AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF J-1 TEACHER EXCHANGE VISITORS IN A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN SOUTH CAROLINA: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Abigail Althea Ralph

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

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Abstract

This phenomenological study aimed to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1 teacher exchange visitors (J-1TEVs) in a rural school district (RSD) in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Personal and professional experience was generally defined as the circumstances surrounding J-1TEVs' private and work lives. The theory guiding this study was the teacher self-efficacy theory, a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory. The theoretical framework guided the exploration of how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs impacted their beliefs in their ability to perform effectively in U. S. classrooms. The central research question was: "What are the lived experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina with respect to their teacher self-efficacy?" Ten current J-1TEVs and former J-1TEVs, up to four years after functioning as a J-1TEV in RSD, participated in the study. Heidegger's hermeneutic circle of inquiry was used to analyze the data gathered from questionnaires, journal prompts, and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that the personal challenges did not affect the TSE for most participants. Professionally, J-1TEVs lacked cultural competence to varying degrees, leading to culture shock, challenges with classroom management and discipline, and intercultural communication. The challenges negatively impacted J-1TEVs' TSE, but with support from administrators and teachers, their TSE increased over time.

Keywords: J-1 teacher exchange visitors, personal experience, professional experience, teacher self-efficacy, cultural intelligence.

Copyright Page

Dedication

This research is dedicated to J-1 teacher exchange visitors recruited to work in the United Sates as cultural ambassadors of their country of origin. You were selected from the best educators in your respective countries to fill difficult teaching positions in America. You may have experienced personal and professional challenges, but adjusting to cultural differences can make the experience rewarding. Today's global society calls for globally minded students; know that your contributions to preparing the youth to function effectively in our global society are valuable and appreciated.

Acknowledgments

"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10: 36). All praises to the Almighty God for giving me the resilience to stay the course. The journey was rough, but He held my hand when I needed Him most and saw me to the end.

To my husband, George Ralph, thank you for the many days you paid no heed to the organized chaos on the dining table and for unquestionably filling in the gaps when nothing else mattered but completing assignments for hours at a time. I want to thank my father, Ashton Benjamin, for instilling the value of education in me. Had my mother, Hetty Jane Benjamin, been alive, both of you would have celebrated the fruit of your labor through my accomplishments. Thanks to my siblings, who constantly checked in asking: "How long more?" To my relatives and friends who had my best interest at heart, I thank you.

I want to acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Matthew Ozolnieks, my Committee Chair, and Dr. Sarah Pannone, my Committee Member, for the advice, encouragement, and guidance they gave me in the final year of my academic journey. Thank you is also extended to all the lecturers at Liberty University for the role they played in helping me achieve a PhD in curriculum and instruction.

Finally, I want to thank the ten J-1 Teacher exchange visitors who volunteered to share their personal and professional experiences to make this study a reality. I appreciate your sacrifice to provide data for three collection methods. Your contributions have practical implications and policy change to improve the lived experience of future J-1 teacher exchange visitors.

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List of Abbreviations

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT)

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Exchange Visitor Program (EVP)

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

J-1 Teacher Exchange Visitor (J-1TEV)

Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)

Rural School District (RSD)

School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ)

Teacher Self-efficacy (TSE)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The J-1 teacher exchange visitor program, recently identified as BridgeUSA, is a category of the exchange visitor program sponsored by the United States (U. S.) Department of State that gives foreign teachers the opportunity to temporarily reside in America and share their knowledge and culture with members of the host country (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). In 2021, the program attracted about 300,000 people from 200 countries to teach in educational institutions in the U. S. (BridgeUSA, 2021-b). Enacted in 1961, its goal was to improve mutual relationships between America and other countries through educational and cultural exchanges (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). In 2022, the J-1 teacher exchange visitor program provided a lucrative pool of trained teachers to help mitigate the teacher shortage in America (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019). Intending to improve their personal and professional lives (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Furuya et al., 2019; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020). J-1 teacher exchange visitors (J-1TEVs) leave their home country and transition to America but encounter numerous (Ephratt, 2011; Mancini-Cross et al., 2009; Ospina & Medina, 2020) personal and professional challenges that can affect their teacher self-efficacy (Hosford & O' Sullivan, 2016; Huang et al., 2005; Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014; Wilson et al., 2020) necessary to function effectively in the classroom (Cole, 2011; Van der Zee, 2005; Ward et al., 2001). The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at a rural school district in South Carolina impact their teacher self-efficacy. Researching J-1TEVs' experiences documents their challenges and opens opportunities for administrators to make decisions to improve J-1TEVs' tenure in the U.S. It also benefits teachers by raising their awareness of the importance of cultural intelligence for cross-cultural

