to attend college. The theory guiding this study is Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006) acculturation theory which relates to the changes in value, belief, identity because of social and cultural systems. Chapter Three includes a discussion of the transcendental phenomenological design, research questions, setting, participants, procedures, the role of the researcher, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Three will also address the trustworthiness and ethical considerations for this study.

Research Design

This study was qualitative in its design and focused on gaining greater insight into TCK repatriation. Qualitative research was used to gain a greater understanding of a phenomenon or problem through a naturalistic approach (Gall et al., 2007). As repatriation is a phenomenon that is based on the unique experiences of the individual, the research for this present study was most appropriately conducted in a qualitative manner as it allowed for each participant to discuss the topic of repatriating by recounting their own experiences. As a transcendental phenomenological study, I gained insight about the phenomenon of repatriation through the first-hand accounts of TCKs who repatriated to the United States to attend college. Transcendental phenomenology is focused on the importance of personal experience and the connection between an individual and their perception of the world (Moustakas, 1994). According to Gall et al. (2007), phenomenological studies are focused on understanding phenomenon based on individual

experiences. For this study, I employed a transcendental phenomenological approach to gain insight into each participant's perspective of TCK repatriation based on their unique personal experiences with the phenomenon of repatriation. According to Moustakas (1994), lived experiences create a person's perception of life. In this way, the proposed study is designed to highlight each participant's unique experience with the phenomenon of repatriation. This study will provide greater understanding and add to the current literature about TCK repatriation.

A phenomenological design was appropriate for the topic of TCK repatriation as this phenomenon is individualized and based on the perception and interpretation of the TCK who is returning home. TCKs experience repatriation from a personal perspective and the challenges that they face are unique and subjective. Using a phenomenological approach provided valuable information from participants about their lived experiences with repatriation. After obtaining approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I began conducting research. Data were collected through individual interviews (see Appendix H), a focus group interview (see Appendix I), and personal artifacts (see Appendix J) from the adult TCKs who have been through this repatriation process.

Research Questions

This study has one central research question. It also includes three sub-questions. These questions will help guide the study. These questions serve to gain insight on the phenomenon of repatriation based on the unique perception, based on the lived experience, of each participant.

Central Research Question

What are Third Culture Kids' (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience?

Sub-Question One

What are TCK perceptions of higher education institutions' preparedness for repatriating students, as a lived experience?

Sub-Question Two

What are TCK perceptions of higher education repatriation support and service effectiveness, as a lived experience?

Sub-Question Three

What are TCK perceptions of the process of repatriation to the United States for college enrollment as a lived experience?

Setting and Participants

The transient lifestyle of TCKs makes a digital setting ideal for the study. As such, social media and video conferencing are suitable for this study to ensure efficient gathering of participants. The use of a digital setting will also ensure access to a much larger population of potential TCK participants.

Setting

I used Facebook to recruit participants for this study. Facebook is a social media platform that was launched in 2004 and currently has 2.7 billion users. One of the unique aspects of Facebook is its ability to create and be a member of specific groups based on specific interests. As such, there are several Facebook groups dedicated to TCKs that I will use to recruit potential participants. "TCKid: Third Culture Kids" is a Facebook group with over 3,500 members. "Third Culture Kids Everywhere" is a Facebook group with over 7,100 members. "Military Brats & Third Culture Kids – Our Virtual 'Hometown'" is a Facebook group with 2,900 members. "You know you're an MK if…" is a Facebook group with 6,100 members. These four Facebook groups have the largest membership focused on TCKs.

Often, TCK networks allow individuals to feel a sense of belonging by a shared sense of multiculturalism (Colomer, 2018). I conducted the focus group interview using Zoom group meeting. Digital platforms can provide TCKs with a sense of belonging and comfort (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2018). As TCKs are often hard to reach because of high transience, it is ideal to conduct interviews and focus group research using social media platforms and technology (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2015). Online interviews and focus groups have emerged as a valuable qualitative data source as technology has improved (Stancanelli, 2010).

Participants

The targeted participants for this study were 12–15 adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) participants who have repatriated to the United States to enter a higher education institution. However, no fewer than 10 participants would take part in this study. To participate in this study, individuals had to be over the age of 18 and had to spend at least four consecutive years living in a host country. The selection of participants was through purposeful sampling. According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), purposeful sampling is used to gain rich information. The reason for purposeful sampling was to study a specific cultural group to gain insight into repatriation through the perceptions of TCKs who experienced the phenomenon. Moser and Korstjens (2018) explained that purposeful sampling allows for a greater understanding of selected individuals.

Participants were TCKs who had repatriated from a host country to begin college in the United States. As many TCKs are transient and live in many different areas, a social media platform was ideal as the setting for recruitment as TCKs are often highly transient (Colomer, 2018; Hannaford, 2016; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2018). Posting a recruitment letter on websites of several TCK groups helped gather participants for this study (see Appendix C). I conducted screening questionnaires, individual interviews, a focus group interview, and collected personal

artifacts. Similarly, participants were provided with a transcript of the interview to verify an accurate representation of their responses. Pseudonyms were used for each participant to protect privacy and confidentiality. Similarly, privacy was ensured by storing all data on a password protected computer.

Using a screening questionnaire (see Appendix D), I determined eligibility for participation in the study. This questionnaire identified the individual's age, home country citizenship, length of stay in the host country, and preference of participation in this study. Demographic information was gathered online and used to report descriptive information only.

Researcher Positionality

The motivation for this study originated from my own experience of repatriating as an adult TCK who spent 4 years living in Malaysia as well as from numerous discussions with other TCKs about the challenges of repatriation. Within the many conversations I had with other TCKs, there was often discussion about the challenges of repatriation and the lack of support and services for repatriating TCKs.

College is a time of great transition for all incoming freshmen. Repatriating TCKs have the added challenge of adjusting to an unfamiliar culture while also facing the same challenges as other incoming freshmen. For this research, I set aside my preconceived ideas about the phenomenon of repatriation and encouraged participants to convey their experiences in their own words.

Specific philosophical assumptions also guided this study. First, I was guided by an ontological assumption to report findings from the different realities of my participants. In doing so, I used the exact words and phrases of my participants to identify themes and report findings (Moustakas, 1994). I also used an axiological assumption to report present biases (Moustakas,

1994). Definitions of values such as repatriation challenges, supports, and services helped shape the study. For this assumption, it was vital that each participant and I agreed on the values placed on these topics.

Interpretive Framework

A constructivist paradigm guided the design of this study. Research notes that a constructivist paradigm is based on the concept that knowledge is formed by personal experiences (Lee, 2013). Using a constructivist paradigm, the researcher assumed that personal knowledge was created through the interaction of ideas and experiences. For this transcendental phenomenological study, the participants shared their unique perspectives on their own repatriation experiences. I focused on each of the participants' perceptions of their experiences of repatriation. The challenge of repatriation is often difficult for TCKs as it involves a great transition. As each participant's experience with repatriation is unique and personal, this will allow a greater understanding of this phenomenon.

Philosophical Assumptions

Specific philosophical assumptions also guided this study. First, I was guided by an ontological assumption to report findings from the different realities of my participants. In doing so, I used the exact words and phrases of my participants to identify themes and report findings (Moustakas, 1994). I also used an axiological assumption to report present biases (Moustakas, 1994). Definitions of values such as repatriation challenges, supports, and services helped shape the study. For this assumption, it was vital that each participant and I agreed on the values placed on these topics.

Ontological Assumption

As a Christian researcher, my beliefs on the nature of reality is singular based on my

Biblical belief system. However, I do believe that the unique experience of the individual makes each person hold different perspectives about life. This study uses the individual perspective of each participant to help gain a greater understanding of repatriation as a lived experience. As such, it is important to look at repatriation from an interpretive stance as the experiences of the individual are unique and, as such, their perceptions are also unique.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemological assumptions relate to how knowledge is perceived and justified (Creswell, 2013). Knowledge can be gained through a post-positivist approach in which it is achieved through objective, quantifiable means. However, I also believe knowledge can be subjective and, as such, gained through personal and unique experiences. In this study, I focus on an interpretive approach in which I gain knowledge through the unique experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Axiological Assumption

Axiological assumptions relate to the role of values. As a researcher, I want to ensure that my bias does not interfere with the study. As such, I need to ensure I remain objective. As I am an adult TCK (ATCK), I know I need to ensure that my perspective based on my own unique experience with repatriation does not interfere with the study. As such, I made sure not to insert my own values or position about the topic of repatriation. Similarly, I was careful in how I gathered, analyzed, and presented the data to ensure that any potential bias did not influence any part of the study. The use of Rev, an online transcript service, and NVivo helped ensure that researcher bias was not present in the study.

Researcher's Role

As an ATCK, I am a currently a member of several Facebook TCK groups. For this study, I used these groups to solicit participants. Other than being a member of these different Facebook groups, I do not have any relation or connection to any of the participants. Having gone through the repatriation process myself, there may be possible bias or assumptions from personal experience with this phenomenon. As such, I have chosen a participant selection process that will help avoid bias and will be using NVivo to analyze data to ensure that personal bias and assumptions did not interfere with this study.

Regarding my role as the human instrument for data collection in the present study, I interviewed participants and reviewed their artifacts. I found participants using social media platforms such as Facebook groups for TCKs. Concerning data collection, I was responsible for conducting the individual interviews, conducting the focus group, and reviewing artifacts.

As an adult TCK, my own experiences may cause bias. However, I attempted to remove potential bias or assumptions by being as objective as possible while conducting research and analyzing data. Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) reveal the importance of the researcher's ability to set aside prejudgments, especially when analyzing data. Data collection should ensure the epoché process to create a safe, productive environment, free of any judgment or preconceptions.

Procedures

To conduct this study, several steps were necessary. First, I obtained approval for the study from the Liberty University IRB (see Appendix F). After approval, I recruited participants for the study by posting the recruitment letter (see Appendix C) and recruitment flyer (see Appendix E) to several TCK groups on social media platforms. After completing the screening

questionnaire (see Appendix D), participants were sent a list of interview questions (see Appendix A) to preview and were asked to digitally sign a consent form (see Appendix G). using Adobe Acrobat. All interview questions were peer-reviewed and piloted.

After participants were selected through purposeful sampling, the individual interviews were conducted by arranging a time and date that was suitable for the participant. Individual interviews were conducted by video conference using Zoom. With participant consent, I recorded the Zoom video calls to help with transcribing the interviews. I transcribed individual interviews using Rev, an online transcription service. Transcripts were member checked by participants after the interviews and before the publication of the study.

The single focus group interview included at least three of the participants and was conducted using Zoom. I asked the focus group questions (see Appendix B). I asked follow-up questions, as needed, to gain greater understanding during the focus group (see Appendix I for focus group transcript). The focus group participants were provided a transcript of the interview to ensure accuracy by participants.

Personal artifacts were gathered and analyzed by determining themes that emerged (see Appendix J). Each participant was asked to supply any available personal artifacts that they had related to their personal repatriation experiences. I reviewed these artifacts to find reoccurring ideas, words, or phrases that emerged. The individual interviews, the focus group interview, and the personal artifacts were entered into the NVivo software program. The data were then analyzed to find emerging themes presented through the repetition of words and phrases from these three data sources. Similarly, the individual interviews, focus group interview, and personal artifacts were used to create and analyze themes using NVivo and to triangulate the data.

Permissions

IRB approval was obtained from the Liberty University IRB (see Appendix F). After approval, I recruited participants using Facebook. Several TCK groups were provided with the recruitment letter (see Appendix C) and recruitment flyer (see Appendix E) on social media platforms. The group administrators were able to approve or decline the recruitment post before these documents were able to be published online. Participants were required to electronically sign informed consent forms prior to their participation in the study.

Recruitment Plan

The sample size for this study was 12 participants. Potential participants had to complete the screening questionnaire (see Appendix D) to ensure that they met the requirements for this study. Participants had to be Third Culture Kids over the age of 18 who lived at least four years in a host country before repatriating to the United States for higher education. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling as this was a transcendental phenomenological study. Then, participants were sent a list of interview questions to preview and were asked to digitally sign a consent form using Adobe Acrobat. All interview questions were peer-reviewed and piloted.

The individual interviews were conducted by arranging a time and date that was suitable for the participant. Individual interviews were conducted by video conference using Zoom. With participant consent, I recorded the Zoom video calls to help with transcribing the interviews. The individual interviews were transcribed using Rev, an online transcription service. Transcripts were member checked by participants after the interviews and before the publication of the study. At the end of the individual interviews, each participant was asked to share any personal

artifacts related to repatriation. Each participant was also invited to the focus group interview that took place using Zoom at a later date.

Data Collection Plan

Evidence for phenomenological research comes from the first-person, lived experiences of participants. Phenomenological research data are collected through the process of topic and question. Phenomenological interviews are an informal process using open-ended questions regarding the participant's experience with the phenomenon being studied. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological researchers must abstain from making suppositions and focus on the phenomenon from a fresh perspective. Interviews serve as a vital method for gaining data within the realm of phenomenological research. For transcendental phenomenological research, qualitative interviews should be conducted with consideration for using informal, open-ended, topical-guided interviews. Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) explained the importance of the researcher's ability to set aside prejudgments, especially when analyzing data. As such, data collection should ensure the epoché process to create a safe, effective environment that is free of any judgment or preconceptions. Research should be bracketed around the question (Moustakas, 1994).

Screening Questionnaire

Demographic information was gathered for this study to ensure that the participants met the participation requirements. This demographic information included the participant's age, country of citizenship, host country, and length of time in the host country (see Appendix D). Participants were selected based on the demographic information gathered online from potential participants using the screening questionnaire. Demographic information was only used to report descriptive information and to ensure that the participants met the participation requirements.

These data were reported only and were not analyzed qualitatively.

Individual Interviews

Phenomenological research evidence comes from first-person, lived experiences of participants. Data collection methods in phenomenological research involve the process of topic and question. Phenomenological interviews are an informal process using open-ended questions regarding the participant's experience with the phenomenon being studied. According to Moustakas (1994), the investigator must abstain from making suppositions and should derive findings that will be the basis for further research about the topic. Interviews serve as a vital method for gaining data within the realm of phenomenological research. For transcendental phenomenological research, qualitative interviews should be conducted with consideration for using informal, open-ended, topical-guided interviews. Participants completed an in-depth, open-ended interview to provide data for this study. The participants were asked several questions related to the phenomenon of repatriation. The following are the standardized open-ended interview questions with the corresponding CRQ and/or the SQ noted.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Describe your experience as a TCK living in another country. CRQ

2. What were the highlights or most significant benefits of your experience living in another country? CRQ

3. What were the drawbacks of your experience living in another country? CRQ

4. Describe your experience moving back to the United States after living in another country. CRQ

5. What were the significant social challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment within your home country? CRQ, SQ3

6. What were the significant psychological and/or personal challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment? CRQ, SQ3

7. What were the other challenges you faced during the repatriation process to a higher education environment? CRQ, SQ3

8. If you had a reentry seminar, what its impact on your repatriation? If you did not have a reentry seminar, do you believe it would have been beneficial and why? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

9. What services or supports did your higher education institution provide for you during your repatriation process? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

10. What were the most beneficial tools you discovered to help you overcome repatriation challenges as a TCK repatriating for higher education? SQ2, SQ3

11. Describe your college or university's role in your repatriation process. CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

12. What services and supports would you recommend a college or university should provide for TCKs who are coming back to the United States? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2

13. What other suggestions would you like to give to a college or university on how to best aid or help students who are repatriating TCKs? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

14. What else would you like to add that you have not already discussed?

The first four questions were important for establishing rapport and gaining insight on the TCK experience. Questions 1 through 3 were designed to gather insight into the participants' experiences as a TCK within the host country. Questions 1 and 2 were intended to be relatively straightforward and nonthreatening and served to help develop rapport (Linton, 2015). Question 1 asked the participants to describe their TCK experiences. Question 2 asked participants to

discuss the highlights and most significant benefits of their TCK experience. Question 3 asked

the participant to discuss the drawbacks of their TCK upbringing. Questions 4 through 7 were

designed to gain insight into the challenges of repatriation for TCKs. TCKs are a unique

subgroup of the population that has experienced a multicultural upbringing. As such, there are

often transitional issues that occur when repatriating to the United States (Bikos et al., 2014;

Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018). Question 4 is broad in its approach by asking the

participant to describe his or her experience moving back to the United States (Kim et al., 2017;

Lijadi, 2018). This question was intended to gain insight into their repatriation process which

relates to the first, second, and third SQs.

Questions 5 and 6 asked participants to provide insight about the specific social,

psychological, and personal challenges they faced during repatriation (Bikos et al., 2014; Kim et

al., 2017; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018). Question 5 asked participants to discuss

significant social challenges they faced during repatriation. Question 6 asked participants to

discuss significant psychological and personal challenges that occurred during repatriation.

Question 7 asked if there were any other challenges, other than social, psychological, or

personal, that they faced during repatriation (Bikos et al., 2014; Cranston, 2017; P. S. Davis et

al., 2013; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Nerhbass, 2018). This question was broad to allow

participants to discuss any other challenges they faced during repatriation to ensure saturation of

the topic as it relates to the first, second, and third SQs.

Question 8 asked participants if they participated in a reentry seminar and how it

impacted their transition process. If they did not participate in a reentry program, participants

were asked whether they believe it would have been beneficial for them. This question served to

gain insight into adequate supports and services related to the central research question while also addressing the three SQs regarding repatriation supports.

Questions 7 through 15 invited participants to reflect on the services, supports, and tools that helped them overcome repatriation challenges related to both transition to higher education and to the home country (Bikos et al., 2014; Choi et al., 2013; Cranston, 2017; P. Davis et al., 2010; P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Dillan & Ali, 2019; Kim et al., 2016; Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi, 2018; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Melles & Frey, 2014; Munn & Ryan, 2016; Purnell & Hoban, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016; Sterle et al., 2018). Question 9 asked participants to discuss available services and supports available to them during their repatriation process which relates to the CRQ about supports and services, the second SQ about effective supports during repatriation, and the third SQ which asked participants to describe their repatriation process. Question 10 asked participants to discuss beneficial tools to overcome repatriation challenges that addressed the CRQ and the three SQs.

Questions 11 through 14 asked participants to reflect on how equipped their higher education institution was in providing supports and services to students who are repatriating TCKs (Choi et al., 2013; Dillan & Ali, 2019; Munn & Ryan, 2016; Purnell & Hoban, 2014). Question 11 asked participants to discuss services and supports that were provided by higher education institutions relates to the CRQ and the three SQs. Question 12 asked participants to describe the college or university's role in their repatriation process which also addresses the CRQ and the three SQs. Question 13 asked about the services and supports that the participant would recommend colleges and universities provide for TCKs to help gain insight about the CRQ and the three SQs. Question 14 asked participants to provide any other suggestions to higher education institutions aid repatriating TCKs to also gain insight about the CRQ and the

three SQs. Question 15 was a general inquiry asking participants to provide any other relevant information that they wish to provide which had not been previously addressed.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

For this study, I utilized Moustakas (1994) phenomenological data analysis procedures through bracketing, horizonalization, thematic identification, individual textural and structural descriptions, and composite textural and structural descriptions. First, I used the transcript service, Rev, to transcribe the individual and focus group interviews and input the data electronically into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software (QDAS). I utilized NVivo to code, analyze for themes, and develop textural and structural descriptions.

Following Moustakas's (1994) emphasis on the importance of epoché, I set aside my ideas about repatriation to ensure that I separated my ideas from what is present in the data. I ensured epoché for this study by using bracketing. In this way, I separated my ideas about repatriation from what was presented within the study. Bracketing ensured that the data were not affected by my ideas about the phenomenon.

Next, I used horizonalization for data analysis. This means that I gave equal value to all parts of the data, with the assumption that all parts of the data are of equal weight (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Horizonalization requires laying out the data to ensure equality within the process of preliminary data coding. In this step, I began coding and grouping by ensuring every quote from the interviews was considered relevant and equal as it relates to the phenomenon being explored.

To do this, I inserted all interviews into NVivo and give equal starting value to each word and phrase used within the interviews. Value was gained through word and phrase frequency. In this way, a word used many times will increase in value over words used sparingly based on the

frequency of use within the data. Coding was used during this phase as I used NVivo to code repeated words and phrases found in the interviews.

To identify themes, I coded repeated words and phrases based on word and phrase frequency. Thematic analysis helped me derive the meaning of coded words and phrases found in the data. For example, if the word "counseling" or "therapy" is repeated multiple times, this word will emerge as a theme which will then be reported within the study as a service or support those individuals found useful in the repatriation process.

Next, I used NVivo to create individual textual and structural descriptions based on individual interviews. I ensured individual textual descriptions by using direct quotes and excerpts from the participants taken directly from the interviews. I created individual structural descriptions by examining the individual emotional, social, and cultural connections to interpret the data based on what participants say. I provided textual descriptions to help explain what the participants experienced, and I used structural descriptions to help explain how the participant experienced the phenomenon.

I used data triangulation from the individual interviews, the focus group, and the artifacts to look for commonalities and help gain greater insight of the phenomenon. Triangulation helps increase confidence in the findings (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Methodological triangulation helps with confirming the findings and increases understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Similarly, triangulation increases the validity and reliability of the data. Regarding data analysis, phenomenologists must approach research focusing on the experience of the individual and the context in which it was experienced (Phillips-Pula, Strunk, Pickler, 2011). The epoché process helps the phenomenologist identify *a priori* thoughts regarding the phenomenon (Phillips-Pula, Strunk, Pickler, 2011). The interviews and focus group

discussion were entered into NVivo to help identify repeated words and phrases to determine patterns found within the data. I used NVivo to identify these overlapping statements. The overlapping statements from participants that are identified formed the textural and structural descriptions.

Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview was conducted using a private Zoom video conference and included three of the participants. The data from the single focus group helped provide triangulation. This interview was semi-structured to allow me to ask follow-up questions to provide clarification or gain more insight, as needed. The following were the open-ended focus group interview questions with the CRQ and/or the SQ noted.

Focus Group Questions

1. What was the process of repatriation like for you? CRQ, SQ3

2. What were the major challenges you faced during repatriation? CRQ, SQ3

3. What are your perceptions of the preparedness of higher education institutions to provide supports and services for repatriating TCKs? CRQ, SQ1

4. What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of higher education institution supports and services for repatriating TCKs? CRQ, SQ2

5. What are your perceptions of the ways a TCK upbringing has affected you? CRQ

6. What else would you like to share about your experience with repatriation that we have not covered?

These questions were used during the single focus group to gain insight into their experiences with repatriating. Using the same participants from the individual interviews in the focus group interview assisted in data triangulation.

Question 1 helped me gain insight into the central research question of this study by having participants voice their ideas about the process of repatriation. This question helped me gain insight related to the CRQ. Repatriation often has a significant impact on the social and psychological wellbeing of TCKs (Choi et al., 2013). Culture shock is standard for repatriating TCKS (Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Repatriation can have a tremendous impact on emotional and psychological wellbeing (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014).

Question 2 asked participants about the significant challenges they faced during repatriation. The challenges of repatriation can be minimized by providing appropriate services and supports for TCKs (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). Many higher education institutions do not provide transitional supports and services for TCKs who repatriate to the United States to begin college (Kortegast & Yount, 2016).

Question 3 asked participants about their perception of their higher education institution's preparedness to support TCK students in the repatriation process. As many TCKs repatriate to begin their education at American universities and colleges, education institutions need to provide services and supports (P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Higher education institutions can help alleviate repatriation challenges by fostering a sense of community (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Heuvelman-Hutchinson, 2018). Colleges and universities can impact students' sense of belonging by embracing cultural differences and unique backgrounds (Poonoosamy, 2018). Cultural promotion can encourage students from diverse backgrounds to feel connected and welcomed within the educational and social community of higher education environments (Fanning & Burns, 2017). Higher education institutions can be instrumental in supporting and servicing repatriating TCKs (Kim et al., 2017). Education environments can help provide cultural and social supports to TCKs (Choi et al., 2013).

Question 5 asked participants to discuss how the TCK upbringing has affected other aspects of their life. TCKs who feel supported and socially connected had improved emotional and mental health (Purnell & Hoban, 2014). This question allowed participants to provide information that they feel is pertinent to understanding TCKs. Question 6 asked participants if there is anything else they want to share about repatriation that was not covered during the interview. This question allowed participants the opportunity to share any other information that they desire about repatriation.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The focus group interview transcript was created through Rev, an online transcription service that used the recorded Zoom video. The transcript was entered into NVivo to help identify repeated words and phrases to determine patterns found within the data. I used NVivo to identify these overlapping statements. The overlapping statements from were used to form textual and structural descriptions. Repeated words and phrases from the focus group interview helped create themes and sub-themes based on frequency of use. Data triangulation was also used to compare focus group results to individual interview data and personal artifact data.

Personal Artifacts

Along with the interviews, data were collected in the form of participants' artifacts that pertain to the topic of repatriation. Artifacts that may be considered include artwork and personal writings regarding the topic of repatriation or higher education supports and services. According to Creswell (2013), documents, observations, and other personal artifacts can be considered as data in phenomenological research. Participants will be asked to provide personal artifacts to gain more insight about the phenomenon of repatriation. Participants may provide artwork, poetry, diary entries, or similar personal artifacts that pertain to the repatriation process which is

being studied. After the individual interviews, I will ask participants, if they are willing, to provide any personal artifacts that relate to their repatriation process. Like the interviews, these artifacts will be used to create and analyze themes and triangulate the data.

Personal Artifacts Analysis Plan

Each participant was asked to provide any created writings or artwork that related to the individual's repatriation experience. The personal artifacts were entered into NVivo. Writing and artwork were analyzed by looking at words, phrases, or artwork subjects. Repetition of words, phrases, or artwork subjects also helped develop themes based on frequency. Personal artifact data were used to create composite textual and structural descriptions of repatriation. I created composite structural descriptions by examining the emotional, social, and cultural connections across the whole participant group. Structural descriptions helped me illustrate the common themes that emerge across the entire participant group. I compared individual data with the focus group data and the personal artifact data to determine the essence of repatriation as a phenomenon and provided an explanation of the impact of TCK repatriation.

Data Synthesis

After all data was entered into NVivo, each individual interview transcript, the focus group interview transcript, and each personal artifact was thematically coded based on frequency. The NVivo software program helped organize and present the themes that emerged based on the frequency of use from all data collected from this study. Themes were identified by repetition of words and phrases from each source of data. Based on the word and phrase frequency, the researcher organized the themes and sub-themes based on word and phrase repetition.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study was ensured through measures to address credibility and dependability. Similarly, I also ensured the confirmability and transferability of this study. I used qualitative methods of research to gain insight on the phenomenon of repatriation.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined trustworthiness criteria for qualitative research. To ensure credibility for this research study, triangulation was used. According to Morse (2015), triangulation increases reliability and validity by providing reliable results and ensuring that analysis of data will produce similar results. To ensure credibility, I adopted established research methods. The modified van Kaam analysis method is a credible method that is endorsed by Moustakas (1994) in phenomenological research. It is also essential that I ensure familiarity with the participating culture. As a TCK, I am a member of the culture being investigated in the proposed study. Triangulation was created using the data from individual interviews, a single focus group interview, and personal artifacts. The purpose of triangulation was to ensure that I gained a greater understanding of the phenomenon from different data sources.

Transferability

To ensure transferability, I provided a thick description of the study to ensure it can be replicated. According to Morse (2015), thick descriptions make it easier to transfer findings. In this way, providing a thick description will allow for transferability. Detailed descriptions of the steps taken to gather and analyze data were provided to allow for greater transferability.

Dependability

Overlapping methods can ensure dependability. Geelan (2004) found that overlapping methods involve triangulation to establish reliability or dependability and establish validity (i.e.,

credibility). According to Morse (2015), triangulation, duplicating analysis, and auditing can help increase credibility. I gathered data from the individual interviews, the single focus group interview, and the personal artifacts.