education. Additionally, students can benefit from the knowledge of other people's culture. Chapter One provides the study's historical, social, and theoretical backgrounds; the problem and purpose statements; theoretical, empirical, and practical significance; research questions; definition of terms to ensure clear understanding; and a comprehensive summary.

Background

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. The ensuing narrative investigated this problem via historical, social, and theoretical lenses to provide a comprehensive analysis of what the literature says about J-1TEV's experiences. Each of the three lenses provides a unique perspective of the implications and significance of the study. The historical context traces the development of the J-1 EVP (Exchange Visitor Program) from the 1946 Fullbright-Hay Act of mutual exchange between America and other countries (BridgeUSA, 2021-a) to today, where it inadvertently provides a pool of teachers to mitigate the teacher shortage in the U. S. K-12 classrooms (Bartlett, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019). The social context addresses the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs within the new cultural domain and the implications of their lifeworld on members of the host country. Finally, the teacher self-efficacy theory introduces a philosophical explanation of J-1TEVs' self-confidence levels challenged by cultural differences. Moving forward, the rural school district in this study was given the acronym: RSD.

Historical Context

The J-1TEV program is part of a larger cultural exchange program that originated in 1945 when J. William Fulbright proposed that foreign currency from the sale of unused war equipment

be used to fund educational exchange programs (Ralph, 1987). Accepted into legislation on August 1, 1946, the framework of the program was established, which resulted in an international academic exchange program for foreign teachers who desire to share their knowledge and culture with American students (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). Foreign currency was used to defray the cost of American grantees outside of the U. S., but there were limited funds to sustain the program within U. S. universities. Therefore, private corporations stepped in and provided the funds (Ralph, 1987). That was the beginning of the symbiotic relationship between private institutions and the U. S government, which has remained the foundation of the EVP (Ralph, 1987).

In 1961, J. William Fulbright led congress to enact the Fulbright-Hay Act, also known as the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act. Stemming from the original Act of 1946, the Fulbright-Hay Act of 1961 aimed(tense) to strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and other countries through the exchange of educational and cultural programs (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). The J-1TEV is one of many programs, including Au Pair, Camp Counselor, College and University Student, Government Visitor, Physician, Professor, Research Scholar, and Summer Work Travel (U. S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). Though never intended to be a source of supply of teachers for America's K-12 classrooms (Department of State, 2013), the J-1 EVP provides a pool to recruit teachers to help fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019). At the same time, with the increased movement of people across borders (Bense, 2016; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Savva, 2017), and the interconnectedness of countries through globalization (Serin, 2017), teachers are seizing the opportunity to develop their cultural

awareness (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Mizzi, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017) and improve their personal and professional experiences (Burman et al., 2006; Modesto, 2020).

Social Context

The increased movement of J-1 TEVs into the U. S. responds to a socially dynamic change in the demographics of America's school-age population (Aydin et al., 2017; Wiggans et al., 2021), and the need for a corresponding change in teacher diversity (Aydin & Ozfidan, 2014). Presently, the racial and ethnic make-up of teachers is less diverse. The White population is declining in 109 counties in 22 states, from California to Kansas to North Carolina. As the White population declines, the Hispanic, Asian, and Black populations are increasing (Krogstad, 2019). Twenty-one percent of public elementary and secondary school teachers are the minority; the remaining 79% are Whites (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). More so, the teaching force is primarily White females who may be challenged to understand the struggles of poor minority students (Savva, 2017). Therefore, teachers of different ethnicities are needed to meet the student population's needs (Schaeffer, 2021). With interest shown by teachers from over 151 countries (Furuya et al., 2019), the J-1TEV program is significant in supplying teachers of various ethnic backgrounds.

The social context of J-1TEVs' experience in the U. S reveals an experience that is both rewarding and challenging. As an initiative to foster mutual understanding between America and other countries (BridgeUSA, 2021-a), J-1TEVs come as representatives of their countries (Furuya et al., 2019; Modesto, 2020) and share their cultures with Americans (Department of State, 2013) while learning about American values of democracy, diversity, and freedom of speech (Clark et al., 2019). J-1TEVs strengthen intercultural ties between their countries and America by connecting U. S. students with students from their home countries, thus fulfilling a

primary goal of the Fulbright-Hay Act of 1961 (BridgeUSA, 2021-b). American teachers can work alongside teachers of different nationalities and ethnicities to exchange and learn new pedagogies to improve their teaching skills (Department of State, 2013). At the end of their tenure, J-1TEVs are expected to return to their home countries with rich experiences to enhance their students' knowledge.

From the diversities of their cultures, J-1TEVs bring a global education that can expand U. S. students' geographic and geo-cultural knowledge of places and peoples (Ganley et al., 2019). Some students know very little about countries outside of the U. S. and have a limited understanding of global issues (Bednarz et al., 2014; Dunn, 2011; Halvorsen, 2017; Modesto, 2020; NAEP, 2018; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Students' knowledge can potentially improve with J-1TEVs integrating into lessons materials that address global concerns (Serin, 2017). Through cross-cultural communications, J-1TEVs can create a milieu of multiculturalism that can prepare students for the diverse workforce of the 21st-century (Canli & Demirtas, 2017; Guven, 1999).

The exchange visitor program rewards J-1TEVs who are attracted to it for personal and professional benefits. It promises a higher standard of living for those coming from developing countries (Burman et al., 2006; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2019) and opportunities to learn new and improved teaching strategies (Altun, 2015; Miller, 2018; Serin, 2017). On the flip side, settling into new neighborhoods, knowing the whereabouts of services essential to daily living, and adjusting to the needs of trailing spouses and children can be overwhelming (Brown, 2008; Lazarova et al., 2015; McNulty, 2012; McNulty, 2013; McNulty, 2015; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012). Professionally, the clash of cultures between J-1TEVs and students, parents, and administrators can lead to miscommunication (Ephratt, 2011; Hutchinson & Jazzar, 2007; Mancini-Cross et al., 2009;

Ospina & Medina, 2020), with teachers struggling to manage classrooms (Dumlao & Mengorio; Halicioglu, 2015; Miller, 2018; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Smith, 2018).

Some administrators do not provide adequate support (Bartlett, 2014; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018) and by their authoritative discourse (Bakhtin, 1998), J-1TEVs may recluse into isolated communities with others like themselves (Savva, 2017). At the same time, some J-1TEVs need to be more open-minded and respectful of the host country's culture (Deardorff, 2006; Ospina & Medina, 2020). This research is therefore beneficial to administrators, teachers, and students because it raises cultural awareness that promotes good working relations among teachers and between teachers and students.

Theoretical Context

The study was situated within the framework of the teacher self-efficacy theory (TSE), which is a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977).

The TSE theory provided a framework for the current study because J-1TEVs face personal and professional challenges affecting self-efficacy and job satisfaction (von Kirchenheim & Richardson, 2005). Self-efficacy is the belief "in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Bandura (1977) identifies two types of self-efficacy: efficacy expectation, which is the belief that persons can accomplish a task, and outcome expectancy, which is the belief that a chosen action will result in the desired outcome (Bandura, 1986). He also identifies four sources of self-efficacy essential to the success of teachers: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states.

Research shows a correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and students' performance (Guo et al., 2010; Klassen et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). If teachers believe they can achieve an expected outcome in students, they work arduously toward it, committing themselves and investing in instructional behaviors that guarantee the desired end (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The opposite is likely to occur if teachers lack the confidence to perform the job (Bandura, 1977). Higher levels of self-efficacy motivate teachers to organize instruction to keep students stimulated and on task, thus minimizing disturbances (Dick et al., 2014). At the same time, teachers can experience job satisfaction that is correlated to self-efficacy (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020).