A dependability audit was be conducted to ensure data are correctly collected, maintained, and accurate. In this way, an audit trail can help ensure dependability. Likewise, a confirmability audit is beneficial to ensure data support the findings, interpretations, and recommendations. I provided participants with a transcript of the individual interviews and the focus group interview to ensure that the information presented in these interviews are accurate. I kept all data safe and secure in a locked, confidential area. Before the publication of this study, I conducted a self-audit of the data.

Confirmability

Having gone through the repatriation process myself, there may be possible bias or assumptions from personal experience with this phenomenon. As such, I have chosen a participant selection process that will help avoid bias and will be using NVivo to analyze data to ensure that personal bias and assumptions did not interfere with this study. I attempted to remove potential bias or assumptions by being as objective as possible while conducting research and analyzing data. Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) reveal the importance of the researcher's ability to set aside prejudgments, especially when analyzing data. Data collection should ensure the epoché process to create a safe, productive environment, free of any judgment or preconceptions.

Ethical Considerations

I obtained informed consent from all participants and ensured that all participants understand that their participation is voluntary. I informed them that they can decline

participation at any time. I provided all participants with a copy of the interview questions before beginning the interview and communicated to each participant that they may refuse to participate or may skip any questions. I required a signed informed consent form from all participants before their involvement.

Data were stored in a private, secure cabinet which is locked in a password-protected computer. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants is protected. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Interviews were conducted in the preferred environment and method of the individual participant to ensure a private, comfortable environment. Transcripts were provided to all participants before publishing any data to ensure the accuracy of participant responses. Before conducting any research, I obtained approval from the Liberty University IRB to ensure ethical considerations and ethical standards were met and adhered to. Liberty University's IRB approved and oversaw all aspects of ethical consideration about the study.

Summary

Chapter Three provided insight on the design, research questions, setting, participants, procedures, my role of the researcher, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of the study to help fulfill the purpose of gaining insight about the challenges of TCK repatriation. This phenomenological research study explored the phenomenon of TCK repatriation and employ qualitative methods of research to gain insight into the challenges associated with repatriation along with learning what strategies and services higher education institutions can provide for students who are repatriating TCKs. Data were gathered through individual interviews, a focus group interview, and personal artifacts. Data were digitally entered into NVivo to discover themes through the repetition of common words and phrases. The Liberty

University IRB oversaw this study. I ensured that this study is trustworthy by including measures that increase its credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. I also ensured ethical considerations were addressed and adhered to Liberty University's policies under the direction and supervision of Liberty University's IRB.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of repatriation, as a lived experience, on Third Culture Kids (TCKs). This chapter will include participant descriptions; the data, in the form of narrative themes, charts and figures presented by theme. This chapter also includes outlier data and research question responses.

Participants

The targeted participants for this study were 12 adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) individuals who have repatriated to the United States to enter a higher education institution. There were twelve participants who took part in this study. Three of these participants also took part in the focus group interview. Two of the participants also provided artifacts. Solicitation of participants was successful through social media recruitment. Pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality of participants and locations. Table 1 includes questionnaire data about each participant

Angela

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in Chile and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. She credits her TCK upbringing with helping her be flexible. Angela shared that faith was an interesting component to the repatriation process. She stated, "Some of us have fallen completely out of the faith. Others have completely surrendered to the faith." Angela currently works as a youth minister at her church.

David

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that he aligns with is a Business Expat. He lived in Indonesia and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. David offered, "It was also an opportunity to travel a lot, not just around Asia but elsewhere, while I was growing up." He credits his TCK upbringing as the root for his love of foreign language and his access to exceptional education at an international school.

Holly

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in China and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Holly stated, "I think being exposed to so many different cultures make you a lot more open to new ideas and a lot more flexible, and just overall open minded to other people's beliefs even." She shared that open-mindedness and acceptance of other cultures stems from her upbringing in China.

Laurie

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Business Expat. She lived in Brazil, Japan, and Mexico. Laurie repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. According to Laurie, "I hope colleges know what TCKs are. I've worked in the field for long enough that the word isn't that spread out unfortunately." She is trilingual and credited her TCK upbringing as to why she can navigate so well in her professional career.

Mandy

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in Argentina, Ecuador, and Peru. Mandy repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Mandy shared, "I think being bilingual is probably the one I use most on a day-to-day basis. But, otherwise, I find that TCKs, in general (including myself), are more empathetic to other cultures and experiences." She is bilingual and shared that she believes in is of utmost importance for TCKs to support each other.

Mike

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that he aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). He lived in the Philippines and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Mike discussed how repatriation helped strengthen his faith. He shared, "It was a challenge to me to re-evaluate long held beliefs and assumptions. But that was actually a good thing. And so, I look back on that with helping me get grounded much better in my faith." Not only was he a TCK, but he also returned to the Philippines and currently works at the international school he used to attend as a student. He has also raised TCK children.

Nathan

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that he aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). He lived in South Korea and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Nathan shared that higher education institutions could offer international foods and condiments to help TCKs gain a greater sense of a multicultural environment on campus. He offered, "I think the big thing would be rice,

rice cooked the way the rest of the world cooks it, not the way the Americans cook it." Nathan also shared that his TCK upbringing has allowed him to appreciate other cultures, learn new customs, and travel extensively.

Naomi

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is as the daughter of a United States diplomat. She lived in Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and West Africa. According to Naomi, "I don't think I realized until I was an adult that it is OK to grieve the loss of every country you've left. For me, it's been a lot of countries." Naomi repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Naomi currently works internationally to help individuals who are underrepresented.

Sally

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in Kenya and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. According to Sally, "I looked like I should fit in, but I very clearly didn't by the things I was saying and doing, the questions I was asking… I didn't catch, of course, any pop culture references, and didn't understand why things were done the way they were done." Sally shared how a home church can help repatriating MKs feel better connected to the home culture.

Samantha

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in Brazil and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. She shared that her religious

upbringing made her sometimes feel confined and that she no longer shares her parent's Christian faith. Samantha offered, "That pressure of feeling like I must be part of something religious, but I'm like, no, I don't believe that anymore. And so, it's just like a lot of struggle internally with that." This was an important change in her identity, and her repatriation process was central to this change.

Sophia

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in East Africa and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. According to Sophia, "I never will understand people who profess to be a follower, and a child of God, and a follower of Jesus Christ, and who say they have given their life to Him to have that an attitude for somebody who is just different than we are, because we're all different." Sophia shared that her extroverted personality helped her face social challenges during repatriation.

Tina

This participant is a TCK who was living in another country for over four years. The TCK subgroup that she aligns with is a Missionary Kid (MK). She lived in South America and repatriated for higher education to attend college in the United States. Tina provided insight about the importance of therapy after repatriating. She said, "Music therapy, art therapy, narrative focus therapy, I think a lot of story work therapy- all those services I think would be very helpful for traumatized MKS and TCKS." Tina suffered much trauma within the host country and shared that these negative experiences have impacted her life late into adulthood. She also provided insight about the importance of different types of therapy that could help TCKs who had faced trauma.

Table 1

Third Culture Kid Participants

TCK Participant	18+ Years of Age	4+ Consecutive Years in Host Country	Host Country	Repatriated for Higher Education	TCK Subgroup
Angela	Yes	Yes	Chile	Yes	MK
David	Yes	Yes	Indonesia	Yes	Business Expat
Holly	Yes	Yes	China	Yes	MK
Laurie	Yes	Yes	Brazil, Japan, Mexico	Yes	Business Expat
Mandy	Yes	Yes	Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, etc.	Yes	MK
Mike	Yes	Yes	Philippines	Yes	MK
Nathan	Yes	Yes	South Korea	Yes	MK
Naomi	Yes	Yes	Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, West Africa, etc.	Yes	US Diplomat
Sally	Yes	Yes	Kenya	Yes	MK
Samantha	Yes	Yes	Brazil	Yes	MK
Sophia	Yes	Yes	East Africa	Yes	MK

| Tina | Yes | Yes | South America | Yes | MK |

Results

There were five themes that emerged from this study: (1) TCK Benefits, (2) Social Repatriation Challenges, (3) Personal Repatriation Challenges, (4) Cultural Repatriation Challenges, and (5) Services and Supports. Along with these five themes, there were several sub-themes that emerged as the result of this study based on the frequency based on repeated words and phrases (see Appendix K). Similarly, table 2 (below) presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from this study.

Table 2

TCK Repatriation Themes and Associated Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
TCK Benefits	Adaptation and Flexibility
	Faith
	Global Perspective
	Good Education
	Independence
	Language Skills
	Travel and Unique Experiences
Social Repatriation Challenges	Current Events and Pop Culture
	Facing Prejudice
	Family Pressures
	Family Separation

Language Barriers

Loss of Friends and Family

Personal Repatriation Challenges

Depression and Grief

Educational Difficulties

Identity

Isolation and Loneliness

Cultural Repatriation Challenges

Culture Differences

Financial Differences and Poverty

Religious Challenges

Seen as International Students

Services and Supports

Academic and Financial Support

Counseling and Therapy

Embracing Multiculturalism

Exploring Cultural Differences

Finding Social Footing

Family Support

Increased Services and Supports Awareness

Increased TCK Awareness

Limited Services and Supports

Mentorship and TCK Network

Overcoming Loneliness and Identity Concerns

Re-Entry Seminar

Religious Support

TCK Literature

TCK Benefits

There are many benefits that come from a TCK upbringing. According to Laurie, "Intercultural competence is another highlight of being a TCK. I think another big one I guess would be a lot of interests. I tend to connect the dots a lot with just different myriads of connections, and I find the common thread that a lot of people tend to not pick up on." Immersion into different cultures, exposure to different languages, and increased global perspective are benefits shared by many TCKs. In this study, TCK Benefits emerged as a main theme and presented seven sub-themes based on word and phrase frequency (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

TCK Benefits

TCK BENEFITS

Bar chart showing TCK Benefits: Adaptation and Flexibility: 40; Faith: 11; Global Perspective: 49; Good Education: 15; Independence: 12; Language Skills: 29; Travel and Unique Experiences: 42.
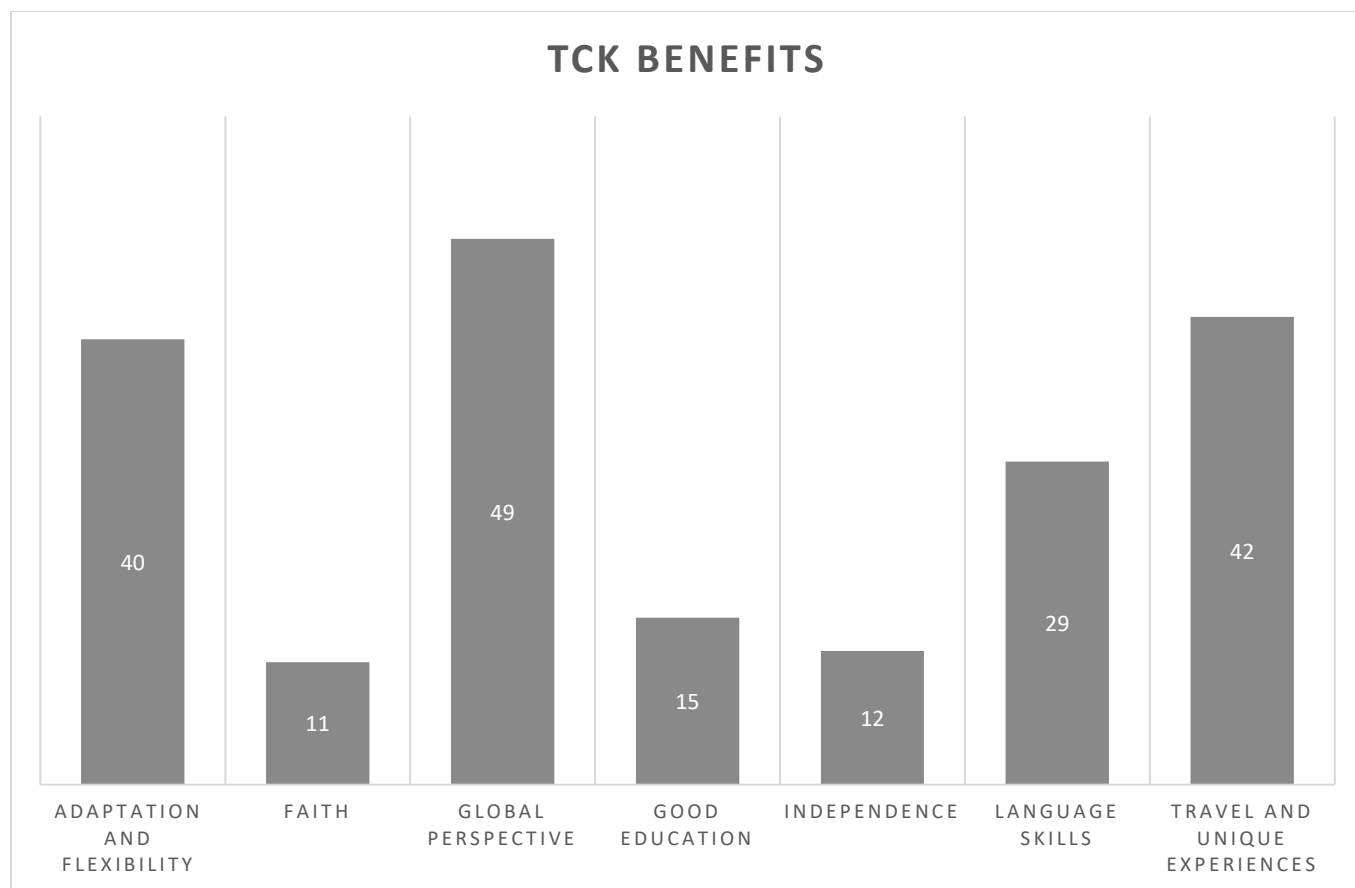
Adaptation and Flexibility

One common benefit that many TCKs share is the ability to adapt and retain flexibility. Holly shared, "I think being exposed to so many different cultures makes you a lot more open to new ideas and a lot more flexible, and just overall open minded to other people's beliefs even." This sediment was echoed by many of the TCK participants who found their TCK upbringings helped them embrace differences. According to Mandy, "I think that's the biggest takeaway from growing up in several different cultures is the flexibility and understanding of people who are different, or things are done in a different way."

Faith

Another proponent that several TCKs mentioned as a benefit from their upbringings was their faith. Sophia shared, "I know how to speak my mind and how to speak it in such a way that

I'm not going to beat them over the head. I'm not going to attack them. But I'm going to make sure that by the time we get through discussing something that they know where I stand, and they know that if they are Christian, this is not how Jesus would do. I don't think I would be that way had I not grown up in a different country." MKs, a main subgroup of TCKs, are in the host country because of a faith-based mission. In this way, many of these TCKs rely on their religious beliefs. Similarly, Mike offered, "God has used my experiences and then being able to morph that into a ministry where I can relate to these other TCKs." In this example, Mike returned to the host country to help as the Christian international school that he used to attend as an MK student because his faith led him there.

Global Perspective

Growing up in multiple cultures provides many TCKs with a global perspective. Their unique upbringing often allows them to appreciate multiculturalism. Laurie contended, "Intercultural competence is another highlight of being a TCK. I think another big one I guess would be a lot of interests. I tend to connect the dots a lot with just different myriads of connections, and I find the common thread that a lot of people tend to not pick up on.

Good Education

TCKs are exposed to drastically different educational environments in the host country. TCKs rely on homeschooling, missionary-based schools, or international schools when making educational choices while living in the host country. One potential benefit of a TCK upbringing is receiving a good education. David shared his advanced math skills upon entering college when he quipped, "But then I realized, 'Oh, this is the basics of calculus. Oh, I stopped doing this. I've done this, so I just use it.' At that point, I was just using it because that's what we were doing in IB higher math."

Independence

As a result of their upbringing, many TCKs report increased independence. Nathan shared, "There was kind of this interesting interplay between independence and self-sufficiency, I can do this, I can accomplish this, I can overcome this barrier." In this way, independence is a benefit to many TCKs as it often coincides with a sense of self-sufficiency.

Language Skills

Another benefit of a TCK upbringing is the different languages that are often a part of the host culture. TCKs often report language skills that they acquire from living in the host country. According to David, "I started learning languages from an early age. So, my parents would speak Vietnamese at home and English, and then at school, I was learning French and Indonesian from an early age. They started at us at five years old there. And then as I grew up, I started learning Spanish in my later high school years."

Travel and Unique Experiences

Living in a host country often provides TCKs with unique experiences unlike ones they would likely have in the United States. Although not all the experiences that TCKs have in the host country may be positive, TCKs often report that they have opportunities and adventures that are unlike the upbringing experienced by their American peers. David shared, "And it was also an opportunity to travel a lot, not just around Asia but elsewhere, while I was growing up. And as an expat lifestyle, when my dad is working for a large multinational and you're living in a country, which is relatively cheap, then there's that as well, it's quite a nice lifestyle."

Social Repatriation Challenges

There were three types of repatriation challenges that emerged from this study: social repatriation challenges, personal repatriation challenges, and cultural repatriation challenges.

Each of these three themes had several sub-themes that emerged. The frequency of words and phrases within the data are reported in Figure 2 (below).

Figure 2

Repatriation Challenges
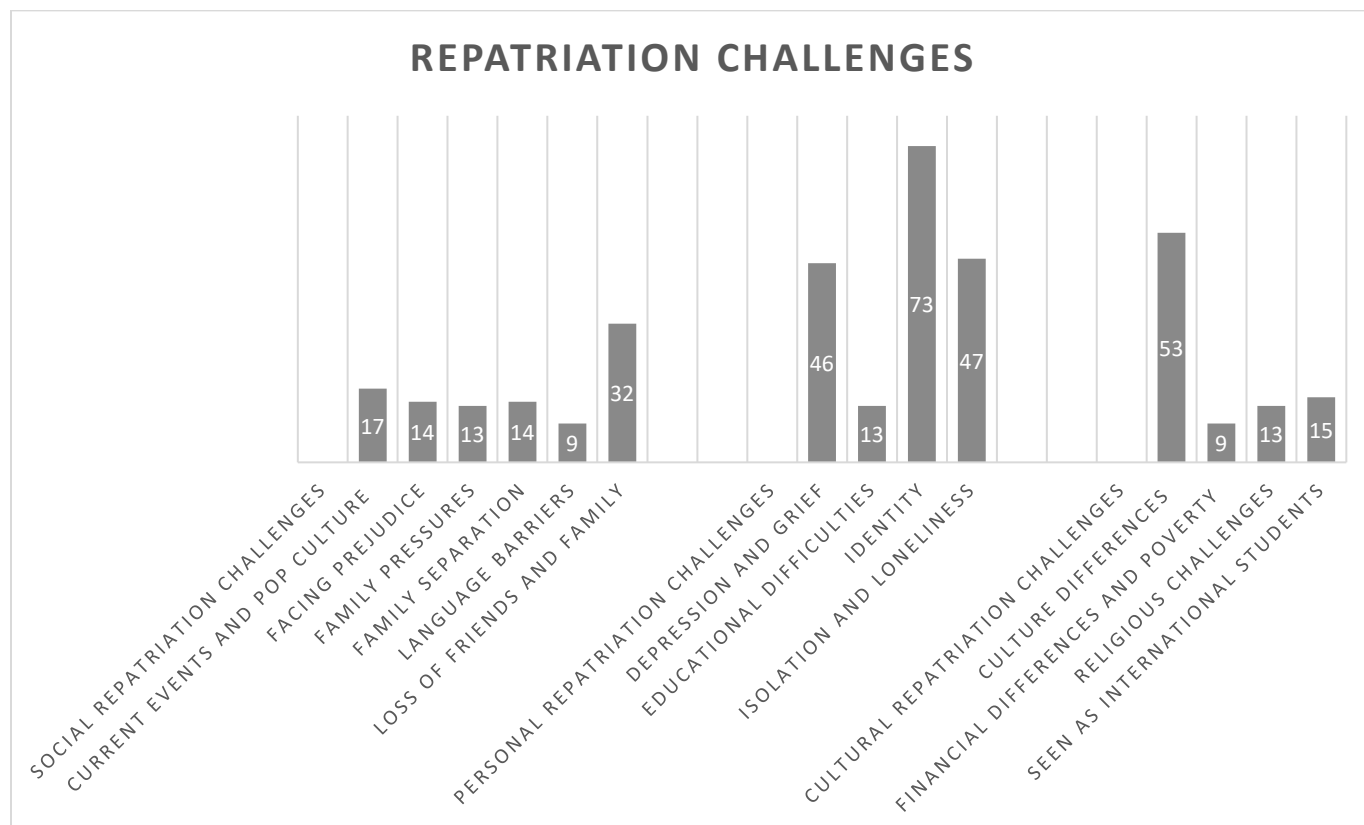
The second theme established in this present study was the social challenges of repatriating TCKs. David shared, "I had trouble with that, which became a problem when I went back to the US, and I discovered I didn't know anything about being American." There are many reasons TCKs feel that they have social difficulty when repatriating.

Current Events and Pop Culture

Often, host countries have different political and economic environments than the home country. Pop culture is another area in which TCKs may not feel connected to their American-based peers. Tina revealed, "I didn't fit in a lot of people. I didn't have a reference point, like

people would talk about what they took for granted, I didn't know what they were talking about. Say they had a sleep in or a lock-in and they watch TV, and it was scandalous. And I had just come from getting shot down in airplanes and running off the runway tracks and killing chickens for dinner."

Facing Prejudice

Some TCKs report prejudice upon repatriation because of physical appearance, language barriers, accents. This can also be exacerbated when TCKs look like American-based peers but do not have the same linguistic style or cultural knowledge. Angela shared, "There was certain incidents because I'm Hispanic. I got bullied a lot, in a way. One of the classes, even though it's very mixed class, Black, White, there were some Asians, but I was the only Hispanic with some other lady. Not the professor, but the students would just look at us different and one of them actually told me to go back to my home country."

Family Pressures

TCKs may also face challenges associated with family pressures. Angela confided, "Our parents put that pressure that we have to be perfect. We have to be this certain way while we're on the mission field and once we get away from that pressure, we have that decision. Well, do I want to continue this, or do I want to dabble? And that's when most of us go. Eventually, we'll come back but…" In this way, pressure from immediate or extended family members can be another challenge TCKs have to face during repatriation.

Family Separation

Repatriating TCKs are not always accompanied by the rest of their family members. Samantha shared, "And it was hard saying goodbye, especially seeing how hard it was for my mom. Like we would they would drive to the airport and then my mom would be bawling as I'm

saying goodbye. And off I go to a different country. And so, it just feels really hard." Some TCKs form close bonds with their immediate family members because of their relocations during time within the host countries which can make separation even harder.

Language Barriers

Spending time around different languages and nationalities may cause linguistic nuances. According to the Angela, "And some of the sayings they say, I'm like, 'That doesn't make sense.' And then I try to translate it in my head into Spanish and I was like, 'Oh, it doesn't even make sense in Spanish.'" Like this example, English may not be the first language for some TCKs. In this way, language barriers may be present during TCK repatriation.

Loss of Friends and Family

Not only do TCKs leave the physical location of the host country upon repatriation, but they also often leave friends, family, pets, and other important items behind when repatriating. David asserted, "A lot of my high school friends were either taking a gap year or going to study somewhere else, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, so on, and then I think the nearest friend I had was in California. So, everything was very far away." These losses can be associated with some of the grief that TCKs mention when repatriating.

Personal Repatriation Challenges

There are several psychological concerns and personal challenges often associated with TCK repatriation. Laurie asked, "Where are you from? — Even after 18 years of education, I have yet to answer that question. It's a trick question. Am I from Japan? Brazil? Mexico? New York? Or Seattle? Where am I from? Where is home to me?" Depression and grief, educational difficulties, identity issues, and isolation and loneliness are some of the personal challenges TCKs may face during repatriation.

Depression and Grief

TCKs often lose the physical location, the culture, friends, and family when repatriating. This can be one aspect of the grief and depression that repatriating TCKs report. Mike asserted, "Anyways, so yes, the other issue for me was dealing with grief and loss. It was very painful to leave the Philippines. And I wish someone would have warned me about that."

Educational Difficulties

Education can be very different between the host country and the home country. According to Angela, "So, once I went to college here, I would have to say how all the students treated the professors here. Some of them acted like they were their friends, and I was not used to that. I'm used to he's the authority. You keep quiet in class. If you get called on, then you answer the questions, not like, "Hey, he's going to ask a question and then you have to respond." That was totally different for me." As such, educational differences can be one challenge that TCKs face during repatriation.

Identity

Identify formation often occurs during adolescence and young adulthood. Exposure to different cultures and ideologies can impact identity development. Naomi revealed, "I just felt like I put more effort into understanding American culture than Americans tried to understand TCK culture. So, yeah, I think just felt lonely. I guess just the feeling of not belonging anywhere. It took longer than expected to kind of feel settled. It was always like, like people just don't get me; they don't want to make the effort to get to know me."

Isolation and Loneliness

Repatriating TCKs may also feel isolated or lonely. Tina revealed, "And then I just feel awkward, and I wasn't trying to do that ever, but there's no dialogue or discussion. And so, I

learned to just be quiet. And so, then, eventually I just never shared anything. I became a great listener, but it was also isolating. And I didn't learn to talk about it until my forties, in my forties." Sometimes TCKs feel that their unique experiences in a host country can alienate them from forming connections with peers.

Cultural Repatriation Challenges

Often, there are many cultural differences between the home and the host countries. According to Mike, "No one warned me that going to the US will be a cross-cultural experience. Okay. I just didn't expect that… This is very different from what I'm used to." Cultural differences can be a difficult challenge for repatriating TCKs.

Cultural Differences

It can be difficult for TCKs to know cultural differences of different countries or be aware of all the norms from one culture to the next. Mike shared, "I wish someone would have told me, 'You need to treat the US like it's a foreign culture. You need to learn what their value systems are, learn what's important to them. And what's not important to them, in general terms. I wish someone would have coached me on that, that would have been helpful.'" As Mike revealed, a lack of understanding of cultural differences within the home country can be an unforeseen challenge for repatriating TCKs.

Financial Differences and Poverty

TCKs may live in a host country that has high poverty and lacks the resources that are readily available in the United States. According to Nathan, "And so that was kind of a hard one for me to get used and then the other one was the waste, the absolute waste of food, resources, materials, equipment. That bothered me then and still bothers me." When TCKs repatriate, some

may have difficulty with the economical differences when comparing their experiences in the host country with what they experience in America.

Religious Challenges

Although some TCKs found strength in their faith when facing repatriation challenges, other TCKs mentioned how their religious beliefs served as a challenge when repatriating. Samantha shared, "But, at that time, I was starting to question my faith. I think that during this time was when I was transitioning out of believing, and so there was a lot of like internal conflict." Religious beliefs can also serve as a form of identity, a personal repatriation challenge mentioned previously.

Seen as International Students

TCKs can often be perceived as international students. Unfortunately, TCKs often have challenges and needs unique to their specific upbringing and the challenges associated with the repatriation process. Laurie offered, "And when it comes to orientation, I think, again, I have a lot of issues with the higher ed because I was in it. But without going too deep into the bureaucracy of things, my issue currently has to do with the idea that the system separating students, domestic students, or international students, and like Naomi said, 'We don't fit in any of those groups.'"

Services and Supports

Another theme that emerged from this study is the importance of services and supports. Based on word and phrase frequency, there were fourteen sub-themes related to this theme (see Figure 3). Higher education institutions can offer these services and supports to help ease the challenges associated with repatriating from a host country. Laurie affirmed, "For me it was just

trying to understand where do I belong in that sense as a third culture kid, and then where do I

find the resources?"