While the greater responsibility rests upon J-1TEVs to maintain high levels of self-efficacy, external factors influence their self-beliefs. These factors collectively influence the school climate. Several studies have provided empirical evidence that a positive relationship exists between school climate and teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Türken & Kahraman, 2021; Zakariya, 2020). For example, Aldridge and Fraser (2016) conducted research with 781 teachers from 29 high schools in Western Australia. The study aimed to determine if school climate influences teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The variables influencing school climate were work pressure, resource adequacy, principal support, teachers' affiliation, and goal consensus. The researchers used four instruments: a 10-item questionnaire to measure teacher self-efficacy, a job descriptive index (Smith et al., 1969) and a job satisfaction survey (Spector, 1997) to measure job satisfaction, and the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ) to measure the relationship between school climate and teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. All instruments used a five-point frequency response of Almost Never, Seldom, Sometimes,

Often, and Almost Always. The findings show that school principals' approachability and teachers' affiliation, directly and indirectly, influenced teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The findings also demonstrate that to improve teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction, leaders must reduce work pressure and maximize goals. School principals should be wary about how they can enhance factors to motivate teachers by boosting their confidence, keeping in mind satisfied teachers can positively impact student performance.

Aldridge and Fraser's (2016) findings reinforced the findings of Almessabi's (2021) correlational study with 108 foreign teachers at elementary, middle, and secondary schools in Abu Dhabi. Almessabi's (2021) study focused on the influence of teacher-perceived school climate on the self-efficacy of teachers working in a culturally foreign environment. Factors influencing the school climate included collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, and community engagement. The findings reveal a significant correlation between overall school climate and teacher self-efficacy ($r = .687$, $p < .01$). Collegial leadership and teacher professionalism (subcategories of school climate) also showed a significant correlation with Pearson correlation coefficients reading ($r = .709$, $p < .01$) and ($r = .772$, $p < .01$) respectively. Community engagement showed a correlation ($r = .253$, $p < .01$), but it was weak. The results of this study are limited to foreign teachers in Abu Dhabi and cannot be generalized (Almessabi, 2021) for other locations and foreign teachers.

Some studies, such as Lack (2016) and Jaafari et al. (2012), have found no correlation between school climate and teacher self-efficacy. However, studies done by Katsantonis (2020), Meristo and Eisenschmidt (2014), and Wilson et al. (2020) have found a positive correlation between school climate and teachers' self-efficacy. The outcome of studies varies according to the factors involved; however, in human socialization, the environment's forces tend

to impact people's psychological states. Knowledge of how J-1TEVs' self-efficacy is affected in new cultural domains informs school administrators and coordinators of induction programs on areas of professional development that could prepare J-1TEVs to maintain high levels of confidence in both efficacy expectation and outcome expectation.

Problem Statement

The problem is that J-1TEVs face personal and professional challenges (Ospina & Medina, 2020) affecting their belief that they have the capabilities to engage students in the learning process in order to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Expatriate teachers encounter personal challenges such as finding suitable accommodation, separation from family, and adjustment of trailing spouses and children (Fillpic Sterle et al., Halicioglu, 2015; Shiva, 2021). Based on the intensity of personal challenges, there can be cross-over effects on their classroom performance (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018). Professionally, J-1TEVs experience barriers in communication and classroom management (Modesto, 2020; Smith, 2018) stem from a cultural gap between themselves and members of the school community (Modesto, 2020; Smith, 2018). This cultural gap may be due to the low levels of cultural intelligence, which can impact job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Almessabi, 2021).

J-1TEVs are recruited to work mainly in rural school districts where teacher shortages are prevalent (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gross, 2018; Showalter et al., 2017; Tran & Smith, 2019). While there is a plethora of studies on the experience of foreign teachers, a paucity exists on the experience of J-1TEVs in rural school districts in the U. S. Examining the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina is expedient at a time when their services help to mitigate the teacher shortage in the U. S.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Personal and professional experience was generally defined as the circumstances surrounding J-1TEVs' private and work life. J-1TEVs come to the U. S. on an EVP visa granted by the Department of State for a maximum period of five years (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). They usually transition with their spouses and children and settle mostly in rural communities (Gross, 2018; U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020), where the need for teachers is prominent.

Cultural changes, the novelty of the American way of living, and the educational system all pose challenges to J-1TEVs' personal and professional lives. I explored J-1TEVs' lived experience to give voice to a class of teachers whose contribution to U. S. education system is significant considering the growing teacher shortage. The teacher self-efficacy theory (TSE), which is a derivative construct of Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, was the framework that guided the study.

The TSE theory helped explain how J-1TEVs' confidence in their ability to achieve expected outcomes can be adversely affected by cultural challenges. Additionally, the theoretical approach helped explain how J-1TEVs' self-efficacy can be boosted through Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states. The findings of this study can improve J-1TEVs' experience and, ultimately, students' performance.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was discussed under three perspectives: a theoretical perspective, an empirical perspective, and a practical perspective. The theoretical perspective showed how the current study advanced the TSE theory derived from Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory and Earley and Ang's (2003) cultural intelligence (CQ) theory. The empirical perspective presented studies like the current study and stated how the hermeneutic phenomenological approach added to the literature on exploring the essence of lived lives (van Manen, 1990). The practical perspective examined the significance of the study for administrators, teachers, and students. Collectively, the perspectives addressed the phenomenon, which was understanding the lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina.

Theoretical Significance

This study contributed to the TSE and CQ theories by examining the theoretical underpinnings through the lived experience of a unique sub-group of educators known as J-1TEVs. The significance of the theories is understood only through people's experiences, shared through observation or verbal judgments (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020). Hence, this study contributed to the literature in this field by assessing J-1TEVs' TSE and CQ during their tenure at RSD in South Carolina. The experience of foreign teachers is distinguished by episodes of personal and professional challenges during relocation to new neighborhoods and school systems (Bünyamin, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Halicioglu, 2015; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Safipour, 2017; Shiva, 2021; Wubshet & Menuta, 2018).

The literature explains J-1TEVs' personal and professional challenges stem from the cultural differences between J-1TEVs and host country members. The cultural dimension J-1TEVs brought to the current study operationalized Earley and Ang's (2003) four domains of

CQ and reinforced the significance of Bandura's (1977) four sources of self-efficacy. J-1TEVs may come to the U. S. with skills garnered from years of teaching experience, yet they may have low self-efficacy because of the cultural challenges they encounter. The study, therefore, advanced the importance of cultural intelligence and teacher self-efficacy for teaching and learning.

Empirical Significance

Several studies have examined the lived experience of expatriate teachers with a focus on the challenges and benefits of living in a foreign country or teaching internationally (Dos Santos, 2020; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Lee, 2015; Miller, 2018; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Savious, & Sadhana, 2021). However, there is scant research on J-1TEVs, a sub-group of expatriates. Some of the challenges and benefits highlighted in the studies include J-1TEVs gaining cultural awareness (Mizzi, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017), improving their standard of living (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2019), family adjustments (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Lazarova et al., 2015) language barriers, and classroom management (Ospina & Medina, 2020; Safipour, 2017). This study added to the body of literature by examining the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina. Like the phenomenological studies identified above, this research advanced the literature by constructing knowledge on the life worlds of J-1TEVs (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Practical Significance

By exploring the lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina, the study provided practical significance for school and district administrators, teachers, and students. The recruitment of J-1TEVs is important to school administrators – especially those in rural communities (Schaefer et al., 2016; Showalter et al., 2017) – since fewer college graduates are

entering the teaching profession (CERRA, 2018; Sutcher et al., 2016; Tran & Smith, 2019). Understanding J-1TEVs' personal and professional experiences can inform induction programs and professional developments. The intention was to make J-1TEVs' transition into the new environment easier, ensure good working relations among staff, and improve students' performance.

The study benefits J-1TEVs because it voices their perspective and points them to the importance of cultural intelligence for success (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Earley & Ang, 2003; Sarı & Yüce, 2020; Wubshet & Menuta, 2018). It is significant for students because of the geographic and geo-cultural knowledge they gain through interaction with J-1TEVs (Ganley et al., 2019). Having students know about the value of J-1TEVs in today's global society, can help them appreciate people of other cultures (Halvorsen, 2017; Modesto, 2020; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Practically, the study benefits students and teachers and helps to secure the goals of the J-1 EVP by making J-1TEVs' experience rewarding.

Research Questions

This study was guided by a central research question and two sub-questions. Research questions were aligned with the purpose of the study. The central research question is the broadest way to express the question (Creswell & Poth, 2018); hence, in this study, the term 'lived experience' was used to generalize the personal and professional experiences reflected in sub-questions. The sub-questions are specific to areas of inquiry in the central research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina with respect to their TSE?