Figure 3

Services and Supports

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
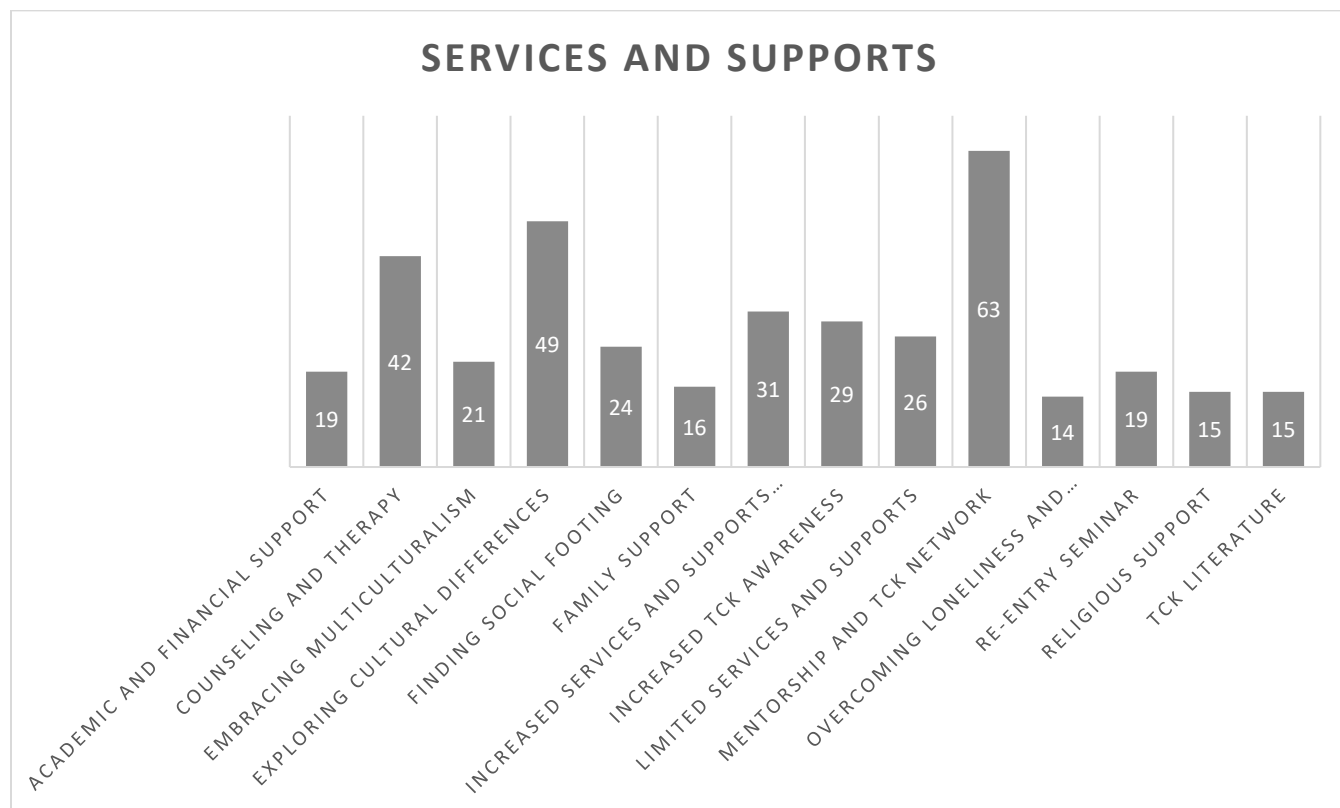
Academic and Financial Support

From financial aid needs to providing credits for IB courses and foreign language

acquisition, TCKs may need academic support and financial aid guidance. David shared, "I

would have benefited from more structure or at least somebody to tell me what I'm supposed to

do because at the time I think they expected me to figure it out and I was not at all like I didn't

even know what I was supposed to do." Higher education institutions can help TCKs by helping

them navigate these areas of concern.

Counseling and Therapy

Many TCKs have unique psychological challenges that could be supported with counseling or therapy. Laurie affirmed, "That's where I really learned about myself and just the different things that were going on within me that had stemmed from when I was a childhood. It was within my college experience that I learned that it's okay to ask for help in that regards. I never learned that anywhere when I was growing up. It just happened when I repatriated that I found that solution." Counseling services can allow TCKs to feel supported and validated while working through repatriation challenges.

Embracing Multiculturalism

It is important for higher education institutions to help develop a multicultural environment for their students. Laurie shared, "But at the same time we were like how about the multiracial people or the bilinguals, or people who are of one race but have again, multiple international interests or intercultural backgrounds like third culture kids? There wasn't a center. We're like okay, well if that's a collective challenge that we're seeing on campus why not build one? That's what we did." Developing a higher education institution that embracing multiculturalism can help TCKs feel more at home. Nathan suggested a simple way that institutions can help build a multicultural environment, "And provide some level in the dining area of the kind of condiments that... Vietnamese fish sauce, certain Chinese peppers, and it's just a whole list of different types of condiments that could be made available so that a person can feel a little bit like they're getting the taste of home."

Exploring Cultural Differences

Many TCKs expressed the importance of gaining insight about American cultural norms and ideas to help navigate some of the challenges they face during repatriation. Naomi shared, "I

had never lived anywhere where your apartment was not furnished – it was just normal in other countries to have furnished housing. In general, life in the US is very different than abroad. So yeah, just kind of like knowing what to prepare for and what the American culture is like. I feel like I don't really know (other than Americans really value freedom of speech)." It can be helpful for TCKs to be exposed to important ideas and norms of the home country to help face some of the issues that may arise during their higher education experience.

Finding Social Footing

TCKs may have a difficult time developing social connections during repatriation. Still, many TCKs credit time and networking to their eventual success in finding social footing. Holly asserted, "I would say time and getting used to the environment here. There's no shortcut around culture shock and whatnot, and loneliness. I just have to give it time and make those friends and connections."

Family Support

Whether family members are close by or remain in a host country, their support can prove beneficial in easing repatriation challenges. Samantha shared, "I'd say being away from family was hard. So, you try to stay connected. I don't even know how often I talk to my mom, but you try to call and then I would stay with them in the wintertime."

Increased Services and Supports Awareness

Higher education institutions may benefit from increasing student awareness of the offered services and supports. Sally suggested, "Usually they already have existing organizations. A lot of colleges and universities already have counseling offices. So, if they could just be maybe more intentional and highlighting some of that." Raising awareness of these

services and supports can help TCKs access important resources and tools to overcome repatriation challenges.

Increased TCK Awareness

It is not uncommon for higher education staff and faculty to be unaware of TCKs. Laurie revealed, "My prior career was in the higher education in the US, and I worked in all sorts of sectors, but I did not meet anyone that worked in the administration level that knew the term TCK yet." By raising awareness of TCKs and educating staff about the unique benefits and challenges that TCKs often face, higher education institutions can help support them.

Limited Services and Supports

Many TCKs feel that there are limited services and supports available to ease their repatriation challenges. Laurie shared, "They didn't have a role in my repatriation process. I wish that they did, I really wish that they did. I was very much alone in that process, and I had to dig deep to figure it out, and I don't recommend that to others." Creating resources and tools specific to TCKs can help them feel supported and welcomed at their higher education institutions.

Mentorship and TCK Network

Developing mentorship programs or providing access to a TCK network are two important ways to help TCKs overcome repatriation challenges. Mike communicated, "Having a list of other TCKs, I think that would have been really helpful. Encouraging TCK networks to set up a program at their college, upperclassmen, who are interested in shepherding underclassmen, I think that model it's an excellent one, in my opinion. And it can really be very, very helpful."

Overcoming Loneliness and Identity Concerns

Feeling alone or lost are sentiments echoed by many repatriating TCKs. By being aware of these concerns and providing TCK-focused services and supports, higher education

institutions may help TCKs overcome these feelings. Holly shared, "Definitely topics on not feeling like you're... even if you feel alone, you're not alone. There are people around you who support you. There are options if you do feel lonely."

Re-Entry Seminar

Re-entry seminars can help repatriating TCKs learn about their home country, gain insight on the norm of the home culture, understand common challenges many repatriating TCKs face, and increase awareness of important services and supports they can access to help them overcome repatriation challenges. According to Laurie, "You never know what kind of differences you're going to land on until you land on it. Just having an overview of what this culture is going to look like would be very beneficial in the sense of like oh wow, this is definitely not what I envisioned. Or maybe that it is something that you envisioned but maybe you didn't think of it in that perspective."

Religious Support

Some TCKs shared that faith played an important role in overcoming repatriation challenges. Sally revealed, "I think that the one or the most positive thing out of moving back to the US was we had always had our home assignments in the same area, almost all of our home assignments. We did have one main home church and I knew people there better than anywhere else in the US. So at least there were some familiar people to come back to, a familiar place as far as the church went."

TCK Literature

Several TCKs noted that TCK literature served as an instrumental resource as they repatriated. Mike shared, "Have you heard of the raft? It's from the book, Third Culture Kids Growing Up Among Worlds. Okay, it's one of the acronyms for one of the ways to help MKs

and others, TCKs, deal with transitions well. And it talks about reconciliation, affirmation, farewells, and think destinations is the acronym. And I had never heard of that, I wish someone would have clued me in. That would have been very helpful to know."

Outlier Data and Findings

There were only a few unexpected findings. The first outlier related to the participant's trauma within the host country. The other outlier related to repatriating with another individual.

Outlier Finding #1

One participant revealed experiencing severe trauma caused during her time within the host country. For this study, this was the only participant who revealed negative experiences associated with time spent in the host country. Tina offered, "So, the words come to mind, traumatic, unstable, erratic, complicated, confusing, ambiguous, transitional, volatile, a lot of war. So, we grew up in a time where there were 13 revolutions in the jungles of South America, it was really political. So, there was a lot of war, a lot of death, and a lot of instability, politically, and our schooling was erratic." It was not uncommon for TCKs to report depression or difficulty stemming from the process of repatriation; however, this specific situation is unique as the experiences from the host country was the root of the difficulty experienced by this individual.

Outlier Finding #2

Two different participants shared that they repatriated and attended higher education with another individual (a partner, sibling, or close friend) who returned with them from the host country and began attending the same higher education institution together. Naomi shared, "I think it really helped that I did have my boyfriend at the time. We could relate to the fact that it was kind of hard to make friends- someone that you could resonate with on a deeper level. I was able to make friends, but it was on a surface level." In both instances, the participant revealed

that this established social connection made it easier to gain social traction within the home country.

Research Question Responses

This transcendental phenomenological study was guided by one central research question and three research sub-questions. The central research question was asked to provide insight about the participants' perception of their TCK repatriation. The sub-questions were asked to gain the participants' perspective on the availability and effectiveness of the services and supports that were offered by their higher education institutions.

Central Research Question

What are Third Culture Kids' (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience? The participants' perspective is that there were three types of challenges that emerged during repatriation: cultural challenges, personal challenges, and social challenges. Each participant revealed that repatriation was a very difficult time for them and that they felt they could have benefitted from services and supports to ease repatriation challenges. Tina revealed, "[Repatriation was challenging because of not knowing where I come from, not knowing where I belong, not ever quite fitting in, but appearing to fit in being the peacock where I can fake it and look it, but I'm not thinking it."

Sub-Question One

What are TCK perceptions of higher education institutions' preparedness for repatriating students, as a lived experience? Most participants shared that the perception of their higher education institutions' preparedness was limited or nonexistent. Awareness of TCKs was often lacking which led to lumping them in with international students. David expressed, "Yeah,

knowing that you're not quite an international student, you're not quite a local student, you're kind of in the middle, and people who get that would be nice."

Sub-Question Two

What are TCK perceptions of higher education repatriation support and service effectiveness, as a lived experience? Many participants expressed that they were unaware of the services and supports that were available, so they felt that there were none. Laurie shared, "They didn't have a role in my repatriation process. I wish that they did, I really wish that they did. I was very much alone in that process, and I had to dig deep to figure it out, and I don't recommend that to others and I haven't. That's probably one of the reasons why I chose to become an admin of higher ed, because I didn't want people to go through what I had to go through." Many of the participants shared that counseling and other services were important in helping them overcome their repatriation challenges but this resource was not common knowledge to many.

Sub-Question Three

What are TCK perceptions of the process of repatriation to the United States for college enrollment as a lived experience? The TCK perception of the repatriation process was riddled with cultural, personal, and social challenges that many felt unprepared to handle. Mike commented, "I think the hardest thing for me was the sense of not being understood. And also recognizing that I didn't really understand them, at least at the deeper level. So, I knew there was a cultural barrier or gulf between us, and I wasn't always quite sure how to bridge it. That was hard." Many of the participants shared that repatriation was a very difficult time and that there was not adequate access to services and supports to ease these repatriation challenges.

Summary

The main themes that emerged from this study were the benefits of a TCK upbringing, cultural repatriation challenges, personal repatriation challenges, social repatriation challenges, and higher education services and supports. Participants shared that they gained many unique skills and experiences because of their TCK upbringing but that they repatriation process was riddled with many challenges when returning to their home country. Participants also shared many services and supports that were useful in alleviating their repatriation challenges such as counseling or a mentorship program.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand TCKs' perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience better. Specifically, in this study, I explored the types of services and support that TCKs need to succeed in the higher education environment. This chapter consists of five discussion subsections: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

Berry's (2003) acculturation theory focused on the individual's attitude towards home culture and host culture. Based on this theory, participants often assimilated (negative attitude towards home culture and positive attitude towards host culture) at the beginning of the repatriation process. After some time and with the help of services and supports, participants began to integrate (successful incorporation of aspects from both the home and the host cultures). One example of this is Holly's comment, "I would say time and getting used to the environment here. There's no shortcut around culture shock and whatnot, and loneliness. I just have to give it time and make those friends and connections." In this present study, one participant expressed a sense of marginalization (negative attitude towards both the home and host culture) as a result of trauma during time spent in the host culture. Tina confided, "Lifelong effects of childhood trauma. That's huge, a lot displayed in depression, anxiety, constant search for meaning, existential crisis at all times, displaced, not knowing where I come from, not knowing where I belong, not ever quite fitting in, but appearing to fit in." In this example, the participant shared

the negative effects of long-term trauma from her time in the host country as well as having to face the cultural, personal, and social challenges of her repatriation to the home country.

Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests that an individual's values, beliefs, and identity will be impacted when exposed to a multicultural system. This theory suggests that these changes are often unnoticed until the individual returns to the home country and experiences its values, beliefs, and identity traits are often very different. This theory directly supports the perceptions of the participants within this present study as each participant revealed their TCK upbringing had impacted their values, beliefs, and identity. According to Mike, "I would say it was probably the most challenging transition I've ever made in my life. And there's a couple of reasons for that I think looking back on it now, of course, it's many years ago. But one was, I had an identity crisis. I had grown up in the Philippines thinking of myself as an American. I clearly wasn't Filipino. And so, I thought, oh, well, okay I'm an American, and I speak English pretty well. And so, no problem going back to the States, right? Well, no, actually." Other researchers echo these findings by revealing that many TCKs feel a lack of belonging during repatriation (Poonoosamy, 2018).

Berry's (2006) acculturation theory focused on the host, society's attitude towards minority groups. Most participants of this present study felt a sense of multiculturalism (the host society values and welcomes them while integrating diverse groups into mainstream society). Naomi shared, "I would say just like the exposure you get to different cultures, religions, people- it really opens your mind to a different way of thinking- the perspectives, things that force you out of your comfort zone. And, for me, I feel like I don't even know what is out of my comfort zone now."

Each participant shared that repatriation brought on many challenges for them. Likewise, one theme that emerged from this present study was that TCKs faced many repatriation challenges on the cultural, personal, and social level. This reflects the existing theories related to TCKs and the challenges of repatriation (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Nehrbass, 2018; Melles & Frey, 2017).

Cultural repatriation challenges consist of four sub-themes: (a) Cultural Differences, (b) Financial Differences and Poverty, (c) Religious Challenges, and (d) Being Seen as International Students. Mike shared, "The cultural differences between me and other regular Americans, or I'm not sure what else to call them but, those who'd grown up here, monocultural kids who grew up here in the States. And trying to sort of enter their world if I could. I wish someone would have told me, 'Mike, you need to treat the US like it's a foreign culture.'" Similarly, Berry (2005) theorized that a TCK upbringing impacted the values, beliefs, and identity which was often exacerbated when the TCK returns to the United States and facing the American-based social and cultural system. Naomi commented, "So for me, if I was in that journey of discovering what a TCK was and what my identity was in the process of going to university and moving to the US." These findings paralleled several other relevant studies that explored TCK identity development (Cranston, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Lijadi, 2018; Nehrbass, 2018; Smith & Kearney, 2016) which was part of the personal repatriation challenges theme that emerged from this present study.

The four sub-themes that emerged from the personal repatriation challenges theme were: (a) Depression and Grief, (b) Educational Difficulties, (c) Identity, and (d) Isolation and Loneliness. Other studies reinforce my findings by noting that one common challenge for TCKs is a lack of belonging (Emenike & Plowright, 2017; Fanning & Burns, 2017; Helsel, 2018; Lijadi

& van Schalkwyk, 2017; Poonoosamy, 2018). Similarly, Mike shared, "That was very, very hard. So, it's very, very lonely and frustrating to deal with all the issues that come with this major transition." TCKs tend to have difficulty answering when people ask them where they are from. This question often sparks challenges with identity, a sense of loss, and a feeling of loneliness. Furthermore, their responses often reveal that there are few commonalities shared by the TCK and the host country peer. Another challenge is that each TCK is coming from a different educational background based on the opportunities and options available within the host country. Language differences, teaching methodology, curriculum choices, student-teacher rapport are just some of the challenges that TCKs may face when entering an American classroom. Angela illustrates this idea by sharing, "English is still not my first language. And so, they were like accepting of it but once it came to papers and all that, or essay questions, all I could see was red pens or red marks and all that. And so that really put a downfall on my education as well."

TCKs often struggle with identity during repatriation. David confided, "Which became a problem when I went back to the US, and I discovered I didn't know anything about being American." As Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests, TCKs often do not realize they have unique values, beliefs, and identity until they repatriate to the home country.

Isolation and loneliness was another common sub-theme that emerged. Laurie shared, "There were times when not being able to answer the simplest question of Where are you from? made me insecure. I felt lost, isolated, and different." This idea mirrors the findings of Kolcheva and Guzikova (2017) in that a multicultural upbringing can lead TCKs to reject specific cultural values and attitudes of one culture because of the experiences within other cultures.

The social repatriation challenges theme that emerged from this study had six sub-themes: (a) Current Events and Pop Culture, (b) Facing Prejudice, (c) Family Pressures, (d)

Family Separation, (e) Language Barriers, and (f) Loss of Friends and Family. Research has indicated that TCKs often struggle to form and maintaining social relationships (Kortegast & Yount, 2016; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014). Often, TCKs have difficulty developing strong social relationships stemming from their host country experiences.

Current events and pop was another sub-theme that was attributed to increased social repatriation challenges. Nathan commented, "We might not know the latest pop culture, we might not know the latest musical group, or we might not know some of the slang words, but we had a much deeper intensive understanding of not only how America worked, but how the broader world worked." Living in a host country exposes individuals to politics, war, poverty, languages, entertainment, religions, opportunities, and challenges can be very different from what is occurring in the United States. As such, TCKs may not have the same pop culture or current event references as their host country peers. Ferguson et al. (2016) also found that awareness of popular music, movies, and celebrities can cause challenges for TCKs who may have not had exposure to popular culture while living in the host country (Ferguson et al., 2016). This can make TCKs feel like they are unable to connect to their peers.

Prejudice can be a difficult challenge that TCKs face during repatriation. Angela revealed, "Some of the sayings they say, I'm like, 'That doesn't make sense.' And then I try to translate it in my head into Spanish and I was like, 'Oh, it doesn't even make sense in Spanish.'" TCKs are often exposed to many languages while in the host country and may even have a non-English language as their primary language. Brown et al. (2017) found that multilingual individuals are often overlooked regarding their unique linguistic skills and may even receive bias about their educational abilities if their first language differs from the primary language of the home culture.

Family pressures can be another challenge that TCKs must contend with while repatriating. Angela commented, "And I truly believe it's because we have to be perfect. Our parents have put it in our heads that we have to be perfect because we're on the mission field." Religion is often a central focus in the life of missionary families (Melles and Frey (2017). In this way, TCKs may feel family pressure connected to their position within the host country and being raised to have to act according to the expectations placed upon them. Other family pressures can stem from other issues such as health concerns. Sally shared, "I was definitely angry about having to move back to the US. My dad was having major health issues, so we didn't have a choice." As revealed in this study, family pressures can add to the challenges TCKs face during repatriation.

Family separation can also play a role in repatriation challenges. David shared, "My parents actually continued living in Indonesia for another two years, so yeah. So, I was off to the United States and that was my difficult repatriation experience, so yeah." Several of the participants shared that their parents did not accompany them as they repatriated for higher education but, rather, remained in the host country. Kim et al. (2017) found that a positive parental relationship can influence TCK well-being during the repatriation process. In this way, family separation can be a challenge for repatriating TCKs.

Language barriers can make repatriating TCKs feel even more different from their host country peers. David shared, "And I had no one, my entire life, had ever told me that I had an accent. And it turns out that going to a British school for 14 years left its impact on me." Similarly, Laurie commented, "And this idea of, all my life speaking English was a status, but now in the US, excuse me. In the US, I speak English, but I also speak other languages, and that in itself makes me not fit in the group. Right? English was not the common language anymore.

And in that sense, I was like, "Oh my gosh. What do I do?" So that was a huge challenge for me." In this sense, the acquisition of multiple languages alienated repatriating TCKs. Accents also made it challenging as it was a linguistic cue convey difference between the TCK and host country peers.

The loss of friends and family is another common challenge that repatriating TCKs face. Naomi expressed, "You're losing everything you've known for the last however many years or months or whatever, and then you have to start again. So that gets really hard. And so, I think those are probably my biggest challenges in terms of identity and grief." The transient upbringing of TCKs can create a great sense of loss and grief stemming from changes in relationships and location (Choi et al., 2013; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2017; Smith & Kearney, 2016). Many TCKs leave the host country, family, and friends during repatriation and, as such, this loss can cause a great sense of loss and grief.

Even with the challenges mentioned, most of the participants shared that their TCK upbringing held many benefits. There were seven sub-themes that were commonly mentioned during this study that relate to the theme of TCK Benefits: (a) Adaptation and Flexibility, (b) Faith, (c) Global Perspective, (d) Good Education, (e) Independence, (f) Language Skills, and (g) Travel and Unique Experiences. The unique multicultural upbringings of TCKs allows them to have a broader worldview (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Rooney, 2018). Furthermore, TCKs often acquire a strong sense of independence and ability to adapt easily within different environments.

Adaptation and flexibility are mentioned frequently as one of the most notable benefits of a TCK upbringing. Holly shared, "I think being exposed to so many different cultures make you a lot more open to new ideas and a lot more flexible, and just overall open minded to other

people's beliefs even." According to Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014), TCKs are often able to adapt themselves to fit into the social and behavioral expectations of other cultures.

Faith can be strengthened because of the experiences TCKs face in the host culture (Bikos et al., 2014). Faith can also help repatriating TCKs feel a stronger sense of identity based on religious ideology. Some participants even revealed that their faith served as inspiration into a faith-based career path. Mike explained, "God has used my experiences and then being able to morph that into a ministry where I can relate to these other TCKs."

TCKs have unique multicultural upbringings which allow them to have a broader worldview (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Rooney, 2018). Similarly, most participants credited their upbringing to providing an increased global perspective. Angela shared, "For me, growing up overseas had made me see the world from a different view, not just an American side of view but from the Chilean pinpoint as well, and just having that different culture, seeing politics and religion and all that kind of stuff." Some participants shared how difficult it was finding that many home country peers had limited understanding of other countries and knew little about anything outside of the United States. The benefit of a global perspective was echoed by Mandy, who explained, "I find that TCKs, in general (including myself), are more empathetic to other cultures and experiences."

Most of the participants of this study shared that their education within the host country provided them with the skills and knowledge to perform well academically after repatriation. David revealed, "I attended a good international school which would, otherwise, have been expensive or difficult or anything like that because most international schools are private schools and therefore, they're expensive." All but one of the participants reported access to excellent educational resources during their time in the host country. Still, some shared that the

educational differences between the host country and home country caused some difficulty, their perspective of educational preparedness within the host country was often positive.

Independence is another skill that several TCKs accredited to their unique upbringing. Ittel and Sisler (2012) found that TCKs can gain higher self-efficacy which can lead to greater success in sociocultural adaptation. Five of the participants shared an increased sense of independence. Samantha expressed, "But it's like I've got to just do this on my own. And so, I think that pushed me to be a better person and to be more successful in college, because you've got to just figure things out on your own and you just got to make it your own experience." In this way, TCKs may develop a greater sense of independence because of upbringing.

Many of the participants shared that language skills is another common benefit related to a TCK upbringing. David shared, "I started learning languages from an early age. So, my parents would speak Vietnamese at home and English, and then at school, I was learning French and Indonesian from an early age." Several of the participants shared that they have found use for their linguistic skills within their current occupation. Abshir (2018) found that identity is formed and reformed from experiences, and culture and language can be reliable components of identity formation.

Perhaps one of the most important benefits mentioned by participants is the travel and unique experiences within the TCK upbringing. David commented, "And it was also an opportunity to travel a lot, not just around Asia but elsewhere, while I was growing up. And as an expat lifestyle, when my dad is working for a large multinational and you're living in a country, which is relatively cheap, then there's that as well, it's quite a nice lifestyle." Similarly, most of the participants shared that their TCK upbringing offered many unique experiences and allowed for immersion into different cultures.

The largest theme that emerged from this study was Services and Supports which included fourteen sub-themes: (a) Academic and Financial Support, (b) Counseling and Therapy, (c) Embracing Multiculturalism, (d) Exploring Cultural Differences, (e) Finding Social Footing, (f) Family Support, (g) Increased Services and Supports Awareness, (h) Increased TCK Awareness, (i) Limited Services and Supports, (j) Mentorship and TCK Network, (k) Overcoming Loneliness and Identity Concerns, (l) Re-Entry Seminar, (m) Religious Support, and (n) TCK Literature.

Academic and Financial support is an important service that must be offered to TCKs. TCKs come from various backgrounds unlike anyone within the host country. As such, they often face many academic and financial concerns when repatriating to higher education. TCKs often know multiple languages fluently and could get college credit for a foreign language. Another participant shared that he took advanced IB courses in high school that should have been counted as credits as he was sitting in math classes and knew all the content. Still others struggled filling out admissions forms that forced them to choose certain criteria, such as languages or nationality, that did not apply to them. Laurie shared, "I was applying to colleges in the States. It started really from me having to pick a box of what ethnic or race I'm a part of, or what heritage I belong to. I remember going to our college counselor and being like, 'Can we select all? Because there isn't a section that says above all or choose above all.'" TCKs would benefit from having more academic and financial supports to help them transition to higher education.

Many participants attribute counseling and therapy to overcoming repatriation challenges. Research shows that counseling services can help repatriating TCKs (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014; Melles & Frey, 2014; Murphy et al, 2010). According to Tina, "I looked to counselors. I

don't think there was a lot of very trauma-informed counselors during that time because it was a long time ago." Similarly, other participants suggested art therapy and music therapy as alternative options that may help TCKs who have had more severe trauma or may have a hard time talking about difficult experiences. Most participants credited talking about their challenges as being instrumental in helping heal and overcome difficulties.

Samantha shared, "I really feel like there needs to be a lot more awareness on the mental health consequences of growing up as a TCK and the mental health support that they need while being a TCK while growing up. It took a long time to realize I needed to talk to somebody about this."