Sub-Question One

How do the personal experiences of J-1TEVs impact their TSE at RSD in South Carolina*?*

Sub-Question Two

How do the professional experiences of J-1TEVs impact their TSE at RSD in South Carolina?

Definitions

1. *Cultural intelligence* - The ability to adapt to new cultural settings (Earley & Ang, 2003).
2. *Culturally Responsive Teaching* - Meeting the needs of students of diverse culture by incorporating elements of students' culture into the lessons (Gay, 2002).
3. *Expatriate teachers* - Teachers who leave their home country to work in another country for a period (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018).
4. *Foreign-born teachers* - Teachers who were born outside of the U. S. and can either be naturalized citizens, permanent residents, or temporary nonimmigrants with work authorization (Furuya et al., 2019).
5. *J-1TEV* - Teachers who are recruited from abroad to work in accredited primary and secondary schools in the United States. They are nonimmigrants. (BridgeUSA, 2021-b).
6. *Personal experience* - Experience relating to a person's private life (Ospina & Medina, 2020).
7. *Professional experience* - Experience surrounding a person's work life (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Halicioglu, 2015).

8. *Teacher self-efficacy* - The teacher's belief that he or she can execute a task to accomplish a desired outcome in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Summary

J-1TEVs encounter personal and professional challenges when transitioning to work in America's K-12 classrooms (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Shiva, 2021). The personal challenges relate to the obstacles they face in their private lives while trying to adjust with their spouses and children. The literature shows a cross-over effect of family adjustments on performance of expatriates (Linehan, 2002; Takeuchi et al., 2002). Expatriates' failure or success is influenced by their family members' happiness (Linehan, 2002; McNulty, 2015).

The professional challenges are the language barriers they face due to cultural differences that can challenge their classroom management ability. Professional challenges also include adjusting to the leadership styles of administrators and sometimes lack of support from them, adjusting to new curriculums and pedagogies, and teaching in multicultural classrooms (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Smith, 2018). These challenges inevitably impact the cultural intelligence and self-efficacy of J-1TEVs (Almessabi, 2021; Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016; Huang et al., 2005; Wilson et al., 2020). Discouragement or feelings of failure can step in, even self-doubt, against years of successful teaching in their home country.

Understanding the experiences of J-1TEVs is essential given the increased recruitment of them to help fill the teacher shortage in the U. S. (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Department of State, 2013; Furuya et al., 2019) and the need to have international teachers in today's global society (Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017). The success of students and the

raising of productive members of society have always depended on teachers (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, using the research questions as the guide, this study investigated the realities of what it means to be a J-1TEV, particularly at RSD in South Carolina. This study is significant because it informs administrators, teachers, and students in ways that can increase J-1TEVs' cultural intelligence and self-efficacy and, ultimately, student performance.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Understanding the lived experience of J-1TEVs is significant for their effective classroom functioning and their role as cultural ambassadors within the EVP. The literature shows J-1TEVs experience personal and professional challenges (Broutian, 2016; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015; Koppelman, 2017; Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018). The theoretical framework for the study was the teacher self-efficacy theory grounded in Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory. Using this theory assisted in revealing how J-1TEVs' levels of self-efficacy within a new cultural setting can affect classroom performance. The theory is discussed in the first section, followed by a review of recent literature on recruitment of J-1TEVs, potential benefits of employing them, and reasons for their migration. Lastly, literature surrounding personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs is discussed. A comprehensive summary of the literature concludes the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework explains phenomena from previous research in terms of constructs and laws governing constructs (Gall et al., 2007). It is the foundation of the study that supports the "rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 12). This research was supported by the teacher self-efficacy theory; however, cultural intelligence theory is discussed below because it supported the teacher self-efficacy theory when exploring J-1TEVs experiences.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Theory

Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is the teacher's belief that he or she can execute a task to accomplish a desired outcome in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). There are two conceptual strands of the self-efficacy theory**:** Rotter's (1966) locus of control and Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy concept that stems from his social cognitive theory. Rotter (1966) purports that people have control of their actions, whether the control lies within themselves (internal) or in their environment (external) (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). On the other hand, Bandura (1977) argued for a self-efficacy theory of changed behavior that hypothesizes cognitive processes change the level and strength of self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as believing one can execute a task and achieve the desired outcome. Self-efficacy is not skills the person can master but confidence in applying skills to accomplish the task (Bandura, 1986; Peterson et al., 2011).