Many participants discussed the importance of a higher education institution and providing an environment that embraces multiculturalism. David commented, "a lot of TCKs grow up with a really pretty international environment. And so being able to get some time in with that, even if it's not every day, refresh yourself with that." Some participants suggested that colleges or universities could have students and faculty share experiences and items from their own multicultural experiences or hold events that help students embrace multiculturalism. Laurie shared, "I think being in higher ed in the US, that's a missed opportunity for all involved, because there are international centers, and I don't know how many people visit or know about it. There's so much to learn and yet it's like it's not taken advantage. Some way or shape if they can introduce that in some way, I think it would be great, regardless of whether you're a TCK or not." Colleges and universities can increase multicultural opportunities to help TCKs feel welcomed and included.

Exploring cultural differences would be an important support for repatriating TCKs.

Mike offered, "I didn't realize how time oriented American culture can be, particularly in it's different kinds of settings. And so, I wish that someone would have kind of clued me in and said, 'Okay, look, these are the basic values that most Americans have. Now, let's contrast those with the basic values most Filipinos have.' That exercise would have been really helpful." Colleges and institutions could provide insight into American norms and cultural expectations for repatriating TCKs which could help them better understand transportation, finances, schedules, college life.

TCKs are often able to find social footing eventually. Holly shared, "I would say time and getting used to the environment here. There's no shortcut around culture shock and whatnot, and loneliness. I just have to give it time and make those friends and connections." Unfortunately, many TCKs shared that there was little, or no interventions provided by the college or university in helping TCKs develop social relationships. Instead, many of the participants shared that they just had to struggle with loneliness until they eventually lucked into finding the right people and eventually build connections. Higher education institutions could use this knowledge to help implement services or supports for TCKs to find social connections by helping them find other students that share commonalities or have a similar upbringing.

Several of the participants revealed that they had a close connection with immediate family members because of their shared experiences within the host family. Samantha explained, "I would say like my immediate family, we stayed pretty close because that's who you have when you travel around, you just have each other." In this way, the shared experiences often helped unite the family. Samantha revealed, "I'd say being away from family was hard. So, you try to stay connected. I don't even know how often I talk to my mom, but you try to call and then I would stay with them in the wintertime." In this way, family support can be found through

technological means rather than physical location. Higher education institutions can help remind TCKs to reach out to family members to help support them through the repatriation process.

Increased awareness of services and supports can help TCKs find ways of overcoming challenges. Most of the participants revealed that they were unaware of services and supports that their institutions offered and wished that there would have been more communication about these resources. Mike shared, "So I think just that resource of letting people on campus know that 'Hey, we have a person that knows about TCKs, right, and here.' And then spread that around because I think you don't know what you don't know. Right?" Research reveals that higher education institutions can help ease repatriation through specific supports and services (Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Kortegast & Yount, 2016). In this way, colleges and institutions must be diligent in communicating their available supports and services to TCKs.

Furthermore, increased TCK awareness is essential. TCKs are a unique subgroup and have diverse challenges. Unfortunately, many of the participants shared that their institutions were not aware of what a TCK is let alone how to best help them overcome challenges. Laurie explains, "And a lot of administrators, unfortunately, that I've met do not know of our existence yet. So, I know there are really strong TCK supporters in the US higher education gives me hope. And I wish all schools, not just rich, big schools, but even community colleges to really grasp on this because it is important that all students can integrate into their school systems, not just TCKs or international students." Faculty and staff of higher education institutions should be aware of TCKs and gain insight on common repatriation challenges.

Many participants revealed that their perceptions of available services and supports for TCKs was limited. Sally shared, "Not that [my college] didn't care, but they really didn't have anything set up for dealing with someone from a different culture or cross-cultural." Participants

shared that their higher education institutions were not adequately prepared to help TCKs overcome repatriation challenges. In fact, several of the participants shared that they felt that they had to find their own resources and tools to ease repatriation concerns. This correlates with the finding of the need for institutions to increase awareness of their offered services and supports. In some cases, it took several years for participants to find and utilize services and supports because they were unaware that they were even offered.

One of the supports those participants discussed the most was mentorship programs and TCK networks. A mentorship program is when an upperclassmen mentor an incoming freshman and helps them navigate repatriation challenges. A few participants shared that it would be beneficial for the mentor to have a similar TCK background. Another important support would be helping new students join an established TCK network. Laurie suggested, "Another thing is just peer support. I think just not doing it alone but knowing that there's other people like you or in similar situations that you can see on campus and be able to connect with them. Or maybe just even like I know when I was running the peer mentoring program." If the institution has a large TCK population, this network could be campus-based. If there is a smaller TCK population, the institution could help the student join an established web based TCK network. A TCK network helps incoming TCKs realize that they are not alone and that there are other repatriating TCKs who can relate and help them feel connected. A higher education institution that offers a mentorship program or a TCK network will allow TCK students to feel connected and help ease many repatriation challenges.

Overcoming loneliness and identity concerns can help TCKs with repatriation challenges. Cranston (2017) found that a network of TCKs can help alleviate feelings of loneliness, grief, and insecurity. Holly shared, "I would say time and getting used to the environment here. There's

no shortcut around culture shock and whatnot, and loneliness. I just have to give it time and make those friends and connections." Several participants shared that social connections and developing relationships, especially with other TCKs, helped overcome loneliness and identity challenges. A few other participants shared that counseling services helped them overcome loneliness and identity concerns because it allowed them to talk through these concerns with someone that cared and understood.

A re-entry seminar could benefit repatriating TCKs. navigate cultural difference and collegiate expectations. Research has indicated that reentry seminars can prepare TCKs for common repatriation challenges (Bikos, et al, 2014; Cranston, 2017; P. Davis et al, 2010; P. S. Davis et al., 2013). Laurie shared, "Just having an overview of what this culture is going to look like would be very beneficial in the sense of like oh wow, this is definitely not what I envisioned. Or maybe that it is something that you envisioned but maybe you didn't think of it in that perspective." In this way, higher education institutions could provide a re-entry seminar for repatriating TCKs to provide insight about American culture and different expectations of the institution. Laurie explained, "Whether it hits you the day of that you step into that new culture, or it might happen months in or even years. It'll happen sometime and to be ready for that moment. I think there's definitely a difference not knowing versus knowing. For me I just got to learn on my own how to do the re-entry." This statement reveals the need for higher education institutions to be aware of the common challenges TCKs face during repatriation and having a program or resource that can help them.

Religious support can also help repatriating TCKs. Mike shared, "What I found challenging was when I went to the Christian liberal arts college. And one of the challenges I faced there, it was not a bad challenge it's actually a good challenge, is they essentially forced me

to reevaluate a lot of assumptions I had basically just kind of taken for granted about Christian faith issues. I actually see that as a good thing, because that helped me make my faith my own." Faith can help TCKs feel a sense of identity and becoming a member of a religious-based organization can help TCKs develop social connections. In this way, higher education institutions can help repatriating TCKs by offering religious groups or by providing information about available local religious organizations.

TCK literature was also mentioned numerous times as being an important resource. Ruth van Reken and David Pollock's "Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds" was an important tool for several of the participants in gaining a better understanding of what a TCK is and the common challenges that TCKs face. Naomi shared, "I found that book and I was like, 'I am normal.' I felt validated and like all my feelings of being rootless." TCK literature helped several participants feel validated and provided insight about common repatriation challenges.

Interpretation of Findings

There were five major themes that emerged from this present study: (1) TCK Benefits, (2) Cultural Repatriation Challenges, (3) Personal Repatriation Challenges, (4) Social Repatriation Challenges, and (5) Services and Supports. These themes helped show the unique benefits that many TCKs acquire from their host country upbringing. Furthermore, these themes expose the common challenges that TCKs face during repatriation and provide insight into the cultural, personal, and social issues that often arise. Lastly, this study finds various services and supports that higher education institutions must be aware of services and supports that can assist repatriating TCKs.

Summary of Thematic Findings

There are three main findings that emanate from this study. First, the individual's time living in a host country have allowed TCKs to have distinctive competencies that they often retain into adulthood. Second, TCKs face exceptional challenges that are unlike their monocultural peers that are exacerbated during the repatriation process. Third, higher education institutions can offer resources and tools that have proven beneficial in removing repatriation obstacles.

Distinctive Competencies. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to understand, as a lived experience, the impact of repatriation on Third Culture Kids (TCKs). To understand the impact of repatriation, it is important to understand the participant's perception of the unique experience associated with growing up in a host country. Most participants shared common perception of skills acquired from living in a multicultural environment. These findings complimented previous research about TCK competencies. Furthermore, the findings support Berry's (2005) acculturation theory in that an individual's values, beliefs, and identity are impacted from living in a host culture. In this way, the experiences within a multicultural environment would help the individual establish distinctive competencies. These changes, as Berry' (2005) acculturation theory suggests, are often noticed upon return to the home country which would also account for the exceptional challenges that TCKs face during repatriation.

Exceptional Challenges. Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests that an individual's beliefs, values, and identity are impacted by multicultural experiences and that these changes often come to light when a TCK repatriates to the home country. This theory is supported by the findings of this present study. Each of the participants shared that they faced numerous challenges on a cultural, personal, and social level during their repatriation process.

Many of these challenges align with previous research. However, the most notable area of new findings within this study is how higher education institutions can help ease the repatriation challenges of their TCK students by offering effective services and supports.

Call to Action. Berry's (2006) model suggests that there are four different ways that a host culture meets acculturating individuals: multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation, exclusion. Although this theory relates to the attitude of the host culture, it could help higher education institutions better understand how to help repatriating TCKs. According to Berry (2006), multiculturalism is when a host society values and welcomes diverse groups and fosters diversity by integrating the diverse groups through mutual accommodation. Melting pot is when the society seeks assimilation of the minority groups into the mainstream society rather than embracing the differences of the cultural groups. The goal in a melting pot society is that diverse groups are absorbed by the mainstream society. Segregation is the process of enforcing separation of the minority groups from the mainstream culture. Marginalization is the exclusion of the minority group by the mainstream culture. According to this theory. A higher education institution that values multiculturalism provides an environment that welcomes, affirms, and integrates different cultures to help provide a positive experience for all students. As such, a higher education institution can help its students by learning about the distinctive competencies and exceptional challenges that repatriating TCKs often face. Raising awareness of provided services and supports can provide students with a clear list of resources available to them. Similarly, higher education institutions should be aware of the services and supports that TCKs have mentioned are important to their repatriation success. In this way, higher education institutions can meet the needs of their diverse TCK student population.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The recommendation for repatriating TCKs is to be aware of the benefits of a unique upbringing and the common repatriation challenges that they will face. Similarly, they are to seek out services and supports that will help alleviate common repatriation challenges. One service recommendation is participation in a TCK re-entry seminar to gain insight about the home country and culture. Another important service is counseling with a therapist who has thorough understanding of TCKs and their unique upbringing and repatriation challenges.

The recommendation for higher education institutions is increased understanding of TCKs and awareness of their unique upbringing and common repatriation challenges. Similarly, higher education institutions must provide a multicultural environment that embraces diverse individuals and provides services and supports that have proven effective in helping to ease the burden of TCK repatriation challenges. Lastly, higher education institutions must increase awareness of its available services and supports so that students are able to adequately take advantage of these resources.

Implications for Policy

Higher education institutions should gain adequate understanding of TCKs and increase awareness of the unique upbringing and common repatriation challenges of TCKs. The must develop and implement services and supports for TCKs that have shown effective in helping repatriating TCKs overcome challenges while fostering a multicultural environment. Similarly, higher education institution must effectively communicate its available services and supports so that TCK students are able to access resources that can help them repatriate successfully.

Implications for Practice

The common challenges of repatriating TCKs and the services and supports offered in this study have implication for higher education institutions. The common cultural, personal, and social challenges repatriating TCKs often face may serve as a resource for higher education institutions to gain insight about the TCK student population. Similarly, the services and supports offered in this study may be a resource for higher education institutions desiring to implement resources and tools that participants have shared to have benefited them during their repatriation process.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

Berry's (2003) acculturation theory suggests that the individual's attitude towards home culture and host culture plays an important role in acculturation theory. This study confirms this theory, specifically in terms of integration, the successful incorporation of aspects of both the home and host culture. Most of the participants sought integration during repatriation and believed they would have a positive experience returning to the home culture. Unfortunately, the home culture made many participants feel that they were unable to successfully incorporate aspects of home and host culture as several participants shared that they felt isolated or alone when they attempted to incorporate aspects of the host culture. After several months or even years after repatriating, however, several participants noted that they eventually gained integration.

Berry's (2005) acculturation theory suggests that an individual's values, beliefs, and identity is often impacted or changed because of experiencing multicultural systems. This study confirmed this theory as most participants shared that their values, beliefs, and identity were impacted by their multicultural experiences. The confirmation of this theory is most represented

in the participants' revelations of being unaware of their differences until their repatriation. Berry (2005) suggested that many of the changes to values, beliefs, and identity would not be noticeable until the individual returned to the home country. The findings from this study support this theory.

Berry's (2006) acculturation theory suggests that the host society's attitude towards minority groups can impact how the diverse minority is addressed. This theory was focused on the host country. However, if applied to the home culture- specifically, the higher education environment- a multicultural attitude that values and welcomes diverse group and integrates diverse groups into its mainstream society could help repatriating TCKs. Participants shared that a multicultural environment that embraced cultural diversity was beneficial in helping overcome repatriation challenges.

Empirical research reveals that TCKs experience unique multicultural upbringings which provides them with a broader worldview (P. S. Davis et al., 2013; Rooney, 2018). Likewise, there are several studies that have explored TCK identity issues (Cranston, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Lijadi, 2018; Nehrbass, 2018; Smith & Kearney, 2016) and repatriation challenges (Altweck & Marshall, 2015; P. S. Davis et al., 2013). However, the novel contribution that this study adds to the field of education is the importance for higher education institutions to increase TCK awareness and provide proven services and supports to help repatriating TCKs. Similarly, this study shows the importance of cultural diversity and acceptance and the need to develop a multicultural environment on college and university campuses. Higher education institutions can increase awareness of available services and supports to help students know what resources and tools they can utilize to help them overcome repatriation challenges.

Using a transcendental phenomenological study, participants were able to provide their unique perception of their TCK upbringing, repatriation, and higher education services and supports. Through the use of in-depth interviews, a focus group, and personal artifacts, this study allowed for deeply personalized and meaningful interactions that sparked honest conversation about the phenomenon of TCK repatriation. As each lived experience is completely unique and personal, this method and design was vital in gaining unique insight. Furthermore, this study shed new light on how higher education institutions are in a unique position to help repatriating TCKs and provides insight about effective services and supports that it can offer.

Limitations and Delimitations

One limitation of this study is that there were no military kid TCKs who participated in this study. Recruitment was attempted in social media groups that had larger military kid subgroups, however, no military kid TCKs volunteered. Another limitation was that the participants geographical locations were diverse which cause some scheduling conflicts, especially for the focus group interview. There were several participants who wanted to participate but lived in a time zone which made it difficult.

One delimitation of this study was to only include participants over the age of 18. Another delimitation was that the participants had to return to the United States for higher education. Another delimitation was that participants needed to live in a host country for at least four consecutive years. This study was purposefully chosen to be a transcendental phenomenological study, as well, to allow for informal, open-ended, topical-guided interviews.

Recommendations for Future Research

One recommendation for future research is to increase the number of participants to allow for more unique experiences. As this is a transcendental phenomenological study, the

focus is gaining the unique perceptions of the experiences of the individual. As such, increasing the number of participants will provide more unique insights about the phenomenon of repatriation.

Interestingly, the MKs participants of this study shared that faith was a strong support or a difficult challenge. Some of the MKs relied heavily on their religious beliefs to help navigate repatriation difficulties. In other cases, religion was seen as an oppressive force that added to the repatriation challenges. Bikos, et al. (2014) also found that repatriation can impact faith and some TCKs reject their natal faith. Still others shared that their return to the home country allowed them to rebel against certain rules associated with their religious upbringing or test their faith to determine if it was something they wanted to continue to pursue. Further research could be conducted specifically on the MK subgroup. It would be interesting to develop a better understanding of how natal faith is impacted during and after repatriation for individuals who are raised in a host country because of faith-based missions.

Furthermore, this study did not include any participants who were military kid TCKs. Therefore, it is recommended that future research included adequate representation of this TCK subgroup. The other main subgroups, missionary kids and business expat kids, were both represented in this study. One uncommon subgroup, US diplomat kid, was also presented in this study. It is recommended that future research includes more participants in each TCK subgroup to increase understanding of this phenomenon. Future studies on this topic may benefit from quantitative research to help prove these qualitative findings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to understand, as a lived experience, the impact of repatriation on Third Culture Kids (TCKs). Berry's (2003; 2005; 2006)

acculturation theories proved beneficial in creating the theoretical framework for this study. This study revealed that an individual's attitude of integration was beneficial in helping incorporate aspects of both the host and home cultures. Similarly, findings supported Berry's (2005) acculturation theory that values, beliefs, and identity are impacted by multiculturalism. Furthermore, the findings support that the impact on values, beliefs, and identity is often unnoticed until the individual repatriates. Also, a multicultural attitude of the higher education institution can help TCKs feel valued and welcomed and allow them to successfully integrate into mainstream society.

One notable implication from this study is for higher education institutions to increase understanding of TCKs. Higher education institutions should provide a multicultural environment that embraces TCK as a diverse minority group and offer effective services and supports to help repatriating TCKs. Lastly, higher education institutions must increase awareness so that TCKs know about its available services and supports.

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Appendix A

Individual Interview Questions

1. Describe your experience as a TCK living in another country.

2. What were the highlights or greatest benefits of your experience living in another country?

3. What were the drawbacks of your experience living in another country?

4. Describe your experience moving back to the United States after living in another country.

5. What were the major social challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment within your home country?

6. What were the major psychological and/or personal challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment?

7. What were other challenges you faced during the repatriation process to a higher education environment?

8. If you had a reentry seminar, what was its impact on your repatriation? If you did not have a reentry seminar, do you believe it would have been beneficial and why?

9. What services or supports did your higher education institution provide for you during your repatriation process?

10. What were the most beneficial tools you discovered to help you overcome repatriation challenges as a TCK repatriating for higher education?

11. Describe your college or university's role in your repatriation process.

12. What services and supports would you recommend a college or university should provide for TCKs who are coming back to the United States?

13. What other suggestions would you like to give to a college or university on how to best

aid or help students who are repatriating TCKs?

14. What else would you like to add that you haven not already discussed?

Appendix B

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What was the process of repatriation like for you?

2. What were the major challenges you faced during repatriation?

3. What are your perceptions of the preparedness of higher education institutions to provide supports and services for repatriating TCKs?

4. What are your perceptions of the effectiveness of higher education institution supports and services for repatriating TCKs?

5. What are your perceptions of the ways a TCK upbringing has affected you?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with repatriation that we have not covered?

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study will be to understand Third Culture Kid (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, repatriated to the United States to study at a higher education institution, and have spent at least 4 consecutive years living in a host country. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in an in-depth, open-ended interview and, if possible, provide repatriation artifacts such as poems, journal entries, etc. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the procedure(s) listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please click here (include hyperlink to online screening questionnaire) to complete the screening questionnaire.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the screening questionnaire. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent

form, please click the button to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read

the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Sincerely,

Kylee Spangler

Graduate Student

███████████████

Appendix D

Screening Questionnaire

1. Are you a Third Culture Kid (TCK)?

2. What is your current age?

3. What is your national citizenship?

4. What host country/countries did you live in and what was the length of time you
   spent in each location?

5. If given the choice of a written interview, a video interview, or a phone interview,
   what would you prefer to participate in this study?

Appendix E

Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

Third Culture Kid Repatriation Study

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a Third Culture Kid (TCK)?
- Have you spent at least four years living in a host country?
- Did you return to the United States to begin higher education?

If you answered **yes** to each of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a Third Culture Kid repatriation study.

The purpose of this research study is to understand Third Culture Kid (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience. The study will help gain insight on supports and services provided by higher education institutions and the availability and effectiveness of these supports and services.

The study is being conducted digitally via Zoom
https://zoom.us

Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in an in-depth, recorded, open-ended virtual interview and, if possible, provide repatriation artifacts such as poems, journal entries, etc. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the procedure(s) listed. After completing the individual interview, participants will be asked if they wish to take part in an in-depth, recorded, open-ended virtual focus group. The focus group interview should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participants will be provided with a transcript of their interview(s) as a form of member checking to ensure the accuracy of the transcript. This procedure will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. A consent document will be sent to participants via email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return to me by email before the interview.

Kylee Spangler, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Kylee Spangler at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **for more information.**

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

Appendix F

IRB Approval

Date: 9-13-2021

IRB #: IRB-FY20-21-502
Title: THE IMPACT OF REPATRIATION ON THIRD CULTURE KIDS AND THE ROLE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PLAY IN SUPPORTING REPATRIATING STUDENTS: A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
Creation Date: 12-22-2020
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Kylee Spangler
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member	Kenneth Tierce	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	████████
Member	Kylee Spangler	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	████████
Member	Kylee Spangler	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	████████

Appendix G

Informed Consent

Consent

Title of the Project: The Impact of Repatriation on Third Culture Kids and the Role Higher Education Institutions Play in Supporting Repatriating Students: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study
Principal Investigator: Kylee Spangler, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, repatriated to the United States to study at a higher education institution, and have spent at least 4 consecutive years living in a host country. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand Third Culture Kid (TCK) perceptions of repatriation as a lived experience. The study will help gain insight on supports and services provided by higher education institutions and the availability and effectiveness of these supports and services.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in an individual interview consisting of fourteen questions related to your unique repatriation experience. This interview will be conducted using Zoom and will be recorded for transcription purposes. The individual interviews will take approximately thirty minutes. Each participant will participate in the individual interview.
2. Participants may volunteer to take part in a focus group interview. The focus group interview will be conducted using Zoom and will also be recorded for transcription purposes. The focus group interview will take approximately thirty minutes. Participants may choose to participate in the focus group at the end of the individual interview. The focus group interview will consist of six questions.
3. If possible, provide personal artifacts (poems, journal entries, blog posts, emails, artwork) related to your repatriation experience.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive direct benefits from participating in this study. Benefits to society include increased awareness of TCK repatriation and a better understanding of effective services and supports that higher education institutions can provide to ease repatriation challenges.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks one would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom, and the researcher will be located where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kylee Spangler. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and/or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Kenneth Tierce, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____   _____
Printed Subject Name   Signature & Date

Appendix H

Individual Interview Sample Transcripts

<u>ANGELA</u>

Interviewer:	All right, so the first question is: Describe your experience as a third culture kid living in another country.
Angela:	I would have to say unique. While I may have looked like the natives from there, I definitely did not have a native last name. So, I was adopted at a very young age, and so my siblings are all white and I am the only brown one in the family. So, I could blend in in some ways but, at the same time, I was considered almost an outsider.
Interviewer:	So, were you adopted from the country...
Angela:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Okay, very cool. Interesting.
	So, what were the highlights or the greatest benefits of your experience living in another country?
Angela:	Well, I can always tell people that I'm twice as smart as they are because I know things in two different languages. For me, growing up overseas had made me see the world from a different view, not just an American side of view but from the Chilean pinpoint as well, and just having that different culture, seeing politics and religion and all that kind of stuff. I also just have to say, it's benefit me because I can get better jobs because I know another language. And being really flexible, I've learned to be flexible on the mission field and coming back from the mission field, I'm still flexible. I'm currently a children's minister, no, excuse me, a youth minister at my church and during all this COVID thing, I've had to manage a lot more on my plate and my boss is like, "How are you so flexible and okay with it?" And I'm like, "You hired me because I'm a missionary kid that is good with teenagers and all this," and I was like, "That is why I'm flexible, because I can do whatever you tell me to do, and I can do it well."
Interviewer:	So, what were the drawbacks or the main challenges, then, on the flip side, for you?
Angela:	A lot of cultural references that I did not get. Even though we were not a third world country, it kind of felt like it because our clothes were outdated about a couple seasons from here. U.S. references, like a chip on your shoulder or referring to "Leave it to Beaver," trying to remember all

the stuff that we'd be talking in my class in the master's program over here. And some of the sayings they say, I'm like, "That doesn't make sense." And then I try to translate it in my head into Spanish and I was like, "Oh, it doesn't even make sense in Spanish." So, certain things like mannerisms here in the United States that are okay, but in Chile it's not okay, and the mannerisms in Chile that were okay, but here it's not okay. Like, it's very frowned upon, I was warned by my brother, but I didn't listen to him, that when you go and try to kiss somebody on the cheek, they would think you're trying to flirt with them and date with me. I was like, "Oh, okay. Well, that's good to know now because I tried that, and it did not work." Just because in Chile, when you greet somebody, you do it with the kissing on the cheek kind of thing, like cheek-to-cheek kind of stuff. So, coming here, all that.

Driving. Driving is what got me. No.

Interviewer:	So, describe your experience moving back to United States after living in another country.

Angela:	I would say it was a tough transition. In fact, today would be 15 years since I left Chile. So, in my circumstances, I quit school early to come back to get my GED to take care of my grandfather. And so, coming back, it was rough because I had my siblings and all that, but they didn't have the same experiences I did coming here. Granted, they're all boys and so they have to "man up" kind of stuff, and so trying to go with them to get help wasn't that helpful. A lot of times, I was probably trying to search myself, in a way. Very doubtful, very depressed, very much in the rebel stage because I felt like we couldn't do that much in Chile because everybody's eyes were on my parents and now that nobody knew my parents as much here, I was able to explore something more, hence why I have four tattoos.

Interviewer:	So, what were the major social challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment within your home country?

Angela:	Oh, so education is very important in Chile. I felt like it was better than here in the United States. Some of the things that we were going over in eighth grade, high school was just going over it, like senior high school kids. I think here in the United States, they have a more laid-back view of education. You can still study, you can do all this, but they rely on the professors more than anything, like they rely on the professors to tell them when the due dates are. They rely on the professors to give them all the answers. Compared to us where we grew up, yes, we relied on that, but we also were told that it's your problem if you forgot you had a test. It's your problem if you forgot this. If you want to explore some more things, there's the library right next door. Go and explore things. They gave us

that option. We were able to study independently and not rely so much on the professors.

Interviewer: What were the major psychological, or mental issues, or the personal challenges that you faced during repatriation to a higher ed environment?

Angela: So, once I went to college here, I would have to say how all the students treated the professors here. Some of them acted like they were their friends, and I was not used to that. I'm used to he's the authority. You keep quiet in class. If you get called on, then you answer the questions, not like, "Hey, he's going to ask a question and then you have to respond." That was totally different for me.

I don't know, every time I felt like I was being called on, just brought back memories of, "I have to know all the answers." So, coming here, I was like, "Honestly, I don't know the answer," and they were like, "Okay, that's great." There's that reprimand-ation from Chile where like, "Oh, you're stupid. You don't know the answer. You should know that answer," because you have to study on your own. You have to do this, you have to do that, and coming here, they'll ask you questions and you're like, "Well, I've already read all the book. This was not in the book. This is not in all the other research I did," kind of thing, and the professor's like, "No, that's fine. This is what I'm asking for." And so that changes the whole entire thing.

How lenient the professors are here, very. I liked it, to be honest. I mean, I got more grace here than I did every get in Chile for grades. It was difficult as well writing papers because I grew up writing papers in Spanish and not in English. And even though I told the professors, "Hey, I'm struggling writing these papers in English," they didn't help at all. Like, "Hey, do your best. Blah, blah, blah." Or even when I turned in my English papers, they were like, "You need to work on writing your papers better in English. Blah, blah, blah." And even though I told them, "This is not my first language." Even though I grew up learning both of them at the same time, English is still not my first language. And so, they were like accepting of it but once it came to papers and all that, or essay questions, all I could see was red pens or red marks and all that. And so that really put a downfall on my education as well.

Interviewer: Now, just really quick, going back to this one question about social challenges. Did you have any issues with students? How was your relationships with the other students and stuff when you hit college? Were there any issues with that, or not that you remember?

Angela: There was certain incidents because I'm Hispanic. I got bullied a lot, in a way. One of the classes, even though it's very mixed class, Black, White,

there were some Asians, but I was the only Hispanic with some other lady. Not the professor, but the students would just look at us different and one of them actually told me to go back to my home country. Yeah, and so that kind of affected it as well, so I don't talk in Spanish as much in class anymore even if somebody's in that class speaking Spanish just because of that incident. Once I got to my master's degree, they're more open. I'm in my master's program right now. Hopefully I'm graduating in May, hopefully. I see a light at the end of the tunnel.

But here, there is more racial acceptance compared to when I went to undergrad and what's that English word? A junior college.

Interviewer:	Were there any other challenges that you remember having to deal with through that repatriation process?
Angela:	Trying to get to classes on time. Chileans are very known for getting late to everything. It was super hard for me to go to my classes on time. I was pretty much five, 15 minutes late every single class. I'm better now, so that's an easier statement. I also have to say that challenges here, I can't think of anything right now. I'm trying to go back because this was only like eight years ago, give or take. I can't think of anything else as of right now.
Interviewer:	Did your family come back with you?
Angela:	No, I came by myself. My parents stayed on the mission field. Yes, there was some challenge. Even though I was with family members, it was still hard to be open about all this kind of stuff. I didn't want to hinder my parents' ministry for them to come back and take care of me. I was 18 at the time. I was like, "I can take care of myself." There's a reason why I didn't finish school in Chile because I wanted to get my GED here and take care of my grandfather because he was very ill and nobody else in the family could do that. So, that had another repercussion of trying to fit in, even though I'm trying to take care of my grandfather.
Interviewer:	Yeah, and then you also made mention of trying to test boundaries, you said about your tattoos or whatever. Was there anything else that you explored during that time or anything at all?
Angela:	Yeah. So, even before going back to the United States from the mission field, I was trying to figure out how much alcohol I could take.
Interviewer:	Okay.

Angela: And apparently, my biological parents, or biological family, we can hold a lot, so that was an issue as well. I did a lot of dying my hair, shaving it all off, kind of stuff. I didn't do any drugs particularly because I was like, "That's stupid," but yeah, that's probably about it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Now, do you think that was just like how everybody explores, like that kind of thing? Or do you think that that was tied to the repatriation challenges that you met?

Angela: I think it was tied more with that, because even going to parties in Chile, I had an opportunity to drink and all that, but I wouldn't drink.

Interviewer: Got you, that makes sense. I know for me; I definitely tested my boundaries and stuff and I think it was more of just trying to figure out who I am and figure out my identity. Does that make sense?

Angela: Yes.

Interviewer: So, I completely get that. A lot of TCKs seem to do that, kind of test the boundaries then. So, good. Thank you.

Angela: I think it's because we are free from our parents and we don't get that repercussion and that when we're here in the United States, not many people know our parents. Or when we go to college, we pick a college that nobody knows our parents. And so that's why we want to test those boundaries. We want to see how far we can go without getting caught, kind of thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, makes sense.

So, did you have a re-entry seminar at all?

Angela: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so what was its impact on your repatriation, having a re-entry seminar?

Angela: Honestly, it was a blur.

Interviewer: Okay.

Angela: I remember it. I don't remember all the missionary kids that were with me except for one, maybe. They didn't really talk. What I do remember, their main goal was telling us to keep our focus on God, but they didn't help us on how to relate with other people. They didn't help us with that kind of stuff. I wish they would have done a follow-up re-entry six months down

the road, or even a year, where we could have gotten together and actually talked about some of those struggles, we were going through because once we get off the plane, we're still in that honeymoon stage and we think everything's fine but come six months to a year, that changes.

Interviewer: Right. So, even though you said you had a re-entry seminar, and you said there was mainly just a focus on your faith, what other things that they could have done in a re-entry seminar that would have been beneficial? Like, what could have they talked about? What topics could they have addressed?

Angela: I don't remember any topics they addressed, but I would have liked them to at least try to pair us up with an older missionary kid that was in the area or ex-missionary families that lived in that, not country, but knew the experience and checked up on us, because we all went our separate ways. Some of us have fallen completely out of the faith. Others have completely surrendered to the faith, but I think it would have changed differently if they would have had missionary families around to help them like, "Hey, I've been on your boat. Tell me what's going on. How can I help you? What do you need," kind of stuff.

Interviewer: Yes, so like a mentorship or a TCK or MK network?

Angela: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Angela: Yeah.

Interviewer: Excellent. Good, thank you.

          What services or supports did your college or university provide for you during your repatriation process?

Angela: Probably none.

Interviewer: Okay.

Angela: In fact, the college that I went to, I was trying to make a support group for missionary kids but the person that I thought I could trust to help me with this never followed through until I graduated, and now he made it into an own clique of missionary kids and that is not what I wanted. I wanted them to interact with other people, but he's made it into a missionary clique, or third culture kid clique basically.

Interviewer: Got you. So, it doesn't include everyone?

Angela: No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Angela: Yeah.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

               What did you find, or what did you discover, as far as beneficial things or tools that you used to help overcome challenges during repatriation? So, what helped you be successful repatriating?

Angela: Yeah. I think, for me, honestly, was knowing that I could not change who I was and how I grew up, and to embrace it, and to be able to educate other people to know that, yes, not all MK or third culture kids are weird and awkward. Not all of them are called to be pastors. Not all of them have a talent of singing or playing an instrument. There are normal ones out of us that don't play instruments, that don't sing, and are still called to ministry. But that kind of stuff I think, for me, was mostly music. A lot of music and a lot of reading books. I can visual the book, but I can't remember the book title, it's the blue one with the hands with the world on it.

Interviewer: Yes, Dave Pollock writes it, I believe.

Angela: I read that book and it was very helpful, and so I would even recommend it to people that were not on the mission field or were not third culture kids to read it. If you encounter somebody, this book will help you a lot.

Interviewer: Excellent. Good, thank you.

               Describe your college or university's role in your repatriation process. So, what part did they play?

Angela: So, I went to a Christian college. They paid for my education, only had to pay whatever the Mission Board gave to my parents, and they took half of the FAFSA money and then gave half of it back. So, pretty much, they were paying me to go to school there. I could have been an RA and they would have paid me more, but I felt like the Lord was telling me not to do that and take advantage of that because other students needed it more than I did, because everything was already paid for. They were very welcoming for missionary kids, but they didn't help missionary kids, like mentally for returning back.

Interviewer: So, like financially they took care of you?

Angela: Yeah, I think if they would have had at least a counselor. I mean, they offered counseling here for the students, but not many people knew about it, so they didn't even offer it. It was a hush-hush if you needed to go to counseling kind of stuff. But I think it would have been very beneficial if they had a third culture kid group where they could express their needs, almost a counseling session, and then if they needed more counseling then we would recommend it to somebody.

Interviewer: Good, thank you.

                 And then, you said about counseling, but what other services and supports would you recommend a college or university should provide for TCKs coming back to the United States?

Angela: I think a class of managing money.

Interviewer: Okay.

Angela: I mean, I'm very frugal with my money. Even as a child, I was. But understanding the currency here is different and then when I go to the store to buy something that's a dollar, I have to factor in it's a dollar plus tax. I think even for missionaries coming back, I think what would be beneficial from a college is having probably like how to do your taxes, or how to file for a job. Even though you grow up overseas and you're supposed to know that kind of stuff, but taxes here are different compared to other countries and so applying for that. Or even applying for a loan, should we apply for loans at this young age to buy a car and then not be able to pay it back? So just probably classes of, yes, you're now an independent person here. However, money is different here. Let's see how you can be financially responsible. Because once you leave the nest, it's like, "Here's your money. Go have fun. If it's all gone in one month, oh well. Suck it up, buttercup. Move on."

Interviewer: And then, are there any other suggestions that you would like to give to a college or university on how to best aid or help students who are repatriating TCKs or MKs?

Angela: Have an open mind. Be willing to listen and not speak. Be willing to have mentors onsite, kind of thing, or give suggestions where mentors can meet up because I think for many missionary kids that were, not trying to brag or anything, but once I was in college there, I took them under my wings. If they had any trouble, they would be able to call me and just like, "Hey, I'm struggling with this," and I'm like, "Okay, well I've been in your shoes. What do you think we need to do to make it better," kind of thing. And I've seen them blossom from that, so that accountability, that mentoring. Even if it's not a Christian church, I mean a Christian church, a Christian

school, having them know that there are churches around, having beneficial of that kind of stuff. When you get plugged in, you're able not to wander as far.

Interviewer: Excellent. It's cool because you saw a need that your college wasn't necessarily fulfilling, so you plugged that gap yourself. I think that that's so cool that you saw that need and you helped.

Angela: Yeah, my brother went to that school. Granted, I told myself I would not go to any school that my parents went or my siblings went because I just wanted to be different.

Interviewer: Right.

Angela: And the Lord had other plans. And so, when he went there was nothing like that kind of support and I was like, "I have to change this. This is not okay for missionary kids because he went down hardcore, worse than I did, and he won't talk about it now. But we've talked about not that instance, but I was like, "If he would've had somebody older MK that was willing to sit down with you and just chit-chat and you just share your burden."

He's like, "I think I would've turned out differently."

Yeah. No, it's really cool because I three older brothers.

One's an atheist now, like completely left the faith. For me, I don't believe he's completely gone. He's not completely lost. I still find there's hope. My second brother, he dabbles. Some days, he's a Christian and some days, he's not. And then the one that went to college, the same one I did, he's a Christian and right now, they're trying to find a church that he can go to since they moved. And all of us, pretty much, went down the same path but because of how we were raised differently, kind of, and the fact that my older brother did have somebody eventually grab him by the throat. The old-time-y thing.

And I truly believe it's because we have to be perfect. Our parents have put it in our heads that we have to be perfect because we're on the mission field. We have to set that example. For us, I started working with children when I was 11, 12 years old, leading bible studies and all that because nobody else would do it and nobody would step up and it's because of that. Our parents put that pressure that we have to be perfect. We have to be this certain way while we're on the mission field and once we get away from that pressure, we have that decision. Well, do I want to continue this, or do I want to dabble? And that's when most of us go. Eventually, we'll come back but...

Interviewer:	So, is there anything that we haven't already talked about that you would like to discuss or make sure that I add to my study? Anything that you think is important, relating to TCKs or even to repatriation?
Angela:	I think what'd be awesome to see how many third culture kids went to a private school versus a public school versus an international school, because I went to a public school in Chile and that's how my parents got their foot in the door to do ministry in that school. Because I was able to be in that school, so people are willing to have that door open for my parents. They're like, "Oh, yeah. They're missionaries and they speak English. They can do an English class," kind of stuff. I think that also would change a lot of perspective because my older brother, again, they went to a private school in Chile and they had the same treatment, but it wasn't public, and so there was less mockery because once my parents started going, there was like this, "Oh no, they know who my parents are now," kind of thing.
Interviewer:	That made me think about even with this study that I'm doing right now, I wonder how the results would be different based on my participants, where they went to college and university. Was it a small Christian college that had a lot of MKs already, and then did they have services and supports? Versus where I went to school, even though I'm an MK, I went to a private non-Christian college that's just a local college and most of them didn't even hear of TCKs or MKs before. Those acronyms were lost on them. So, I felt completely isolated and alone. So, I think that even there...
Angela:	Oh yeah.
Interviewer:	...there can be a lot of different variables for sure.
Angela:	Yeah, because when I went to the school I went to, my brother was the only other missionary kid. And then when I came, there was only three of us. And by the time I left, there was 12 of us, and that's because my university started shutting down their curriculum for missionary kids or accepting new missionary kids, giving that full scholarship, and so they were trying to find other places they could go to for free, which I don't blame them. If I don't have to pay anything for my college, I would totally go somewhere else too.

DAVID

Interviewer:	Describe your experience as a TCK living in another country.
David:	Okay. So just to start off, my parents are Vietnamese. They came over just after the war to the United States. They met there and I was born in Texas. But when we were about four years old, my dad's company moved us to Indonesia. So, he was working for an oil company at the time, and I started growing up there. I actually spent most of my childhood there from basically four until I was 18 going to a British international school in Jakarta, Indonesia. My dad changed companies, but yeah, I basically managed to stay in that school the whole time.
	While we were there, we would go back, about once a year or once every two years depending, back to the US to visit family, but it was our Vietnamese American family. And then when I was 18, I've moved back to the US. I had been accepted to a large school in Michigan to study and that was my repatriation experience. My parents continued living in Indonesia for another two years, so yeah. So, I was off to the United States and that was my difficult repatriation experience, so yeah.
Interviewer:	So, what were the highlights or the greatest benefits of living in another country?
David:	A lot of things. So, I'm going to divide these into the sort of material things, the basic superficial things, which is just experience, of course, languages. I attended a good international school which would, otherwise, have been expensive or difficult or anything like that because most international schools are private schools and therefore, they're expensive. And it was also an opportunity to travel a lot, not just around Asia but elsewhere, while I was growing up. And as an expat lifestyle, when my dad is working for a large multinational and you're living in a country, which is relatively cheap, then there's that as well, it's quite a nice lifestyle.
	But in the general sense, it's like... Well, I started learning languages from an early age. So, my parents would speak Vietnamese at home and English, and then at school, I was learning French and Indonesian from an early age. They started at us at five years old there. And then as I grew up, I started learning Spanish in my later high school years, and yeah, friends from all over the world, that sort of thing. And one of the benefits of international schools is that it doesn't really matter where you're from, people are just people. And you make friends with anybody, and you get used to that sort of mindset, which is the difficult thing when you go back to the US or your passport country for that matter. So, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: What were the main drawbacks or your main challenges of your experience living in another country?

David: For me, there were a couple of them. Again, I can divide them into superficial and then sort of more personal. The superficial stuff was that Indonesia was going through an interesting political time. So, when I was about 12, 13, there was hyperinflation with the Asian financial crisis. And then they had a dictatorship under Suharto at the time, so the process of the political turmoil of him stepping down and Indonesia democratizing was an interesting time to live through. It's interesting in hindsight, though probably more dangerous than I remember, so there was that. And I would say also the one thing that you become comfortable with, and I don't know if this is the same everywhere, but in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, you have a large wealth gap that you get used to as an expat kid. So, you get used to the poverty being just a part of a thing that you live with and, as an adult, that's something I'm less comfortable with, so yeah.

In the personal sense, one of the troubles is, of course, identity is something that I ended up having to tackle later on. As a kid, I didn't worry about it too much, and even as a teenager, never worried about it very much. The weird part was going to a British school as a Vietnamese American and my parents were not very American because they were Vietnamese growing up. So, it was a weird thing where I felt like a bit of an impostor because international schools, they like to have their international days where you represent your country and I've never knew which one I was supposed to be because it was like my parents are Vietnamese, but we don't know. But I'm American-ish, but I don't know which one they're supposed to ask me to do. And so, I think I challenge that. I had trouble with that, which became a problem when I went back to the US and I discovered I didn't know anything about being American, so there is that too. Yeah. And this is just talking about while I was a child. These are different issues, I guess.

Interviewer: Describe your experience moving back to the United States after living in Indonesia.

David: When I was applying for colleges, I was at a place emotionally where I was very present, where I wasn't thinking too much about the future. I was thinking very much about like, "Well, I'm going to leave, so I should enjoy this while I have it." I had a good social group and so on and we were, generally, quite close, so I wasn't really thinking about where I was going next. And I think this is something that I think if you're American and grew up in the US, you're used to this idea of, "Oh, yeah. I go here, then I take responsibility to go study and I go do this." Of course, that depends on family and so on, but it was expected from my parents for me to know what to do. And I didn't really, I was not thinking about that at all.

So, when I moved back to the US, I didn't even know where Michigan was. I had gone through the application process to apply to this university, and I still didn't know where it was. Until I was on the flight, and they had the GPS map, and I was like, "Oh, okay. That's where it is." And then we arrived, my dad dropped me off. Well, we got to the Airbnb in Ann Arbor and that's when he told me when we were in our hotel room, he said, "By the way, you have an accent." And I had no one, my entire life, had ever told me that I had an accent. And it turns out that going to a British school for 14 years left its impact on me. And then I would go on to discover this as I made American friends and they would all tell me like, "Wow, you sound so British." And none of my British friends would have said so because they didn't think I did, but I guess it's that international school accent that people talk about.

And, but I got my crash course and the weird American accents, Midwest, East Coast, all these things. And they were all saying like, "Well, say it again. Say it again." And I was like, "What?" "Say girl again." And I say, "What? Girl?" And they're like, "No. It's not girl, it's girl." And I'm like, "Oh, what?" I came in with the international orientation because my parents thought and I thought as well like, "Well, you haven't lived in America. You might as well come in like an international student." So, I came in with a few others. Well, with the whole bunch of international students, which felt a bit weird as technically an American, but it made sense. But then what the people I ended up associating with were Americans because of our studies. So, while I would meet the people from that orientation occasionally, it was much like... Once I actually got into the study process, it was just mostly Americans. Yeah.

And most of them were curious also where I was from, and I was feeling a bit weird about that as well. So, I took a part-time job, and I met a guy from Houston, where I was born, and it was like, "Oh." I told him I'm from Houston too and he's like, "Oh, cool. What part?" And I'm like, "This part, yeah." And then he's like, "Okay, I'm from Sugar Land. And I'm like, "Never heard of that." He's like, "You're from Houston? You never heard of Sugar Land?" And it turns out it's a huge part of the city, so I felt like an impostor again. And I was like, "Okay, maybe I'm not very good at being Texan." And then, yeah. Let's say, and I met other people who told me, "Okay, so we're trying to figure you out. You spent 14 years in Indonesia, maybe that means you're Indonesian." But there's nothing like living in Indonesia as an expat that makes you know that you are not Indonesian.

Interviewer: Right, yeah.

David: So, I was like, "No." I did make some Indonesian friends who were international students, that sort of thing. But I also felt the cultural divide there where I was kind of like, I feel like an impostor trying to join you to

do this. And then I met Vietnamese Americans who are much better at being Vietnamese than I was. They spoke better Vietnamese than me. They were better about the traditions and stuff and all these things. And I was like, "Oh, okay. Not that either."

I went to visit family in Houston, and it was a weird thing because I was starting to also realize that visiting our Vietnamese family in the US is not being exposed to American culture, even though they are also kind of Americanizing. Especially my cousins, they were Americanizing, but it was a weird little bubble of that diaspora. And then I think I had a conversation with my aunts, and I was telling her all the interesting political things that was happening in Indonesia in the early 2000s, politics, terrorism, these things. And she was saying, "Wow." And for me, I always thought it's just an interesting aspect of my experience, but for my aunt, she responded, "Oh, well, I'm just happy. I live in the safest place on earth." And I'm like, "What? Texas?" I don't know. Okay, if you say so.

I was struggling a lot with this idea, this identity thing. I was also struggling to have my international baccalaureate recognized at the time because they didn't know what it was. This was 2003, so fair enough, I guess. But I remember being quite annoyed because I was quite proud of having graduated with the IB and getting a decent score. And then trying to transcribe that into university credits was a bit of a weird thing. Was it... So, I had made some Singaporean friends who did their O-levels and they got so many more points than I did, and I felt envious. I was like, "What? I did the IB. Everyone told me the IB is amazing, and then they just get all these extra points."

And I sat in on a math class, which was... I think my early confusion about like, "I think I'm supposed to take math class, right?" And I don't remember it to this day, whether it was required or not, but I was very confused for about two weeks because I thought, "What is this? What are they doing?" But then I realized, "Oh, this is the basics of calculus. Oh, I stopped doing this. I've done this, so I just use it." At that point, I was just using it because that's what we were doing in IB higher math. So, I was like, "Oh," and I finally managed to convince people that like, "I don't need to do this. I got the credits," but I was so confused trying to handle all these things. I didn't know who to talk to actually regarding IB, what counts, all these things, that was an issue for university.

And then also that put my general unpreparedness for university, as well as the identity crisis became a bit of an issue. For spring break, rather than go to a sunny place like most Americans do, I went to the UK to visit old friends. And while I was there, a friend of mine, actually, she pointed out that like, "Oh, you're starting to enunciate and cross your Ts again." And I'm like, "Yeah, maybe. Okay." And being in England, even though I had

never lived there, felt comfortable in the sense of being a foreigner. So being an assumed foreigner or getting to acclimatize, get my accent back because I was adapting already. And so, I went back to the US, and I thought, "I have decided. I am British now," which is very embarrassing.

I think I hung a flag on my dorm room door, that sort of thing. Things you do when you're 19. And even though when I was growing up, I thought it was really silly whenever my friends would use the word bloody like bloody hell and stuff like that. But I started doing it because I was trying to bring it back, bring my accent back. And it wasn't really working, but I was trying, and yeah. But all of this kind of came to ahead because I stopped. I don't know. I felt very alone, I think, is the main thing. A lot of my high school friends were either taking a gap year or going to study somewhere else, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, so on, and then I think the nearest friend I had was in California. So, everything was very far away. Family was also far, but I wasn't very close to them, especially my extended family, and my sister was in Chicago. So, it's not so far, but we weren't so close at the time. So, I felt very alone and like I didn't have anyone to turn to.

And in my family, I think I also had trouble talking to my parents about having challenges, having problems because I always felt like my parents would just expect higher of me or just tell me to study harder or to focus on my priorities. And I didn't feel like I could talk to them about these things. And so, it became a problem also that I actually ended up... So, when I first got there, I was keeping in touch with my friends. And then one time I went home to Indonesia to visit family, to visit my parents while they were still there. And then my mother who was feeling a bit insecure about her kids moving away was worried that she was feeling a bit, I don't know, offended that I had kept in touch with my friends more than I did with her. And then, so that became a problem where she started trying to overcompensate and call me more often and which I didn't really want to because I didn't want to talk about difficult things.

And then that became a problem as I started sort of spiraling downwards and not attending classes that I didn't feel like attending, and then just sort of retreating inwards. I had friends that I would hang out with, but we all kind of conveniently ignored the certain things like the fact that I was sort of spiraling, and yeah. And that ended up with me being, in the end, disenrolled from university there. Yeah. And I kind of didn't want to talk to my parents about it, I didn't want to talk to anybody about it really. And then I just... Yeah. In the end, what ended up happening was I think I was in a [inaudible] room, just kind of like living off of the credit card my parents had given me for emergencies, and yeah. And then my sister emailed me to say, "Hey, we could file a missing person's report if you

don't get in touch." And I was like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, I don't want that. This is where I'm at."

And then literally like a week later, my dad showed up at my door and to say like, "Oh." He made some excuse like, "Oh, the company has an office in the area, so I thought I'd stopped by," that sort of thing. And yeah, then he picked me up, and then by that point he was working for a multinational that was based in Switzerland and so they had moved in there. So, I would not go back to Indonesia for many years after that and so, yeah. And then they decided, "Maybe you should just come to Switzerland." So, this was June 2005, this is two years into being in the US. I left to go to Switzerland. And while I was there, I got that feeling, again, of like... Even though I had visited Switzerland a couple of times because my sister ended up having a lot of ties there and just being there, and I started learning German.

And that experience of being a foreigner and with no expectations and in a multicultural environment, that's when it started to activate for me. Where I was thinking like, "Oh wait, this is a lot more comfortable." So, I finished my degree, and I actually went back to the US for two years. I worked there in Florida. And while I was there, I thought to myself, "Okay, I can live here if I want to, but maybe I don't want to." So, I ended up leaving. I had been away from the US for about 10 years now. I haven't gone back yet since. So, I don't know if this is the thing that like... Because part of me is like, "Oh, work permits would be nice." Not having to worry about work permits would be nice, I should say. In the US that would be easier, but so far, so good. 10 years away. I'm fine, I can say. Anyway, sorry, like I said, that was long.

Interviewer: No, it's awesome because it gives me a really good background of everything that happened to you, so that's perfect. So, I mean, I know you touched on it a little bit, but what were the major social challenges you faced during repatriation?

David: One of the main ones was because we just had grown up in such different environments, right?

Interviewer: Yeah.

David: As an expat kid in Indonesia, the way you spent your time was very different from your average American teenager or kid or whatever. And especially by the time we were teenagers, we started going out to bars and nightclubs and so on because it's possible in Jakarta. They didn't care. No one cared even that you were underage or anything like that. And it was relatively classy. Depends, but yeah, mostly. So, you got to have this sort of privileged lifestyle and then you go back to the US when you're 18 and

you can't buy a beer, you can't walk into a bar and all the other teenagers you talk to they'd have no reference for that if they've even heard of Indonesia.

Interviewer: Right.

David: And so, me as a dumb 18-year-old was also like, "Oh, but it's so awesome." Some Americans at that age and entering college like, sure, they want to go party and stuff, but there's a lot of them who are still young and haven't experienced anything like this. So, I felt like a weird correcting influence on them. And then I wasn't that happy with the kind of parties that you were getting in college because they're in stinky student houses and stuff like that which is fine. When I look back now, it's fine. But like at the time I was being a bit arrogant about it and that distanced me further, I felt like I couldn't relate. And I had friends on their gap years who were telling me about the crazy adventures they were having. And I was like [inaudible]. I feel like I'm missing out so that was a big part of the social thing.

What was also interesting was that there was a lot of weird little assumptions. So, I had done beginning of Spanish from my last two years of my IB and I figured, "Okay, I have to take language for my program. I'll continue doing Spanish." But the Spanish I learned in school was Castellano, it's Spanish-Spanish. But in the US, it's mostly Latin American Spanish that people were exposed to. I got told by a friend that the way I speak Spanish was very colonial, which is like a weird thing. I was like, "This is just what I learned. And they speak like that in Spain." I felt weird about it. And I would meet people from Latin America that... And I didn't know anything about Latin America because I had no experience with it. But in the US, of course, it's a big deal. So, I felt so half worldly, but not as well, and not comfortable not knowing things. Today, I'm comfortable not knowing things, but at the time I was like, "Oh, oops."

Interviewer: Yeah.

David: Yeah. Actually, somewhere, I still have two reference letters from professors. One of them, my Spanish teacher, who wrote the worst one ever. She was the one who had to talk with me in her office hours to say, "Are you sure you want to be a student because you don't seem responsible enough?" Another class I took, which was about the portrayal of Chinese culture in American cinema, I was super into that. It was a topic I was very interested in. I didn't know a lot about it, but I was like learning. And the professor wrote me a glowing, wonderful reference like, "Wow. He offers insights," and something like that because my experience was just different from most of the students, so yeah.

This part of the university was called the residential college and so they had their sort of program. And one of the professors there has spent time in Indonesia and so she wanted to bring a lot of Indonesian culture to the college, so technically speaking that should have been felt familiar. And they were offering Gamelan classes, which was this brass, percussion orchestra, which was something I grew up playing in school. And then also Silat which is a martial art, which was something I was unfamiliar with, but okay, that's cool. But I went to go and chat with this professor just because I was interested. I said, "Oh, I grew up in Indonesia, maybe you have something to come to talk about." But I think she spent time there more of like in the '70s and maybe as more of a hippie experience thing. And me being the son of someone working for an oil company, we were from different worlds.

Interviewer: Right.

David: And I was like, "Oh, okay." I get along with people like I'm generally good with people. But I make friends, but I still felt alone. And I think, yeah, and that group of friends that I made in Michigan are people who are still relatively close today. They still get in touch with me sometimes. They're very nice people, but there's definitely a gap of understanding that's even to this day, so yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

David: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, what were major psychological or personal challenges you faced during repatriation?