The terms locus of control and self-efficacy are often used synonymously in the literature; however, there is a difference between the terms (Bandura, 1977). Locus of control is the belief that one has control over the outcome of their actions, while self-efficacy is the belief that one has the skills to produce a particular outcome. Bandura (1977) argued people could have locus of control and low self-efficacy because they lack the skills to perform the task. This means that having locus of control does not guarantee self-efficacy.

Bandura (1977) identified four sources of self-efficacy: performance accomplishments which raise self-efficacy through mastery of tasks; vicarious experience, which increases expectancy through success of others; verbal persuasion, which leverages expectations of competence by internalizing the belief a person places on another; and physiological states (emotional arousal) which determine levels of anxiety that either debilitate or enhance self-

efficacy. The extent to which the four sources influence people's self-efficacy depends on how people evaluate the four sources, and the value people place on the sources (Bandura, 1977).

TSE is not static; it changes over a teacher's career (Cheung, 2008; Goddard, 2001; Lev & Koslowsky, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). High TSE leads to more engaged students and greater student performance. Students are inspired to rise to challenges because of the teachers' belief that the outcome is possible (Bandura, 1993; Ross et al., 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

TSE theory is primal to the lived experience of J-1TEVs working at RSD in South Carolina. J-1TEVs' ability to adjust (Black et al., 1991; von Kirchenheim & Richardson, 2005) and become culturally responsive (Almessabi, 2021) can play into their classroom confidence and impact their self-efficacy. The greater their ability to adjust, the higher the level of self-efficacy. Conversely, unadjusted teachers, who do little to bridge the cultural divide between themselves and students, tend to have low self-efficacy (von Kirchenheim & Richardson, 2005).

In agreement with Rotter's (1966) concept of external locus of control and Bandura's (1977) belief that people's behavior is influenced by the environment in which they operate (Bandura, 1977; Stajkovia & Luthans, 1998), host members' attitude toward J-1TEVs and the school's authoritative discourse (Bakhtin, 1998) can affect J-1TEVs' attitude toward the job, which inadvertently depends on how emotionally competent they feel about the job (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020). The school climate, which includes students, administrators, staff, parents, community members, and persons in authority is, therefore, a predictor of the self-efficacy of J-1TEVs (Lacks, 2016).

Bandura and Adams (1977) alluded to the link between school climate and self-efficacy when they said that personal agency, a term used synonymously with self-efficacy, depends on

the environment in which it functions. Several studies (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Almessabi, 2021; Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016; Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014; Wilson, 2020) provide evidence of a positive correlation between school climate and teacher self-efficacy. On the contrary, some studies did not find a positive correlation. For example, Lacks' (2016) study on two middle schools in the U.S. and Jaafari et al.'s (2012) study in Iran did not show a significant relationship between school climate and teacher self-efficacy. Differences in research outcome hinge upon the nuances of each study, but generally, humans' social nature accounts for the environment's influence on their psychological states.

Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy are pivotal in leveraging mastery expectations that can boost the self-confidence of J-1TEVs. Observing others' best practices (vicarious experience) and believing that one can do the job because others have done it are motivations that can positively influence the psychological state of J-1TEVs to strive for mastery. Moreover, as Bandura (1977) points out, repeated success raises mastery expectations and reduces thoughts of failure.

TSE theory aided in understanding the psychological state of J-1TEVs who were competent in their home culture but felt helpless in the host country's culture (Ward et al., 2001). It provided the framework for exploring how J-1TEVs can alter efficacy-based futility to develop competencies and outcome expectations to drive job satisfaction amidst personal and professional challenges. The theory guided multiple aspects of the study, including the problem statement and research questions. During data analysis, a conclusion was made to determine if the results aligned with the theory postulating TSE can impact performance levels.