David: So psychologically, like I said before, I had no one to talk to about feeling lonely, the identity crisis that I was going through and it felt like no one understood. Actually, in that circle of friends, there was one guy. I think he was a missionary kid. I think he had spent time in Sweden I think, but we still felt so different because... I don't know, it's such different experiences and that I didn't really relate to that, even though in hindsight, maybe there was common ground. And then for personal, combination of difficulties as it turns out with my family that I didn't realize I had until... Or didn't really realize how bad they were maybe.

Between that, also over time, your friends grew apart as your lives go apart. So, I felt like I was losing it too. Mostly, it felt like there was no one to talk to. Maybe even if there was someone to talk to either I didn't know about it, or I also wasn't really equipped at the time to seek out help like that. I would rather like wallow in my problems than do look for somebody to help me. And that's something that I didn't know was a

challenge for me until this whole experience actually. So, yeah. No, couldn't talk to family, couldn't talk to other people. Yeah. So, I think when I would go see extended family, like uncles, aunts, I still felt like not really connecting and not really seeing eye to eye. They don't really see me.

Interviewer: What were other challenges you faced during the repatriation process?

David: One that I would think of is coming from a different educational background was a big challenge, I think. Because I think in the British education, generally speaking, they lay it out for you. They tell you, "Okay, this is what you're supposed to do." In American education, I think, and I respect this like... Well, now that I'm older, I think it's nice to be able to sort of mix and match, figure it out as you go. Okay, like I'm taking these classes. Oh, I have an interest in this, I'll take that further. Whereas at the time, I would have benefited from more structure or at least somebody to tell me what I'm supposed to do because at the time I think they expected me to figure it out and I was not at all like I didn't even know what I was supposed to do.

I would look at these class lists and be like, "Well, I guess I'll take that," rather than anybody tells me like, "Okay, this is what was required, and this is what you should do." And I'm sure there were counselors like student career counselors, that sort of thing. I'm sure they were there. I just did not go to them because I didn't feel like either because I felt a little ashamed of not knowing and also that I didn't know where to go because the one time I think I did go to sort of like a study plan, sort of counselor person, she didn't seem to know where I was coming from in terms of what my background had been, like education-wise. And yeah, better knowledge would have been great.

Interviewer: So, you said you had an orientation, I guess that would kind of count as a reentry seminar. If you had a reentry seminar, what was its impact on your repatriation? If you did not have a reentry seminar, do you believe it would have been beneficial and why?

David: So, I hear that to these days, a lot of international schools do sort of like workshops with their students before they repatriate. And mine didn't because you it was a while ago, so I don't expect too much. But then even if they did, it was a British school. So, they would have been tuned to what they're familiar with. So, assuming that you're returning to the UK, for example.

Interviewer: Right.

David: And so, they had no experience with the American education system. Even when I was applying for universities, I felt that contrast by the way, because I was doing the IB and then my application form to apply to American universities asked me like, "Oh, what percentile are you in your class?" And I was like, "My class is 33 students and it's the IB. What's the 35 in the IB when you translate it to American?" I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

David: So, I didn't have that at my school. And the international orientation was more like, "Oh, you're an international school student. You're an international student coming in from anywhere in the world, this is how it works." And that's okay, but I still felt lost. And I think I felt like an impostor either way if I've tried to be American or if I pretended to be an international student. And it wasn't so much reentry in terms of... I think they tried, to be fair. Because if you're coming in from another country, it's the same set of process. You still have to learn how things work and so on and so on. And I think I took that in, but I somehow still felt like it didn't fully apply to me. Looking back, I'm not sure now. I just remember some stuff. I remember sitting in a lecture hall while it talked about stuff and then there were some like group, so you can meet other students, like things. And it went on for a few days, but I think that's all I remember from it. So, it's been a while, to be fair.

Interviewer: What services or supports did your higher education institution provide for you?

David: I have no idea.

                Well, like I said, if they did, which they probably provided like counselor support, that sort of thing. But like I said, I don't... The one counselor to deal with study plans or study planning, I felt like she didn't really get it. And then when it came to other support... Okay. Just realizing now, actually. So, when I was having trouble and they were actually giving me warnings to say like, "Hey, your GPA is getting dangerously low." But there was no recommendation for like, "Do you need to talk to somebody? Do you need someone to help you sort it out?" It was just, "Here's a warning. You have one semester to bring it back up." That's it. And then when that Spanish professor had that chat with me, she was basically saying, "Are you sure you want to be a student?" And I thought, "I don't know, what else I would be? What would I do?" She's like, "Oh, go get a job." And I was thinking like, "Here?"

                I just could not even imagine because they're like, "Just go out and get a job somewhere." I had no experience with that, didn't know anything about the area really beyond living there for a little while as a student, and

all these things. It just felt so alien, in a sense. And it would have been nice if someone did suggest some kind of support, so yeah. Or somebody to talk to, some kind of counseling because I didn't get any. I didn't seek out any, which is my own issue, but I don't think it ever got recommended to me either. So, I think that's something that's probably better now. I think people in general talk about mental health a lot more now than they did back then still.

Interviewer: What were the most beneficial tools you discovered to help you overcome repatriation challenges?

David: One of them was... Okay, so the university had a large international student body. I just didn't see it most of the time, but it was there. And every time I got to interact with it was refreshing for me. So even though, for example, I had made friends through the international orientation and once in a while, we met up to do something with other internationals, like student organizations. So, for example, the Indian students would organize a Bhangra. And I would drag a few American friends to be like, "Let's go to this Bhangra. I don't know what it is either, but we're going to go and have fun with it." And I had to like to teach them how dance with it, even though I was learning at the time, but it was fun. And I just wanted to do things like that. And that was refreshing for me because I think especially if you're pseudo international, but surrounded by your passport post-culture, assuming that's what it is. It's refreshing to get exposed to international student things.

So yeah, anytime something like what's going on, it was nice to build, to hop in into that because I think a lot of TCK is they grow up with a really pretty international environment. And so being able to get some time in with that, even if it's not every day, refresh yourself with that because I think a lot of student groups or organizations would base themselves around a certain identity, so. Oh, we're Indian international students, we're Chinese or whatever. And while you could hop into each of them, there wasn't necessarily like one for all, everybody. Yeah. One other thing was also discovering what Asian American was about because I didn't know either because I actually got approached by a fraternity. It was like an Asian fraternity, and I felt weird about it because I was like, "Am I one of you? I don't know. Technically on paper, but I grew up in Asia."

Interviewer: Right.

David: And that was... Oh, sorry, it's not this question, but that was another identity aspect that was the thing that I was discovering. Especially through that class, I discovered about Asian American identity struggle in the context of America and stuff like that. And I met Asian people who were in the US who asked about the FOB identity, so fresh off the boat.

And that's to do with like, are you Americanized or not? Are you still like Asian? And I was like, "I don't know. Yeah." I think these groups, they try to reach out to me, but they didn't apply to me. And I didn't really feel like there was a group that applied and that was a sound issue, so yeah. It's nice that they tried, just didn't feel it. I would've felt like more of an impostor trying to join these things, so yeah.

Interviewer: And you kind of touched on it but describe your college's or university's role in your repatriation process.

David: It was the whole point. It was the whole point of going back actually because my parents actually stayed in Indonesia. And looking back, I probably would have benefited from some kind of gap year because I didn't know what I wanted to with my life, so that was me. And having something to do, some kind of, I don't know, work experience, some kind of thing to sort of like give me a better idea of what I might want to do before I take on, especially with how expensive university is in the US. Going there with some kind of direction is I think a good idea.

                 And I didn't have that, I just had a general interest in political science that I wanted to study, but I didn't know like what I wanted to do with that, which I think is not unusual, but some kind of thing to sort of... Yeah. So, it was the whole point of going. And then it's... Yeah, in the end, I try to take a lot of personal responsibility for it because I should have been better prepared and I should have said what I wanted or tried to figure it out or decide what my limitations were at the time, so. But yeah.

Interviewer: Good. And then what services and supports would you recommend a college or university provide for TCKs coming back to the United States?

David: Well, obviously counselor support that is aware of how this works, I think is very important. Communicating that to make sure that they have that. And I don't know, at some point during that admissions process, saying like, "Oh, you're an American living abroad. Okay, we know what to do with you." Because I think at the time they didn't and that's not their problem, but they could do better, right? So, what's also would be really nice, and I know this is like a student thing that they should do, but local students organized TCK group things, that will be really nice. I think it's better talked about now, which is great. And I think students are organizing in that regard, so that's good. So yeah, I wish it were around when I was there, but yeah.

                 It would have been nice to, number one, know what kind of situation I was getting into because I didn't know at the time. No one talked about it. And then the other thing being that like having people around who understood it and could welcome you into that sort of group and I think that would be

really nice. So officially, as a service and support like counselor support and then also from other students. Yeah, knowing that you're not quite an international student, you're not quite a local student, you're kind of in the middle, and people who get that would be nice.

Interviewer: Do you have any other suggestions that you would like to get to a college or university on how to best aid or help students who are repatriating TCKs?

David: Quite a lot of it would be just being open-minded and it's a lot easier to do the research now. So, let's just say you're coming in with a degree, I think the IB is pretty widespread now but still. It was funny because the IB is supposed to be internationally applicable, but there's still a lot of schools that don't know it. So, in general, even if you're not familiar with, let's say, another country's education system like being able to say like, "Okay, that's how that works," to better help you transition into what the American university expects of you because I think a lot of Americans, they grow up with knowing that this is going to be how it works or having at least the general idea. But if you don't grow up with that, you have no idea. It's all like a crash course that you are literally crashing in.

Interviewer: Right.

David: So yeah, I think that kind of helped to welcome me... You need a helping hand to guide you through the process. And I think that would be really nice, especially when it comes to the academic system and so on.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you'd like to add that you haven't already discussed?

David: Thinking, thinking, thinking.

Interviewer: It's okay, take your time. You're fine.

David: The race aspect was an interesting one because like there's racism everywhere, but the way it's sort of defined in the US is quite different. And so, it wasn't until I got there that I felt weird about it not because of... It's just an identity thing. So, I met Asian Americans who were adoptees, for example, who grew up as an Asian kid in a white family, for example. And for me, I was just interested. I was like, "Wow, okay. Where were you adopted from? What's that background?" And I've met a few who are, for example, adopted from Korea. And I have Korean friends growing up, so I was like, "Oh, hey, we can talk about that." But they had no experience with that because they're adoptees, they were orphans. And for them, they felt vaguely challenged as if you highlight the Asian part of their background, then they're maybe not really American is the question.

And I felt weird about that because I was like, "What's the problem with being Korean?" Because I have Korean friends, they're fine.

Interviewer: Right.

David: And it was the same... In a lot of ways, I met others. This was the whole fall of the debate at the time. Which was that like, if you're more Asian than you are American, then you're not really American. And that felt weird because I was like, "I grew up in Asia, there's nothing wrong with that." And the association was that if you don't speak as good, that your English is not as good, then that's you not really being American. And I was kind of like, "No, it's not a problem. You're fine as long as we understand each other." But they couldn't figure out where I stood, so they were like, "Are you FOB because you just came from Asia, but then you speak great English and your American passport, so maybe you're not." And I'm like, "I don't know. Don't break your mind thinking about this too much."

Identity is a weird thing in the US as well. Facebook became a thing at the time. And there was a huge debate, both there and also like among friends and so on. And it's like, "Oh, what do you say for... How do you talk about soda drinks?" You know how it is in the US, they had the different regions and stuff. And people were like, "Oh, what do you say?" And I was like, "I didn't grow up here." But I felt like I had to say that I said something, but I didn't realize at the time that you could also just like not have a word for it. You're just like, "Oh, I'd like a Sprite, or I'd like a Coke," or, its carbonated beverages, fizzy drinks, whatever, whatever. And I think I decided fizzy drinks because it sounded vaguely British and that was the thing I was going for at the time.

But one day, we were going to a vending machine, and I was like, "Oh, let's go get some pop." And then one friend turned to me, he's like, "We're winning, you're converting." And then for me, in my brain, that was like a mild horror like, "Oh, no. What's happening to me?" And so actually the accent that I had entering the US, I never quite got it back. And I've had this accent ever since then. I've moved around a lot, but I've never got it back. So, I do still switch. I started to adapt when I'm around more English people, for example. Yeah, like there was a week of my life or whatever like that, where I was like just around a lot of English people and my accent just started coming back and I was like, "Oh, this is kind of nice." But then it would go away after a while again. So, I always tell myself like, "If I could send a year in the UK, maybe..."

Hasn't happened yet. So, yeah. But it's still something like now when I tell people like, "Yeah, I'm American." They go like, "Oh, okay." And I find it easier to be American outside. And I don't mind telling people... I'm in

Poland now. And when people ask me where I'm from, I tell them, "Hey, I'm American." Because they're expecting somewhere in Asia because they just look at me and they say like, "Oh, you're somewhere in Asia." And I told them, "No, I'm American." And they go, "Oh, okay, cool."

So yeah, but it's okay. At this point, I'm more comfortable with who I am. So, it's not a big deal, but yeah. But when I'm in the US, I think my American friends, they point out that my accent lacks regional flare.

HOLLY

Interviewer: Describe your experience as a TCK living in another country.

Holly: Wow, it's so broad. I guess I loved living abroad. I moved to China, for the first time when I was in 3rd grade. I lived there 3rd through 5th grade. I moved back to America 6th through 7th. And then I moved back to China 8th through 11th grade. I came back to America permanently for senior year. Living there, I went to an international school. It had people from all over. My class only had, I think at most, through all of my years there, 10 people. That was a really unique experience because we just were all very close to one another. Sorry. There we go. We're all really close to one another. We all had this mentality, at the international school, make friends as quick as you can because you don't know how long you'll have those friends because people are coming and going all the time, because of business and parents who were there for business or language school and whatnot. I loved being there.

It was very culturally diverse because I had friends from India, a lot of friends from South Korea, I couple friends from America. We're all really close to one another. We used to do stuff all together. A lot of studying. Being in China, there was a lot of pressure academically just to study really hard. School is everything, and that mentality. Especially with the majority of the school being maybe 70% South Korean. So, a lot of those parents pushing for more homework in school. It was very academically challenging, but I really enjoyed it there. I felt like they push you really hard to do well in your studies. Another thing, I lived in Xi'an China. It's a really big city. At the time it was 11 or 12 million. Now there's more, I'm sure. Very big city. I hear it's a lot like New York, but I've never been to New York. Bikes everywhere, people everywhere. Really loud city. Really high pollution.

In America, I live in Michigan now, so we have snow days here. But in China where I lived, we had pollution days where the pollution index was so high, they didn't want us to go outside, or we had to wear masks. That's really common there. The whole masking here is almost not that different from in China, only except people keep them on inside instead of outside. Just trying to think of other things to tell you about living there. I guess traffic is really bad there. You walk a bunch of places. If you don't walk, there's a lot of buses and taxis. I had a moped there at the time. You could ride that wherever you needed to go, which is totally different than here because there's not as many motorcycles.

Which is very different for me because there used to be motorcycle lanes almost designated for just them. They're always looking out for those people so it's safe for motorcycle and bicyclists because everyone is

looking for them. Whereas, you're not really looking, it's a lot more dangerous so I'm not allowed to ride a motorcycle here, according to my mom. It's very different.

Interviewer: What are the highlights or greatest experience living in another country?

Holly: Greatest benefits would probably be being exposed to so many different cultures in the international school and just living abroad in a different culture than the one I was in for my early childhood. I think being exposed to so many different cultures make you a lot more open to new ideas and a lot more flexible, and just overall open minded to other people's beliefs even. Being a TCK, my parents were there as missionaries, and so having my own beliefs but then hearing other people's and why they believe what they believe is also very interesting. And finding out more definitely why I believe what I believe. Because people would not just accept the answer that, "I'm a Christian." They'd be like, "Why are you a Christian? Why do you believe those things?" Making my beliefs more, almost affirmed in my mind, and being able to support those beliefs. Just hearing other people's perspectives and changing my own perspective and being like, "Wow, that's very interesting, why you believe that." Just overall thoughts about science and history and learning about the history of other cultures and how they feel towards other people.

I know a lot of Chinese people are racist towards Japanese, and why that is. Seeing that there, because there was a celebration at one point where they were celebrating the independence when they kicked Japan out of China after they had invaded. They were flipping Japanese made cars, like Toyota and whatnot. We weren't allowed to go outside because it was one of the dangers. Since I, at the time, was learning Chinese, my Chinese wasn't that great. Not being able to speak Chinese looked suspicious. They could think that you were a foreign exchange student from Japan or Korea. Just not wanting to go outside at that timeframe. But seeing that culture and the anger that they had towards other people was very eye opening in how racism and whatnot can extend towards certain people groups different than in America where we see a lot of it towards African Americans. Seeing it just towards another Asian culture was very interesting.

Highlights, definitely my friends. Just sitting, hanging out with them, and learning about their cultures. My best friend, one of them is from India, his name is Alex. Just spending time with him and his family. He was Hindu. Just learning about their culture making lifelong friends I think was probably just the highlight.

Interviewer: What were the main drawbacks or challenges of your experience living in another country?

Holly: Drawbacks or challenges of your experience living... Probably there was a lot of people coming in and out of your life, so you did have to make friends quickly and it was always sad to see them go because sometimes you'd only get to be friends with them for a year before their parents went back to their home country or to another country for business. That was really hard. I think the hardest thing, at the time, was going back and forth between the countries. Because when I came back to America, I went to a school which is also a very small school. The class is of 30 people, which is bigger than I had experienced but a lot smaller than public school. Because of that, and they had grown up with each other, it was a private Christian school. The only reason I was there was because my parents were missionaries and on scholarship almost, but a lot of the families were a lot wealthier. Seeing that, it sounds bad, but almost entitlement and they'd lived there their whole lives. Maybe never left the state even. Seeing very one minded wealthy I guess is how I would put it. Not all of them were snobbish. It was just the atmosphere of convenience, in a way.

But seeing, while we were in China, absolutely poverty in places, just was totally different. I remember going through culture shock in the grocery store because where I lived in China, we had three cereal options. Frosted Flakes, Fruit Loops and Raisin Bran. And then we came to America, and they had a whole aisle dedicated to cereals. I was just in awe of that, thinking that was amazing. But also really overwhelming, just the number of choices and convenience that there is in America. Everything is so quick. Definitely transportation was another shock because there, "I want to go somewhere." Hop on a bus. It was really safe I felt like. My parents felt safe letting me out, go outside at midnight if I wanted to, and not worry necessarily. Whereas here, they're a lot more cautious about it and I can't just hop on a bus wherever I want to go, or taxi. It's a lot less common. A lot of people just have their own cars, and they drive. I remember first coming back thinking, "I can't go anywhere because my mom is busy so she can't drive me." I also did not have my license in America until I turned 18. That was really different because all of my friends in high school, they had gotten theirs when they were 16. Very different because they would drive for lunch at school.

Making friends was really hard coming back to America because most of them had grown up with another at the school that I was in. Just trying to fit in there and figure all that out. I came back I feel like really hard years, 6th and 7th grade, in America, and senior year. Just very odd years to come back. That was really challenging. And the culture is very different. In China, it's very respectful towards adults and elders. In America, they're also respectful, it's just almost a different level and what's expected of you. Like when the teacher says to be quiet, you're quiet in class. Whereas in America, it's a little bit rowdier, I guess. There are different standards of respect, I feel like.

Interviewer: Describe your experience moving back to the United States after living in another country. How was that experience?

Holly: Really hard, I think. When I moved to China the first time, it was really simple because I was really young, thinking it was a graduation adventure. But I remember leaving my friends in 5th grade, coming back to America for the first time since 3rd grade. It being really scary because I was in middle school and not knowing anybody. Sixth grade was actually a really bad year for me because there were only eight girls in the class, and they were grouped four and four. It was really hard to make friends that year. Just felt very lonely and didn't really feel like I fit in so well. Seventh grade came around and I don't know, middle schoolers, one of the girls left and there was room for me, I guess. We all got extremely close. It was interesting in the fact that I didn't expect that. We all became really good friends. We did stuff together, had sleepovers. It was really hard leaving America at that point because I was really nervous that in my mind, 7th grade mind, God was going to stay in America and not come with me to China. It's going to feel alone again and lonely and go through that whole process. I didn't want to leave. The moving back and forth was hard.

Actually, a family friend, he actually came over and was like, "God told me that you're having troubles and that you're nervous." He had this bracelet for me that was engraved that says, "I will always be with you." I hadn't told him obviously, and my parents hadn't told him. It was a profound moment for me because I realized God wasn't going to abandon me. He wasn't going to stay in America, and he'd come with me. It made it a lot better. I was able to go back to China and I actually had a great time there, 8th through 11th grade were really good years for me. Moving back to America was hard mostly because of culture shock. Not being able to go places when I wanted to, feeling like it was a lot less safe. I just always really safe in China wherever I went, or what time of day.

In America, I feel like it's a lot less safe. Being able to read all the signs, that was also weird. I was able to read signs in China but there were few that I'm not really sure what that says, or advertisements. Whereas in America, you could read it. Watching TV, we didn't watch TV in China. We just watched movies through our DVD player or whatnot. Being able to watch TV, that was totally different. Which was weird, being able to flip through channels and watch TV. That was one of the big ones I remember coming back to America, being amazed by that. I know for my little sister, she's only... She lives the majority of her life in China. So, when she came back, she would wake up early and take pictures of the sunrise and sunset because it had always been gray in China where we loved, because the pollution. Just being in awe of the blue sky, not realizing, taking advantage of the fresh air and the fact that the sky is blue here. That was also really different.

Interviewer: What were the major social challenges you faced during repatriation to a higher education environment within your home country?

Holly: I don't know. I'm in my senior year of college right now. Just maybe the lack of, not drive necessarily... That's not really a social challenge. But in China, education is such a big part of everyone's life, that drive, "Do good. Do better. Always be studying. Always work towards that." Coming back to America, it seemed like a lot of people who just skate by or partying. They do that in China too, but I'd never gone to college in China. It's almost like in China, you study super hard in high school. Once you get into college, that's when you can relax a little bit more. In America, I felt like you study hard in high school and then once you get to college, that's when you can relax. Or you party in high school and then you focus on college in America. It was just really different, just the academic culture wise, the view on education. I don't know that that's a social challenge necessarily.

I guess…understanding... Since I came back senior year, it was more the social challenges senior year more. Because by the time I got into college, I was a lot more acclimated. But at the time, understanding pop culture and references and verbiage. My parents were very strict and conservative, so even on top of that, not really understanding what anyone is talking about. I ended up making a list senior of popular sayings, trying to understand what people were saying. Some of the kids thought that was really funny. The terms like on fleek and dab, when that was popular, and things like that.

Interviewer: What were the major psychological and/or personal challenge you faced? Again, since you came back your senior year, you can talk about it during that as well. What were the major psychological and/or personal challenge you faced?

Holly: Probably loneliness and making friends. Because in the environment I was in China, it was making friends and don't be angry long because you don't know how long you have with people. Or if you don't get along with someone, they might be gone in a year. Don't worry about it and let it get in your head and let it upset you almost, because it's going to pass really soon. Don't hold on to those angers because you don't know how long you'll be able to see those people. Coming back to America, in my mind it was like, "We'll make friends pretty quickly." I was fairly social I feel like, except I was really out of my element because a lot of my friends in China, I had also grown up with. Because they would leave and come back and rotating out of our lives. Those people had grown up with each other, so being really lonely because they all knew each other forever, from kindergarten and being friends with them and whatnot.

That was hard, trying to make friends in such a small school too. I think I almost would have done better in public school because it would have been so many people that I'm sure I would have made a friend. But the fact that there were only eight girls, 30 kids who had known each other and had come from very different from mine... I guess I'd say very American- if that makes sense. Just always lived there and never really lived anywhere else. Very, I would almost say, not open to other people's perspective, because they were... going to Christian school, it's very... It's hard to describe. Almost like Christian but that's a good thing. But in the minds of all other things are bad whereas not being open to even things that might be culturally different, thinking it might be bad. That was hard because a lot of people didn't really understand that. And asking me about the culture in China and being way off the mark.

Psychologically, mostly lonely. Maybe seeing my siblings also struggle with that, that was difficult. Not really having a place, when people ask where you're from, that's always the most annoying question because you're from... I have layers on top of it because I'm also adopted from China. I'm Chinese, my ethnicity is Chinese. My citizenship is a US citizen. But I lived in China but I'm also America. It's just a lot to explain. And then I have white parents who are both American. That figuring out identity psychologically is really difficult, figuring out who you are and how you want to explain who you are and what's important to you in your identity characteristic wise and values. It's always really difficult because there are values that you pick up from the culture you live in, and then the values you pick up in America.

Here, even there, it's very nationalistic and your nation and what's important to you. Trying hard, especially now almost, it's very different because you're figuring a lot from COVID. China is really bad, whatever. Just being like, "No, China is an amazing place. You have to understand that it's not all like that." It's difficult because people are feeling very strong feelings towards them. I'm thinking, "Do I... but I'm American, so it's okay. I'm not included in that." Just dealing with that is very different. And sometimes, I know it sounds so weird, but since my parents are white and I grew up in a very white family and being in America for a long time, in American culture. Sometimes they forget I'm not white and that's always really exciting. And then like, "Yeah, you're Chinese." It's just very different, for sure.

Interviewer: Were you adopted from China or were you adopted from the United States and then went over to China?

Holly: I was adopted from China and then my parents brought me back. I was adopted when I was one and then I was brought to America. I lived there until the end of 2nd grade, and we moved to China, 3rd grade. I think we

went back when I was one year old. I don't obviously remember. We lived there for six months and then we visited a little bit. Adopted from China. I also have four sisters who are also adopted from China, but we're all adopted from different places in China. That was always really unique, trying to explain that to the Chinese people but also to Americans, because they're... I don't know. Unique experience, I guess.

Interviewer: Absolutely. That's really neat though. Were there any other challenges you faced during the repatriation process to high school or to college?

Holly: Education was hard because the way they do it in America and the way they did it at the international school was really different. Trying to figure out what classes I still needed to take was really difficult because I was ahead in some, but I was behind in others because I hadn't had to take those in my school. I was in a whole bunch of weird classes. I ended up taking a lot of after classes just because at the international school, it's so much harder than high school in America that I didn't really... I love school, I love learning. That's really important to me. I took a bunch of extra things because I wanted to feel challenged, and I didn't feel that necessarily while I was here in America for senior year that was challenging also socially because a lot of people thought that was really weird and odd. Because I took two math classes, two English classes, a couple science classes ... something like that. That was hard, getting the transcripts the figure all that out was kind of weird.

Church is different in America. It's big. It has several thousand people. Which I don't mind. But it's definitely different than how church was in China because in China obviously it's supposedly legal to have church but where we were, it's like, "Oh, you're a foreigner. As long as you don't share your religion, it's fine. You could practice amongst you foreigners." Because it was a whole group of missionaries there where I lived because they had to go through language school there and then they would go where they wanted to go. We had the large group of missionaries from America and whatnot. We would have church and... but even then, there was probably only 30 or 40, maybe 50 of us. Even so, everyone knew everyone, and everyone was Aunt or Uncle something. Aunt Jane Anne, Aunt Emily and whatever. That's how everyone addressed one another. Whereas in America, I don't even know probably 20 people at the church I go to. It's super big. That's probably on me also because I'm just not as evolved. It's a lot less family style almost. That was different.

Interviewer: Did you have a reentry seminar, by any chance?

Holly: Yes. I don't remember it very well. I kind of remember it. I still work in the reentry seminar for people coming back with little kids and whatnot, at the summer camp. They're not doing one this summer because of COVID,

but I worked the last year's one and then I worked the year before that. That was really exciting. Not only reentry but also helping some of the kids, the first part of the program is helping kids who are going over for maybe their first time or second time. That was really exciting.

Interviewer: What do you think are the major benefits or things that, the topics that are most beneficial to go over during reentry seminars?

Holly: Probably loneliness. I know that a big one that a lot of people face, because of the feeling of not fitting in or not knowing where home is, or identity even because of the cultural differences that you're facing there versus here. Definitely topics on not feeling like you're... even if you feel alone, you're not alone. There are people around you who support you. There are options if you do feel lonely. Putting yourself out there, getting to know people, getting involved, not letting yourself stay lonely. If you do feel lonely, reach out, talk to people who might have similar experiences. I know at the TCK program that my family/church is a part of, they do a lot of video meetings and, "How is it going for you guys?" Checking in letting them know that they're there if you need them. I think counseling is a big one for a lot of people because just having someone to talk to and bounce ideas off of and this, "This is what I'm facing here."

Not a lot of people understand what that's like. That shouldn't be stigmatized almost, that should be normal and okay and totally not an indicator that your mental health is bad. Just that you want to be able to talk to someone about those things. Because a lot of people don't understand, and your experience is different than your parents so sometimes that hard to talk to them even about. Making those resources available but talking about it. And loneliness. Also, identity in that it's important that you can figure out who you are and what that means to you and that your identity doesn't have to solely be TCK either. Sometimes I feel like in the program that we were in, they make it almost sound like, "Because you're a TCK, you are unique and amazing and special." Some people go in with that mindset and it sets them up for failure in a way because they think, "I'm a lot better than you because I've lived abroad." Whereas it's just a different experience.

Recognizing that it's an amazing experience and unique and makes you who you are, but also not turning it into almost something that makes you feel separate from others. Being able to incorporate it to your identity but also not making your sole identity being a TCK. Because I've seen a lot of people do that and only stay with TCKs. That's why there's a lot of TCKs... I guess I'd call them TCK colleges, where the majority of missionary kids go because that's where everyone goes… there's a lot of missionary kids there. It's funny how they even stay in their groups there and make friends with one another. So, making friends with other people.

Interviewer: What services or support did your higher education institute provide for you during your repatriation process?

Holly: I feel like it wasn't so much that they were helping me because of... maybe it was, getting back into America. More just in general. I definitely did do counseling not because... I don't know, just overall trying to figure out school and college. I felt like that helped a lot because even just other issues from the past and with family and being able to talk about those things definitely helps. I did several semesters of that because I'm like it's free and I'm paying for it anyways in college, that I should do it. The first semester, I think the first two semesters, I had an intern. It was more just bouncing ideas off them, talking to get that out of my chest. The third semester, I actually had the head of the counseling department, and I wanted to talk about, now what? Solutions and if I had this problem, what should I be doing to fix them? Actually, wanting to move forward and not just tell you about my problems. That was really helpful. Coming up with, "If you feel this way, do this. Or you shouldn't feel that way and why are you feeling that way and whatnot," and actually solving some of those, I feel like.

That really helps me because the figuring out, like why am I less social now than what I was when I was younger? Is that why I have less friends? Is it more important to have more friends to me? Stuff like that. That was a big part of coming back to America, making friends and whatnot because I had been so close to people in China. I still have a hard time with that just because I feel like a lot of... I like to have more deeper friendships. I guess most people do, but it's more important, for me, fewer, deeper friendships than a lot of friendships. I feel like a lot of people here have very many friendships but they're not very close necessarily. That helped a lot, counseling. Other things that help? I had some amazing professors in the school that I was at before I transferred.

I like the school I'm at right now. It is a small Christian school. I just loved the teachers that I had because they integrated a lot of the concepts that I had in China being that if you're a Christian, this is what you might believe. But there's all these other perspectives out there. I really enjoyed hearing that from some of my professors. You don't have to just believe it because that's what everyone else believes. Why do you believe that? Just to hear some of the other perspectives. That helped a lot because for so much of my senior year, it was Christian, Christian almost. It was nice in university to see more diverse thought and you're about to go out into world, you need to be aware of these different perspectives and open to those. Coming back to that open-mindedness. I really liked that and that helped me learn better and acclimate to college.

Interviewer: What were the most beneficial tools you discovered to help you overcome repatriation challenges?

Holly: I would say time and getting used to the environment here. There's no shortcut around culture shock and whatnot, and loneliness. I just have to give it time and make those friends and connections. Putting yourself out there, for sure. Like youth groups if you go to church or getting involved in clubs and volunteering. The more you stick your fingers in different things in that culture, the more you'll get used to it almost and be more open to it and accepting. That helps you integrate better because you'll understand them better and feel like more of a part of it the more you are involved. That can be really hard because I feel like sometimes when you get back, you don't really want to, and you feel like you don't fit in. Being a part of something makes you feel like you fit. It gives you a sense of belonging almost. I guess joining clubs and volunteering definitely is the most beneficial and making friendships for sure. I ended up getting into a relationship. We've been together for four years now. That definitely helped as well because just feeling a sense of belonging and closeness. Not that everyone should get into a relationship or anything. But building relationships in general and being close to other people and learning more about them and feeling that sense of closeness.

Interviewer: Excellent. Describe your college or university's role in your repatriation process. What part did they play?

Holly: Probably not a huge role just because I did come back senior year. I guess as far as the counseling goes, that was a big part of acclimating back to America. In that way, that was their biggest role I would say, is just getting used to it and whatnot.

Interviewer: What services and supports would you recommend the college or university should provide for TCKs who are coming back to United States?

Holly: Probably, it would be cool to have a club or just... I go back and forth because it's exciting to have, know that there are other people who are also dealing with that, and making them feel comfortable by offering a club. Like, "Wow, you're part of that too." Feeling a different sense of belonging. But I think there's a danger in that only because, like I said, I have friends who only stay within that group, and they don't branch out. Offering activities within that environment but also branching out and having things not just TCKs. Like, "Let's invite a bunch of people..." maybe having activities open, letting them know what opportunities are open in other groups. "Here's a pamphlet for these clubs that you should join. You guys can get involved in this." and whatnot. Making them aware if different things that they could be involved in. Instead of just having

club for them, but more opportunities for them to get involved in the world that they're in. Definitely counseling, because I think that helps a lot, just being able to talk to someone with what you're dealing or facing. Because I have a lot of friends who have a hard time with that and the loneliness. One on one talking or with friends, and so that group could also do like, "What are you facing?" But also making sure they're getting plugged back into other systems.

Interviewer: What other suggestions would you like to give to a college or university on how to best aid and helping students who are repatriating TCKs?

Holly: Just thinking what my friends... because I have friends who came directly from the countries that they were in, which I think is a lot harder than being in America and then going to college. My sister, Anna, she came from China and then went to college. One thing they do offer as far... but it's not my college, it's more of a church/people we're associated with. They do a, it's called Thanksgiving Retreat. That's where all the MKs who's families are still in China could get together and be together on Thanksgiving. Maybe having stuff like that because it is really lonely if you don't have any family in America or somewhere to go or whatnot. So, offering somewhere for them to be during those holidays is really important. I don't find it helpful, but I know some of my friends, having holidays or events recognized in their culture, or having a club that celebrates those are really important to them. Making sure that those, not necessarily you get them off for an actual holiday. But like, "This is the holiday that's occurring today and what it is."

So, people can also be learning about your culture and not just America culture. Being open to talking about different cultures and making people aware of different things that are going on in the world. Not just so focused basically on what's happening in America. Maybe whether it be in their newspapers or in their classes or just in general, however else they would announce things, making them aware that... Even traumatic world events, "This is what's happening in India. This just happened and it's very serious." Not that it should all be bad things but even good things. Or like, "Today is a holiday in China. This is what it is, and this is how they celebrate." Just something very generic but making people aware that they're trying to educate people on different cultures and whatnot. I think that would be helpful.

Interviewer: Excellent. The last question is, what else would you like to add that we have not already discussed?

Holly: I feel like we've talked about most things. I feel like I covered most of it. Just thinking... Just culture is just totally different there. They're very superstitious. I'm sure they are in Malaysia too. A lot of Asian cultures are

very superstitious and have very interesting practices. Even things that people wouldn't think of. Like don't stick your chopsticks in your rice straight up because it looks like incense, and you'll offend the cook and whatnot. Taking your shoes off, that's a big one in America that it always bothers me so much when people don't take their shoes off in the house. That's one that I really like about China, is that everyone takes their shoes off at the door, puts on slippers or just socks or whatnot. It always makes me laugh when I see people walk around their houses with their shoes on. I'm like, "You have to clean all the time then or..." Nothing major.

Appendix I

Focus Group Interview Transcript

Interviewer:	What was the process of repatriation like for you?
Naomi:	I can go first. I guess my situation's a little bit different just because I only repatriated, I guess, for three years of my life. But yeah, so when I did move back to the US, one of my passport countries, there was a lot of reverse culture shock for me because I had grown up entirely outside of the US my whole life. So, I feel like... I moved to go to school in Iowa. People did not understand why I sounded American but did not understand any of their pop-cultural references or you don't have watched the same movies that they grew up watching because the accent is so deceiving in a way. Because I'm Panamanian American, Irish, and Mexican. So, people were like, "Where are you actually from?" And I'm like, "That's another whole conversation, identity, where you're from."
	So yeah, I think the biggest shock for me was just the reverse culture shock and just that people really labeled me as a foreigner because I spoke different languages, I had lived just come from Colombia and South America. And they're like, "Oh, but isn't there cocaine and drugs. And they're very unsafe." I'm like, "Yeah, like a couple of decades ago. Sure. But it's gotten along better." So, for me, it was just that feeling. What's the word? Feeling like I didn't fit in. Because usually, moving around so much growing up, you found your niche of people because everyone else had moved into some other country, and they're like, "Oh, cool. I also lived there." Or you had some commonality. Right? Even if it's just having moved around. Moving to the US was just... Yeah, people just didn't get the upbringing of a TCK, so that was really hard.
Laurie:	I think I had a pretty similar experience in the sense that I moved from Mexico City to a small town in Eastern Washington. And I only... Repatriation is a little weird for me because US is not my passport country, but it is where I currently lived the most out of my passport country. My passport country is Japan, which I've never lived there yet. But even then, going back to the US was still a reverse culture shock because... I mean, I lived in the US when I was four till fifth grade. Yeah, so my perception of the US was very young. And so going back there as a college student was a little off and it was like seeing everything for the first time.
	And my biggest shock was during orientation week where people are saying, "This is such a diverse campus." And coming from Mexico City, I was thinking, "What do you mean by diverse?" Right?

Naomi: Please define.

Laurie: "It's 80 to 90% Caucasian on this campus. What are you talking about?"
              And so, just from that, I just realized that "Wow, there's a different
              perspective to even diversity in itself." And I just remember the first week
              saying, "Oh my gosh. This is a completely different world." But it didn't
              scare me away. And I think because of technology even back then, I was
              able to feel that belonging through instant messaging, through my high
              school colleagues that pretty much did the same to go to American
              colleges. And so, in that way, I got to experience my belonging with my
              fellow experiencers. So, I mean, if all of TCK is I think that we're going
              through the same thing at the same time, just not at my campus, so to
              speak.

Interviewer: Very good. Thank you.

Mike: For me, I spent most of my life growing up in the Philippines. Although
              both my parents are American, I was born in the US. And I think for me,
              the biggest challenge was I had an identity crisis. I always thought of
              myself as an American, at least in the Philippines. But when I got back to
              the US, I realized I'm culturally not. And it was a bit of a shock. And
              unfortunately, I'm probably the oldest one in this group. That was back in
              1982. So, there wasn't...

Naomi: I wasn't born yet.

Mike: Okay, fair enough.

Laurie: Yeah, me neither.

Mike: Yeah. So, the bad news is that there wasn't a lot of preparation back in
              those days if any. And there was no orientation that I was aware of back in
              the US. The good news is, today there's pre-departure orientation and post-
              arrival, or pre-depart preparation, and then post-arrival orientation options
              if you want to take advantage of them. So anyways, identity, where are
              you from? That's a tough question.

Naomi: Mm-mm (negative). Don't say it.

Mike: Don't say it. Right. Yeah. People get all, "I'm from the Philippines."

              "Oh, you're Filipino."

              "No."

              "Oh, okay. Fine. Whatever."

I think a lack of... No one warned me that going to the US will be a cross-cultural experience. Okay. I just didn't expect that. And it was like, "Whoa, okay. This is very different from what I'm used to with other MKs largely from the US but also other countries as well." The other issue is dealing with grief and loss. No real preparation for that. No real help dealing with that. And that was sad because when you're really angry because you're hurting, because you're grieving, and you lash out at people that doesn't help. That can destroy relationships. I wish someone would have warned me about that. So, it was challenging for sure.

Interviewer: Excellent.

Naomi: Yeah. So, we're kind of on the second question, can we go into the second question because Matt kind of touched...

Interviewer: Absolutely. Yeah, major challenges. Go for it.

Naomi: Yeah, so Matt already touched on some. But yeah, I think going off of what he was saying, and identity for me... So, my mom is Mexican Panamanian but was born in the US, so she has US Citizenship as well. My dad's Irish American. And my dad was working for USAID for about 33 years. And so, we were born in DC, and then ever since at five weeks old, we moved to West Africa. Then we were in South America for about eight years and then Asia for about 10 years.

And so, there's really no consistency throughout my life. It's like, "Oh, where did you grow up?" I've never lived anywhere for more than four years. And at this point, I'm 29. I've lived in 15 countries. There's this constant like, "I don't know anything but to move." And luckily my partner is a TCK, so he's like, "We should like make a base somewhere." I'm like, "What does that mean?"

But in terms of moving back to the US, it was interesting because I really feel like a diplomat living overseas. My dad worked for USAID because he was representing the US. Right? I never felt that strong sense of American pride because I had all these other nationalities and my mom being from Latin America, whatever. So, I felt it, like a fraud in a way. Because I was like, "Yes, I'm a US diplomat. And I'm benefiting from US government paying for my international schooling and all of these things that I'm living the great life with maids and drivers and everything outside of the US. And when you go to the US it will be like, "Yeah, we're not having a maid. We're not having a driver."

That's real. Right? I mean, the first time I ever mentioned to a friend of mine who... This was months after we actually became friends. I was like,

"Oh yeah, you know, my maid in Colombia." And they're like, "You had a maid?" There's judgment of like, "Oh my God. You guys are so rich."

I'm like, "It's not about that." Like, "Yes, we obviously are very privileged as TCKs having grown up and lived there, like in so many places. But the culture of having house help or having a driver is very common in many low, middle-income countries. And so that... Having to really, I guess, dumb down my experience for people in the US was a little bit... I didn't feel I could be myself fully.

And so, I had met a sweet, sweet girl in the university, and she was like, "I had never seen a Black person until I was 18." I'm like... I don't even know how to react. Right. I was born to Ivory Coast at five weeks old. You just get thrown in it when you're a TCK sometimes. So yeah, I think that lack of identity. Because you're like, "Where do I really fit in," in American culture. The accent gives it away, I guess. But then they assume. All these assumptions come with having an American accent.

And then also I think, like Matt was saying, for me, unresolved grief, that is a hundred percent something that I've struggled with. Because it wasn't until maybe about three years ago that I really did not know what I was doing with my life in the sense that I was in the US. I was trying to find a job. I didn't feel like I fit in into the US. And then I ended up moving to London. But the unresolved grief, because after moving so much, you just like throw it under the rug. Right? You're just like, "Let's just shove it under the rug," and just be like, "Okay." This is what it is. Right?

You're moving. You're going to lose all your friends. You're going to make new ones. Right? And we're great at making friends at TCK. I would generalize. We can argue with that. But in general, I feel TC Kids are easy to reach out to, we're open, we have deep conversations. But the unresolved grief, I think, is something that really should be emphasized. Right? That's like, "It's okay to feel the feelings of loss." You're losing everything you've known for the last however many years or months or whatever, and then you have to start again. So that gets really hard. And so, I think those are probably my biggest challenges in terms of identity and grief.

Interviewer: Excellent. Thank you.

Laurie: I'm in a lot of the same things. I would say, though, for me, identity-wise, the biggest thing was race. So, I never recognized race, I think, probably mostly because of privilege. But in Mexico City, I went to a private school. A lot of my friends were diplomats or Americans that again, we're there to station in Mexico or they were related to the American Embassy. And so, this idea of, I never had to compartmentalize who I was until I got

to the States and people looked at me, I look very Asian. And they go, "So are you from Asia?" I'm like, "No." And then they're like, "So where are you from?" Again, that question. But then, I always said Mexico City because that was literally the country that I had just come from.

And they go, "Why are you in Mexico City?" They completely didn't understand. And I still was like, "What is this?" I'd wondered why I couldn't grasp it. And it wasn't until I met the Mexican girl or Mexican club or the Chicano Latino Center on campus. And I was like, "Oh, I think I found my home here." But then I realized, the Chicano Latino Centers in the US primarily has an activist feeling to them. And it's not very cultural thing. Well, it is a cultural, but it's more like holding onto the roots kind of thing. And to me, I didn't fit that. I love Mexican culture, but would I stand up for it, and rah-rah with the history? Not so much.

So, then I was like, "Okay. Well, this center doesn't really fit me." And so, I was trying to look for all these, and then what I realized is at least in the US culture, on campuses back then, they only have centers for certain races. Right? The Asian and Pacific Islanders Center and I also went there because I was like, "I'm Asian." Right? I'd go there. But then I'm like, "No, I don't fit here either." I went to every single cultural center, so Africans, American Center. And then I realized that I don't fit any of those places. Right? If you look at me physically, I don't fit into the AAPI. Language-wise, I went to the Chicano Latino Center. I do not fit there either. And so, what I realize is I don't fit anywhere.

And this idea of, all my life speaking English was a status, but now in the US, excuse me. In the US, I speak English, but I also speak other languages, and that in itself makes me not fit in the group. Right? English was not the common language anymore. And in that sense, I was like, "Oh my gosh. What do I do?" So that was a huge challenge for me. And then, yes, this idea of grief. Right? I feel like I'm currently trying to dissolve my griefs through therapy. And I'm in my late 30s. But I mean, the same thing. For this time around, I had to quit my job for toxicity in the job. And I just lost myself. I'm just like, "Whoa. What is this?" And then, as I'm talking to my coach, it turns out it's all these moving that we had to do.

And it was all the things that we shrugged off. Right? It was all coming up. And it was just like, I didn't have a mechanism to treat this and understand how to process grief. Like, "What is grief?" Right? We started there and we just... Again, it was just really reliving my childhood, and it's been helpful. But I would have really loved it even if it was my parents or even at school, somebody would have told us. You could have started this when I was living in Brazil at age four. Right? Just younger is probably way better than later on in life. And so, I definitely agree with the

unresolved grief. So just letting us know about it, and maybe one or two tips that we could do to handle it.

Naomi: Yeah. Sorry. Touching on the languages really quickly that you were talking about. I think that was a pretty big challenge as well for me because when I told people that I'm Panamanian, right, or that I'm Mexican, whatever. Right? People would be like, "Your English is so good. How is your English so good?" And I'm like, "How..." That is just so inappropriate to say to someone. But at the same time, and this is fascinating, right, because when I was doing my master's in London, I met a girl. And when I started talking to her, she sounded fully American. And I was like, "Oh, okay. Cool. She's from the US." And then I actually find out that she is fully Colombian, but she's on asylum because of what was happening in Colombia.

In like the early 2000s, her uncle had been kidnapped and they moved to the US. So, she was a refugee in the US. And so, she had lived about half of her life in Colombia and then have of her life in the US. The point I'm trying to make is that I made the assumption of her being American because of her accent. So, I can't... When you meet me and I speak in English, you would assume that I'm American because my accent. Right? You wouldn't think, "Oh, maybe she's Latina or maybe not." Because my name is very American sounding. People will be like... Unless I add my mom's last name, which I have been doing more for identity purposes, but that's another conversation. Yeah, people make assumptions because based on your accent.

But then when I start speaking there in Spanish, I'm like, "Oh my God. This is probably how people assume what I am when they talked to me." Right? If I speak to someone in Spanish, they'll be like, "Oh, she's Latina, a hundred percent." No questions asked. But then, I get English, also. So yeah, I met someone a few weeks back in Panama when I was there, and they're like, "Oh, where are you from?" I'm like, "Oh, I'm Panamanian." They're like, "But how is your English so good?" I'm like, "You're from Texas. I should have asked you how your English is so good." Right?

Like, "I'm sorry." I do find it interesting like some comments that you get like... Yeah, when I moved to the US, people were like, "Oh, how do you speak French? I don't get it, but you're not French." I'm like, "My mom's an interpreter. She speaks several languages. We lived in West Africa." There are all these things that you need to just explain to people consistently. Yeah, it gets frustrating when you just have to keep defending yourself. And I thought that that was a constant struggle for the first, probably year that I had moved back to the US.

Mike: I think I covered the main ones earlier, so yeah.

Interviewer:	Perfect. Okay. So, the next two questions are similar. It's just the difference between preparedness and the effectiveness of higher education thing. So, what are your perceptions of the preparedness of higher education institutions to provide supports and services for repatriating TCKs?
Mike:	Okay. There's some good news in this realm. Both of my kids are also MKs who went back to the US for college. And both of these Christian colleges have recognized that if they want their TCKs and their international students to do well, they need to start a pre-orientation program before all the freshmen show up.
	And so, in both of their cases, my kids went to this week-long pre-orientation program for MKs and international students at both of these different colleges. And in my opinion, that was wonderful. I wish my college had done something similar for the MKs and the international students that went there. That would have been so helpful. So at least some Christian colleges, I'm not sure about the state universities and stuff, are actually recognizing, that if they want their international and MK students to do well, they've got to step up and provide additional orientation. And some of them are doing a very good job of it. So, I was very encouraged.
Naomi:	That's amazing. I have heard nothing of the sort at the university I was at, but I also haven't been there in 10 years. So, I can't really, or eight years, whatever. No, that's... I think, especially for... I mean, because I went to a state university, I think because they're such big schools... I don't know, things like... I think where we need to start is really recognizing what TCKs or MKs, like who we are. Right? Because I feel like... Especially big state university, they're not going to know what a TCK is. I really didn't come to the identity till I was around 21. So, it was like a couple of years into university where I found the TCK book, growing up in one world and I'm like, "This is everything to me." Right?
	Because it's like, I feel now, someone actually... They've given us a term, at least. The rootlessness, the grief, the loss, all of that, it's all explained to us. So, I feel like, yeah. I mean, I think it's definitely a long way to go with big state universities. But I also... Like I said, because I haven't been there for a while now, I mean, I could only hope that... Because I do remember there was always international student orientation. But that's very different. It's like when you've grown up your whole life in China or in Korea or in Japan and then you come to the US that's like, you're not a TCK. Right? You're just an international student and moving to the US. Whereas for TCKs, I have heard nothing of a story at least where I went to university. So, I think that there's hope.

Laurie: Yeah. So, I've been... I mean, my prior career was in the higher education in the US, and I worked in all sorts of sectors, but I didn't not meet anyone that worked in the administration level that knew the term TCK yet. And again, that's not to say it's the whole entire US because I only went to four schools and worked at four schools. But just with my experience, I felt like, "Wow. The term needs to be at least known." Right? And when it comes to orientation, I think, again, I have a lot of issues with the higher ed because I was in it. But without going too deep into the bureaucracy of things, my issue currently has to do with the idea that the system separating students, domestic students, or international students, and like Naomi said, "We don't fit in any of those groups."

Where I went to college, so I... Weird story is I had a US... Well, my parents paid US taxes because we had a house here. And so, I petitioned that I was a domestic student or in-state student as opposed to out of state, but I was applying from Mexico City, so it was weird because I was an international student by physicality, but tax-wise I was an in-state. So, I was a domestic student. And so, people were like, "So which one are you?" And I'm like, "Well, I'm both." And they couldn't grasp that idea.

And so, I went through the domestic orientation and not the international orientation. But then later on, I worked with international programs a lot. And I realized, "Oh, there is a pre-orientation." Right? And that's cool. But then as I was peer mentoring and all that, I was like, "But this wouldn't have allowed me to reenter US college." It wasn't the same. It was international students have a different need.

And, weirdly enough, I did my dissertation about TCKs and that's when I first probably introduced the term TCK to that campus. So, I'm hoping there is something with that, but if not, just the idea of getting maybe even the term TCK, but just yet. The idea that there are people repatriating that may not fit every single category that you guys are still thinking of. Right? And that need is still there because I've met so many TCKs in the four schools that I've been to, and they've had the same issue. And they came to me as their advisor. And they were just like, "What do I do?" And then I always said, "Read this book first." Right?

Mike: Yeah.

Laurie: And then come to me if you want further suggestions or advice. And I was like, "And there's all these organizations just could be a part of." And so, I feel like I've been a connector to the mini TCKs that are around campus. But of course, they won't know that until, again, they meet another TCK. Right? So, I think just that resource of letting people on campus know that, "Hey, we have a person that knows about TCKs, right, and here." And then spread that around because I think you don't know what you

don't know. Right? And a lot of administrators, unfortunately, that I've met do not know of our existence yet. So, I know there are really strong TCK supporters in the US higher education gives me hope. And I wish all schools, not just rich, big schools, but even community colleges to really grasp on this because it is important that all students can integrate into their school systems, not just TCKs or international students.

Interviewer: So, it feeds into like... I mean, we talked a little bit about both, but the effectiveness of higher education institutions, what is your perception on that? How effective were your services and supports that you were offered?

Naomi: I mean, I'll just start very quickly, because there's really not much to add but I was offered nothing. So, I was left to fend for myself. And I think for me, it translated into... It took probably a good six months for me to meet people that I could actually trust and have a genuine... I don't know, non-superficial conversation, you know. Because a lot of times people are like, "How are you doing?" And they don't actually care. When I ask someone how they're doing, I want to know. And that's not something that is common in US culture, which is something that I... As a Latina, every time I messaged someone in Spanish and be like, " [foreign language]." Like, "[foreign language]." They're like, "How are you doing?"

And they're like, "Oh, I'm kind of feeling sick." They go on, and then you get to the point. Whereas in the US you're like, "Yeah. Can you get this done for me?" And I'm like, "Oh, okay. It's nice to see you too." It's nice to say hello. Right? So culturally, there were things that I had to learn about like US culture which is fine. But it definitely took a few months to find... And I'm the kind of person that I'd rather have two amazing trustworthy friends than 60 acquaintances. Right?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Naomi: So, for me, because I wasn't offered any kind of... I did the same as what you did Laurie, in terms of just like I went to the Latino Clubs to see if... Well, in the US they have this whole thing like Latin X which I... It's a questionable thing in my opinion because in Latin America that's not a thing. But yeah, so I went to Latino community or different clubs or trying to find where I could fit in. But then I also realized something that within the Latino culture in the US, I cannot assume that because you're Latino/Latina that you speak Spanish.

And that is the assumption that I made incorrectly. Because every time I met someone with like a Latino sounding name where they look Latino. That, " [foreign language]," you know, whatever. And like, "Oh, I'm actually learning Spanish," or like, "I don't speak Spanish." And I'm like,

"Wow, what a culture shock?" You know like coming from Latin America, I'd never met a Latino or Latina that would not speak Spanish. Right? And for me, and this is a huge part of my identity that because I am half Latina, I would feel like a complete fraud if I did not speak Spanish.

So, for me, yeah. Trying to find where I fit in was kind of like I would love to my own devices. And it took a while. But I did make some really good friends. My first... My roommate in university, she came from a 700-person town in Elma, Iowa. And I was like, "We have nothing in common." Like, "Wait. What is this?" Right? And I came from [Bogota] which is like 8 million people. We became best friends. Her mom was from Papua New Guinea. Her dad was American. And they met in the Peace Corps, actually. "My dad is in the Peace Corps."

"I did too." And I'm like, "This is amazing." And we became best friends. So just the little things. Right? But once you get to know them. You're not going to know this in the first conversation. But it did take a while to acclimate to just yeah, finding my people, I guess. So, yeah.

Laurie: I mean, for me too. I was provided nothing in that sense. But I had really... So, I joined this group called Global Perspectives that essentially was catered to people that studied abroad but came back, and now did not find a place that they belong to because none of their other friends studied abroad. And so, they couldn't share that experience of studying abroad. And so, I sneaked myself in that group. But then, we realized that, because me and a couple of other TCKs, they were like, "Oh, so where do we belong on this campus?" And through that weekly club meeting, we actually formed another center for our campus called the International Center. Where again, it was just a home for anybody else that had the intercultural interests that could come in.

It wasn't a racial center. It was just an inter center. But then, the great thing about our center, as one of the founders of that center, I guess, is we even built a student government role under that. So, the International Center now has a representative that is under the student government of that campus. So, it's like, "We're all united in this." It's the same thing again, we're trying to welcome students into our campus, not just our center. And so, I feel like that process really helped me in the sense of again, meeting or creating a group for me, and then also feeling belonging. But that I can create something from scratch. Right? And then, I think that skill was really important to me to learn because I feel like I've learned that through my childhood, but then to put it on a campus was really important to me because I didn't want another TCK to come on this campus and be like, "Where do I belong?"

So at least I think... It was great that I was able to make that foundation for another person on that campus. And I'm really hoping that other students know that they have that capacity as well. Right? And that's been my professional work in the sense of giving students the power and voice on campuses. They could do anything if they wanted to, because higher ed, I mean, just thinking about it business-wise, it wouldn't exist without students. So again, as students, they have so much power and I think a lot of students don't realize that or don't recognize that. So that had been my mission for a long time. And so, yeah, I think we have a long way to go, but I'm hopeful again that even with technology that resources available to students of all people are increasingly getting better.

Naomi: So just to piggyback off of just what you said, Laurie. In terms of the student organizations and stuff. I actually did create my own organization as well with a couple other friends. And I think that... Yeah, looking back now, I don't think I hadn't identified as a TCK yet. I was in the process of that journey. And so, I think selfishly, it was like, perfect. I can go volunteer internationally. I led it. I was a co-founder of the organization, and we went to Lima, Peru for a month or two. We went to Machu Picchu, and I was the only Spanish speaker. So, I was like, you know, I took everyone around. I was an interpreter.

But then, yeah, thinking back now, it's really, I think it was my way of trying to find a purpose for myself within the bigger universities since they didn't have international volunteer organization before and I was like, "What's like that?" You know volunteer opportunities within Iowa or in the US and stuff. And then, yeah. I mean to this day. Yeah, I think every year they go to different countries, which is really cool. But I think that was my selfish way of being like, "Cool. Let me leave a little mark of my desires to want to go internationally but then also expose other people." Because it was only about 15 of us that went to Lima, but I think maybe 10 of them had never left the US. And that to me was like special. Right? Because I was able to help them out. Having a Spanish speaker basically take them around and is great. You don't have to hire an interpreter. So yeah, it is interesting looking back now in university. Yeah, what helped us feel like we fit in?

Mike: Yeah. I think and ideally, it'd be great to get universities and higher education institutions to recognize the need for TCK orientation and groups to be a part of... That would be wonderful. One organization that I'm aware of among Christian colleges, I'm not sure if it's made the leap to secular colleges is called Mu Kappa. And it's the Greek letters for MK. And what they did was they decided that as students, the upperclassmen TCKs would deliberately find out who the freshmen MKs were and would go out of their way to mentor them.

Naomi: Wow.

Mike: And you know, how come get a driver's license, whatever. Right?

Laurie: Right.

Mike: Okay. And I think that organization has helped a lot of MKs and TCKs. But you had to be at a school that had that. This started in Taylor University. I think, in the early '90s. And then it spread to other Christian colleges. Once again, I'm not sure if it's gone to the state colleges yet. Anyways, so that was a student-led kind of thing. That was very helpful for a lot of different people. But I really liked the idea of educating administration about TCKs and seeing if they're willing to provide some resources and some structures that would be really helpful.

Naomi: That's really amazing. And I think also because TCK is like... I have friends who don't even know that they're TCKs yet. Actually, I had a conversation with my father who is the [OG] of TCK. He was born in Cairo and has lived internationally. He lived in 25, 30 different countries. I actually told my dad that he's a TCK. I'm like, "This is an amazing conversation to have." Because I think... I mean, just growing up internationally. Right? And my dad had only known that himself as well. And so, I think for him it was never like anything different than what he grew up, like how he grew up. Right? So, the thing is that at one point I think there was a feeling of resentment of like, "Why didn't you guys like help us? Like with every transition and whatever."

But it's a generational thing as well. My dad, when he found out he was TCK, like what, like when he was 71 years old. Right? It was from his 28-year-old daughter at the time. Right? So, I was like, "This is pretty incredible to have that conversation." But then I think, yeah, with universities, you don't know what a TCK is, a lot of TCK themselves will not know, especially going into university that they are ECKs. Right?

Laurie: Right.

Naomi: So, for me, if I was in that journey of discovering what a TCK was and what my identity was in the process of going to university and moving to the US, so I think, yeah. I mean, if there were organizations set in place or some kind of mentoring program like you said Matt, that would be... I feel it would also help a lot of TCKs or people who repatriated to the US to even find out maybe for the first time that they are even TCKs.

It's just interesting hearing about people's journey and to like how old they were. My partner is a TCK. He found out when he was living in Dhaka when... I think in fourth grade, they're like, "By the way, you guys are all

TC kids." And when you were in fourth grade, you're like, "I don't know what that means." You know, would you know what it's like. He grew into the identity in the teenage years. I found out when I was like 20, 21. Right? So, it's interesting in what state of people's lives they find out and can identify the TCK so it's fascinating to me.

Interviewer: It sounds like your dad was a little late in the game.

Naomi: Yeah. At least he knows now.

Laurie: That's good.

Interviewer: So, what are your perceptions of the way a TCK upbringing has affected you? It could be like how it affected your job, your travel, anything. How is the TCK upbringing affected you today?

Naomi: I'll stop talking for a second. So please go ahead.

Laurie: I think weirdly enough, I think it went through a hybrid professional identity course a couple of weeks ago. And it really, in my mission statement, or at least like the elevator pitch, this idea of helping people being seen and heard is very true to me. And I think because I didn't get that growing up. It's what I stand for right now. Because I don't want people to go through that, and the grief part too. And so, I think for me, inclusivity is huge. And I think that was because I grew up as a TCK. That's the factor there, right? And I'm a lot more willing to be like, "Okay." But if we're in a meeting, like really point out, "Okay. I get the ideas here, but what about the ideas out of this room?"

Like, "Who are we missing here? What factors are we not considering?" Because the people in this room, yeah, we have all this privilege and all that. But who are we not considering that's not in this room, and who can we add into those groups that will have different perspectives? Because I feel like without that, again, that connector, we got left out. We're not even acknowledged because they don't know us. Right? And so, I think just that idea of my experience as a TCK of what I didn't get, I'm trying to provide for others in different ways. Right? And I thought I could do it in higher ed, couldn't do it in higher ed, so I'm now trying to find another place that I could possibly help in this situation.

But yeah, I think that's the biggest thing for me of allowing or making my best to make people be seen, but also be heard because I think two of those go hand in hand and sometimes people say that "Yeah, I hear you." But then it's like, they don't do anything about it. So, it's like, "Are you seeing me then? Are you just listening and not doing anything about it or are you really understanding me in that sense?" So yeah, the whole idea of being

heard and being seen is something that I learned, at this age, that it is something important to me and that I strive for in the future work that I do.

Mike: I remember reading the TCK book and it was incredible. I have rarely read a book that described me as well as that book has. Maybe not a hundred percent fair enough, but at least the high 90%.

Naomi: Nice.

Mike: So, the identity struggles and then the whole list of benefits and challenges. So, benefit wise, yeah, some really neat things there that I would not trade in this life.

Laurie: Let me talk you through it.

Naomi: I wouldn't.

Mike: Right. That's one thing I would not change is growing up overseas as a Missionary Kid. I would not change that. Because the cross-cultural experiences, the broaden worldview, the ability to relate to people from different cultures, different value systems, I think that's incredibly helpful stuff. And it is hard when you come back to a country that doesn't really appreciate that stuff, quite frankly.

Laurie: Right.

Mike: You know, it's like, "Oh, that wasn't invented here. So, we're not [crosstalk] that's important." So anyways... So yeah, so I think there's a lot of stuff there. For me, the neat thing is that I went back to the Philippines and I'm working at a school for MKs. And so, I actually continued to get to work with TCKs.

Naomi: Wow. That's a big thing.

Mike: Yeah, and that's a dream come true.

Naomi: Are you currently in Manila?

Mike: Not at this moment. No.

Naomi: Okay.

Mike: We're on home assignment in the US.

Naomi: Okay. Yeah. Because it's hard to get in then.

Mike: It is.

Naomi: My dad assigned there, actually for next year.

Mike: Yes. As a foreigner, you have to have special permission to get back in the Philippines right now. Yeah, that's true. So anyways, it's neat to see for me, how God has used my experiences and then being able to morph that into a ministry where I can relate to these other TCKs because I are one. And so, we have that connection that we TCK share with each other, even though we're probably from different places and different cultures and so on and so forth. And that's really cool. Anyways, I'm very grateful for the experiences I had growing up.

Naomi: That's amazing. Yeah, that gave me the goosebumps. That's a beautiful story. Yeah. So, I think I'm going a little... Yeah, so in terms of how my TCK upbringing has affected me, I think more related to work. I think it's interesting seeing what I'm doing now. We have nine clinics in Colombia, and we provide free healthcare to Venezuelan migrants because of what's happening in Venezuela. And so, it's really interesting realizing that when I did my master's, my master's thesis was about the mental health impacts of internally displaced people in Colombia and their exposure to violence. And so, I've actually realized a trend in my research. And also, now in my work that my passion is to help and serve underrepresented communities and populations.

So mostly... And I think one thing that is a source of frustration for me because a lot of people intertwine the word refugee and migrant. And there's a huge difference between a refugee and a migrant. Because migrants do not have the same privileges that refugees do have because they have to seek asylum and then have the status of refugees so you can access healthcare. You can access all of this work. You can access all these things. As a migrant, you literally are stuck in a country without any privileges, without being able to access the healthcare system of the country you're in, if you were displaced to a different country. And so, the work I do now, I realize I can resonate and not in the same way. Not that I'm saying I'm displaced, but because of having grown up and having no choice in anywhere I moved until I was 18.

You know, my dad would be like, "Yeah, we're moving to India. Now we're going to Sri Lanka. And now we're going to Bolivia. And now..." It's like, I had no choice but to displace my life to this new country. And now I realize that in the work I do, it's like, I want to help people that might feel helpless in the fact that they've had to move out of their own country, to relocate to a new country.

And that's my passion. I'm very passionate about this. And this was my first job out of my master's. And I'm like, "I could not be more grateful for the work that I do." And I always wanted to work bilingually. Like 70% of my work is in Spanish. I feel like I'm... Because of how I grew up, I just want to help populations that are just underrepresented, underserved, and forgotten about. Internally displaced people especially are one of the most forgotten about populations worldwide.

People don't even know that Colombia has some of the highest number of IDPs in the world because they're always focused on Syrian refugees or Syrian migrants or Syrian IDPs or whatever. So yeah, definitely because of how I grew up, my passion is really just to help people that, yeah, might feel helpless maybe. But then being able to provide free healthcare to these Venezuelan migrants is a gap that very few INGOs are doing right now because all of the money that governments or INGOs are providing are mostly in the Middle East or where you can see a physical war happening, right, which is understandable.

But for every Venezuelan migrant, there's $150 that's being given out. Whereas for every Syrian refugee or migrant, whatever you want to call them because they use it interchangeably, there's about $2000. So just in terms of the focus of where the international aid community is, it's definitely not in this part of the world. So definitely, I think that because of how my upbringing was. Yeah, I want to help those that often don't get helped in a way.

Interviewer:	Excellent.

So let me see here. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with repatriation that we have not covered? It could be anything that you just want to share out about that.

Naomi:	Hmm. Let's see.

Mike:	Well, one other resource that I'm aware of, at least in the US are re-entry programs for TCKs. There are two organizations that primarily run these, and there could be others, too, that I don't know of. And then, Interaction International, which was the organization that Dave Pollock, the main author of the TCK book started and continues to exist even though Dave is now with the Lord.

So anyway, both of them run re-entry programs for TCKs. The sad news is that probably a very small percentage of TCKs actually take advantage of that. I don't know what the percentages are, but I'm going to assume it's tiny compared to the number of TCKs that are coming back to the US typically for college and that kind of thing. So that's just one more

resource that I'm aware of. Some other good news is the high school that I graduated from, now I'm working there. They now have a semester-long transitions class that's a requirement for all seniors.

Naomi: Wow.

Mike: Okay. Which I would have loved to have had that class.

Naomi: Back in the day, yeah.

Mike: Back in the day, it just wasn't on anybody's radar. And the textbook, one of the textbooks for that class is the TCK book.

Interviewer: Oh, nice.

Mike: Okay. So, we're doing everything we can to make sure all of our TCK graduates from the school I work at now are well aware of these issues that we've talked about today. Now, the challenge, of course, is they haven't gone through the re-entry process back typically in their passport country. All right. So that's still in the future. But hopefully, they'll remember some of the things they learned from the class when they do. Like, for example, I think one of the things in the book that I continue to encourage TCKs who are transitioning to pay attention to is called the raft. Does that ring any bells?

Laurie: Yeah.

Mike: It's reconciliation.

Naomi: Oh, yeah.

Mike: Affirmation, farewells, and think destination. Okay. If someone had told me that, in my senior year of high school, that would have been really helpful. "Oh, that's what I need to do in order to live well." That information was not available and I'm very grateful that it is now available.

Laurie: Yeah. I mean, even as the senior TCKs, I think, going through these focus groups or just any conversational groupings allow for these kinds of resources to emerge because we started talking about, "Oh, it would have been great if we had X, Y, Z." And then more people are like, "Yeah, totally agree." And then people put it into action. And then it gets built. And unfortunately, a lot of administrators don't believe you until it's a huge research topic and it's like, "Oh, maybe we should pay attention to this because people are researching about it."

I think it does serve a purpose other than interests and all that. And I think that's why I support research because I've been on the other end of researching myself. So, it's like, it's hard to collect these stories that are few and beyond. And so, I think, yeah, just the importance of just sharing stories off and on and, and with people you don't know, or with people that you do know, and then just building on that, I think, it's really going to be effective, hopefully, some someday. Right?

And yeah, so I think definitely, I've seen the growth in the research and then also just the term TCK being known in the world. Because you know, I always bring up the term TCK during the job interviews.

Naomi: Oh, nice.

Laurie: And they're still like, "What?" And then there's some people that are like, "Oh, yeah. I know the term." And I'm like, "Yes."

Naomi: Like we'll be friends.

Laurie: One person, right? It made my day that you know the term at least. Right? So, I mean, I think it's shifting, definitely. I think it has a long way to go, but it's slow progress.

Naomi: Yeah.

Laurie: Yeah.

Naomi: Yeah, and I totally agree with that sentiment. Because I long for the day that someone... when the term is normalized. Right? I want that term to be normalized. And I long for the day that I'll be in a taxi or an Uber or whatever. And when someone asks me, instead of where am I from, if they're like, "So what's your story? Or what's your background?" Right? Every time someone asks me, right, especially in the US, they're like, "Where are you from?" Like, "Ah." I'm like, "Do we want the long story? Is this guy going to be interested?" And then you're just like, "Ah, yeah. From Panama." They're like, "Ooh." And then we all know it's like. But at one thing that I find really interesting, so I have a twin and we grew up the same until we were 18. But she has ever since we repatriated to the US she has stayed in the US and so she pulled on, has taken on the American identity.

I don't think she ever has identified as a TCK. So, she lived now in the US for about 11 years. And when you ask her where she's from, she's like, "Oh, I'm from DC." It's fascinating to me. And I'm here like... Like flailing around trying to answer that question. So, it's fascinating how even though we had that same 18 years of having grown up in seven countries and

whatever. Ever since my university time, she was at Penn State, I was at Iowa. She stayed in DC and ever since has made her life there now. And she's been there for a while.

For me, I've moved around probably to seven or eight different countries since. And so, we have very different experiences. And I don't think... I actually told her like, "Hey, maybe this book, the TCK book could be helpful." And she's like... I don't think she ever read it. So same 18 years of developmental chaos, right, with our TCK upbringing but very different identities. She can easily be like, "I'm from the US. I'm from DC, whatever." And then I'm like... So yeah, I just find it fascinating, especially with other TCK twins that just have very, very different experiences after their developmental year. So, it's been a struggle. But I wouldn't change it. Like you said, Matt, I would not change some things.

Interviewer: Excellent. I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for joining in today.

Appendix J

Personal Artifacts

<u>**LAURIE: FRESHMEN '13**</u>
Ruth Van Reken, co-founder of FIGT
Prof. Xavier if you will
created a safe haven
for scholars, researchers, and individuals
to unite
to share
to explore
trends and research for what it is to transcend globally
the 'cerebro' lies in all our stories, our findings
the hidden ties, the hidden powers
lies in all of our lives
all this knowledge

all these underlying understanding
it's hard to make the implicit explicit
yet, we try
age, race, gender does not matter
together we are one
TCK or not
whether you traveled to Asia, Europe, or South America,
our emotion, our feelings, our past
unites us
'a-ha' ~ "nods" ~ "exactly"
no place to call 'home'
but does that make me a
mutant?
a foreigner?
no, just different.
but that difference
intrigues others
to listen.
curiosity
crosses boundaries.
"cultural integration and the illusion of closeness"
was the theme for this conference.
keynote speaker Pico Iyer said it best
"home is a project, a place where you become yourself"
"home is a piece of 'soul' not your 'soil'"
It's not where you come from
but where you are going.
#figt13 tweets
Facebook, LinkedIn, Skype
we are surrounded by
communication
but
face-to-face
is the most important.
the KEY to bridging gaps.
Ruth's first question to me
"What's your story?"
instead of
"Who are you?"
opened, no, held the door
for me to enter.
I felt her hand reach out,
reaching to bring me
'home'.
I can't wait
to go back

'home'
next year.
Remember though,
This is just my story.
Do share yours.

LAURIE: REFLECTIONS ON BEING A THIRD CULTURE KID

Where are you from? — Even after 18 years of education, I have yet to answer that question. It's a trick question. Am I from Japan? Brazil? Mexico? New York? Or Seattle? *Where* am I from? *Where* is home to me? As a Third Culture Kid (TCK), that is the one question, I fear. I can never give a concrete answer, and it feels awkward not to be able to pinpoint one place.

Watch the movie clip below. If for one second of the clip, you have an "ah-ha" moment, or "I know exactly how that feels," then you must be a TCK as well. If not, let me introduce you to *my* world.

What is a TCK? The term "third culture kid" was coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s. A TCK refers to someone who, as a child, has spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than his or her parents.

[Laurie]'s 20th birthday. This experience led to her senior thesis: "The meaning of the Coming-of-Age Ceremony for Japanese people living abroad"

Believe it or not, I wasn't aware that *I* was a TCK until my second year of college. I was born in Japan, but never lived there. I have a Japanese passport, yet I cannot sing the Japanese anthem. I speak English and Spanish more fluently than Japanese. My name is spelled "Risa" officially but phonetically I go by "[Laurie]" (BIG difference. I'd be happy to explain it further at a later time). I've lived in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paolo, Seattle, Bronx, NY, Mexico City, and Pullman, WA. I have friends from all over. I never had to 'define' myself as anything. I was *me*, until my senior year of high school.

The first time I felt obligated to define myself was when I started applying to colleges. I spent my high school years in Mexico City, and knew I wanted to go to college in the United States. My friends and I alike spent numerous counselor visits asking which box do we fill in for "race" and/or "ethnicity"? Do we have to choose? Can we select *all*? *I* never wanted to answer it as I had no clue what to put.

I eventually chose to study at [information deleted to protect identity]. I chose [this school] for their communications program, nothing more, nothing less. [Name of town] is a college town with about 24,000 in population, and about 21,000 are students at the college. Having moved from Mexico City, I was experiencing culture shock for the first semester.

For the first time in my life, I *felt* like the minority and/or foreigner. I was forced to realize a dichotomy of us vs. them and "the others." My first friends on campus were from the Chicano-Latino center, as I had a Latin American background, and my Spanish was still very strong. I remember feeling out of place, not belonging anywhere, as I refused to limit/define myself as one cultural identity.

It seemed as though everyone around me (local domestic students) would be able to relate to one another by simply answering the question "where are you from?" except for me. The only support group I had at the time was high school friends connected through instant messaging. All my friends from Mexico City who went off to colleges in the US were going through the same thing and that in essence, saved me. I knew I was not alone.

There were times when not being able to answer the simplest question of *Where are you from?* made me insecure. I felt lost, isolated, and *different*. For the first time, *I* was the foreigner. Fortunately, similarity saved me, and communication helped me grow.

As an Intercultural Communications graduate, I've learned to use the question "where are you from?" as an ice breaker. I may not be able to come up with a quick answer, but it definitely gets the conversation going. I don't think learning the term TCK has helped me define myself any better, but it certainly helps to know that there are others just like me and that there is much to learn from this idea of kids and adults alike, living in different cultures. No TCKs are exactly the same, yet we all share the same type of experiences. I think it's crucial to share those experiences as there's *always* room to learn from one another.

Looking back at not only my life experiences, but also all the intercultural communication classes I've taken both in my undergrad and graduate years; I've realized that *different* is not so bad after all. In fact, being *different* allowed me to explore the *why's* of cultural identities for my

senior thesis in college and led me to my enthusiasm for International Education. In retrospect, I'm glad I have yet to answer the question *Where are you from?* as it allows me to continue exploring this fascinating theme.

There are many lists on the internet that starts with, "You know you are X when…" TCKid.com has a list of "You know you are TCK when…" so I'll wrap here with a glimpse of *my* logic:

– **"Where are you from?" has more than one reasonable answer.**
– **You flew before you could walk.** *[I flew at age 8 months]*
– **You have a passport but no driver's license.** *[Had a passport at 8 months, got my driver's license at age 19]*
– **You go into culture shock upon returning to your "home" country.- Your life story uses the phrase "Then we moved to…" three (or four, or five…) times.**
– **You wince when people mispronounce foreign words.**
– **You don't know whether to write the date as day/month/year, month/day/year, or some variation thereof.**
– **You miss the subtitles when you see the latest movie.** *[I tend to use the subtitle option on DVDs a lot]*
– **You have frequent flyer accounts on multiple airlines.** *[yes, yes, I do]*
– **You know how to pack.** *[my friends have said I should give a seminar on packing]*
– **You have the urge to move to a new country every couple of years.** *[most definitely]*
– **You sort your friends by continent/countries.** *[I kid you not: on both FB and Gmail accounts]*
– **You have a time zone map next to your telephone.** *[both on my desktop and phone]*
– **You realize what a small world it is, after all.** *[I feel like we are only 4 degrees apart sometimes]*

MANDY: JOURNAL 1

♥ The smell of dirt after it rains. °°₀

♥ The food.

♥ The beautiful sand dunes. ～～

♥ The sound of the crashing waves. ssss

♥ The Tranquility

♥ The weather ☁

nasca

People i will miss...

1. Wendy
2. Juan Carlos & Anita
3. Alexandra
4. Angela
5. Amy
6. Kari

Perú

★ It's rich with culture, simplicity, and minimalism. It is beautiful, but sometimes stressful. things move slowly and calmly, but that means it also takes longer to get things done.
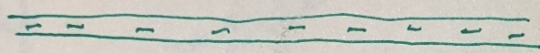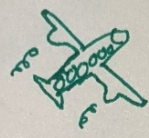
Moche (clay pot)

I will miss walking and seeing others walking. I will miss riding public transportation. I will miss speaking spanish. I will miss sunshine and maybe sometimes even the dust. I will miss having to work with kids. I will miss having a house. I will miss figure out where to go, etc. without the internet. I will miss reminiscing with old friends. I will miss being home.

✗ Clean my all the dust
✗ People staring @ me.
✗ How hard it is to cook
✗ the danger
✗ The machismo
✗ the poverty
✗ the education

bus   combi   taxi

"Somos fibres, seámoslo siempre, y antes neque su luces el so

MANDY: JOURNAL 2

MUSEO DE SITIO INTIÑAN

Latitud: 00°00'00"

Things I miss...

1. The landscape
2. The weather
3. The beach
4. The altitude
5. The equator
6. Galapagos
7. Old Friends
8. The school
9. Soccer
10. Cumbre Alta
11. Our house

ecuador

✗ Political chistatility
✗ Conservative
✗ Some danger
✗ Can't find easy foods.
✗ generational conflicts

Condor

Alliance Academy International

Pichincha - Cotopaxi
Antisana - Cayambe
Chimborazo

Salve ¡oh Patria, mil veces! ¡oh Patria! ¡Gloria a ti! ¡Gloria a ti!

MANDY: JOURNAL 3

Subte "A"

I enjoyed getting to learn the culture my mom grew up in. There were many great things, and many frustrations, but I learned a lot over the years.

World Cup

Rough Parts
1. weather
2. iBuses?
3. Economy
4. Politics
5. Villas
6. going to the bank
7. Sodas
8. Church

Congreso
e 6 25 .com

valentina ♥

Photograph removed
by researcher
to protect identity

argentina

ARG
2009

NICOLÁS OTAMENDI
Manchester City FC (ENG)
12-2-1988
m 1,83
kg 81

Argentina lost to France.

"Messi missed a Penalty kick

10 MESSI

FLORESTA

Best memories
* visiting Keila in Mar de Plata
* Seeing fantastic beasts in 4D
* Parque de la Costa
* Evita museum
* Game bar
* Bariloche
* Harry Potter coffee shop
* Cheap ice cream
* Empanadas
* World Cup in the park
* Museum of Science
* Museum of Art
* Taking the trains
* Taking the subways
* going to the desaparecidos march
* going to the feminist march.

"Oid, mortales el grito sagrado libertad, libertad, libertad..."

Appendix K

TCK Repatriation Themes and Associated Sub-Themes with Frequency Table

Theme	Sub-Theme
TCK Benefits	Adaptation and Flexibility (40)
(Frequency= 198)	Faith (11)
	Global Perspective (49)
	Good Education (15)
	Independence (12)
	Language Skills (29)
	Travel and Unique Experiences (42)
Social Repatriation Challenges	Current Events and Pop Culture (17)
(Frequency= 99)	Facing Prejudice (14)
	Family Pressures (13)
	Family Separation (14)
	Language Barriers (9)
	Loss of Friends and Family (32)
Personal Repatriation Challenges	Depression and Grief (46)
(Frequency= 179)	Educational Difficulties (13)
	Identity (73)
	Isolation and Loneliness (47)
Cultural Repatriation Challenges	Culture Differences (53)
(Frequency= 90)	Financial Differences and Poverty (9)
	Religious Challenges (13)

Seen as International Students (15)

Services and Supports   Academic and Financial Support (19)

(Frequency= 383)   Counseling and Therapy (42)

Embracing Multiculturalism (21)

Exploring Cultural Differences (49)

Finding Social Footing (24)

Family Support (16)

Increased Services and Supports Awareness (31)

Increased TCK Awareness (29)

Limited Services and Supports (26)

Mentorship and TCK Network (63)

Overcoming Loneliness and Identity Concerns (14)

Re-Entry Seminar (19)

Religious Support (15)

TCK Literature (15)