Cultural Intelligence Theory

There are two main concepts of cultural intelligence (CQ). The first was proposed by Earley and Ang (2003), and the second by Thomas et al. (2008). Earley and Ang (2003) defined CQ as the ability to adapt to new cultural settings. Drawing from Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) four-dimension concept of multiple foci of intelligence (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008) – metacognitive intelligence, which is how people acquire and understand knowledge; cognitive intelligence, considered as knowledge and knowledge structures; motivational intelligence, which focuses on the drive and impetus that impact cognition; and behavioral intelligence, defined as the ability to perform actions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015) – Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualized CQ as a multidimensional construct comprising four dimensions within the cultural domain: metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ.

Hence, metacognitive CQ refers to an individual's mental ability to gain and understand cultural knowledge; cognitive CQ focuses on knowledge and knowledge structures about culture; motivational CQ reflects an individual's drive to understand others' culture and to function effectively in cross-cultural settings; and behavioral CQ is defined as the capability to communicate appropriately during intercultural interactions (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Thomas et al.'s (2008) CQ theory emerged from the conceptualizations of cross-cultural interactions, social cognition, and intelligence; hence, the scholars defined CQ as the ability to have effective cross-cultural interactions. Effective interactions are indicated by good personal adjustment to new cultural domains, good interpersonal relations with others from different cultures, and the ability to complete a task related to goals within a cultural context (Thomas et al., 2008). Thomas et al.'s (2008) model shows three interrelated components: cultural knowledge/cultural skills, cultural metacognition, and culturally intelligent behavior. A person

with cultural knowledge and skills experiences cultural metacognition that leads to culturally intelligent behavior.

CQ theory is vital to the lived experience of J-1TEVs working at RSD in South Carolina. Because J-1TEVs interact with others from different cultures and face personal and professional challenges in the host country and classroom, having high CQ can positively impact their performance (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). J-1TEVs can increase their knowledge of the different facets of the host country's culture so their behavior, verbally and non-verbally, can be appropriate to promote intercultural competence. Moreover, understanding CQ can furnish administrators with the knowledge to provide emotional and pedagogical support (Herrera, 2021) to make J-1TEVs lived experience satisfactory.

Related Literature

There is a growing teacher shortage crisis in America's K-12 classrooms (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Furuya et al., 2019; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019; Wiggan, 2021). For several reasons, teachers leave the profession (NCES, 2022; Tran & Smith, 2019; Wiggan, 2021), seeking employment in what they consider more lucrative fields (Strauss, 2015). To help fix this problem, school districts hire J-1TEV to occupy hard-to-fill positions in STEM and career and technical education subjects, special education, and foreign languages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019). On arrival to the U. S. and during their tenure at schools, J-1TEVs face personal and professional challenges (Bunyamin, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Halicioglu, 2015; Miller, 2018; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Smith, 2018). There have been several studies done on the experience of expatriate teachers in the U. S. (Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Obi, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020), but research conducted specifically on J-1TEVs at RSD in South

Carolina is scarce. This literature review was conducted to include an overview of the recruitment process of J-1TEVs to the U.S., the potential benefits of employing them, the reasons for J-1TEVs migration, and the challenges they face while living and working in U. S. public schools.

Recruitment of J-1TEV

The J-1TEV program is one type of exchange program authorized by the U. S. Department of State. The exchange visitor program originated in 1946 when Senator J. William Fulbright introduced a bill in the U.S congress. The bill aimed at developing a symbiotic educational relationship between America and other countries, where American students in the fields of education, arts, and science could learn about the culture of other countries, and students of other countries could learn about the culture of America (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n. d.-a.; South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-a). In 1961, the Fulbright-Hays Act was consolidated into the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act which remains the charter for all exchange programs. By 1971, 100 countries were engaged in the program (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n. d.-a). Today, about 300,000 exchange visitors from 200 countries share the cross-cultural experience, hosted mainly in California, South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, Arizona, and Florida. Most visitors are from Spain, China, The Philippines, Jamaica, and France (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). Below are two tables: Table 1 shows the total number of J-1TEVs arriving in the U. S. between 2016 – 2020 and the top ten countries from which they originate. The statistics show a steady increase in J-1TEVs' arrival between 2016 – 2018 and a significant decrease in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Comparably, most of the J-1TEVs come from Spanish-speaking countries (Spain, Mexico, and Colombia) to meet the needs of the rising Hispanic student population (Krogstad, 2019). Table 2 summarizes the

number of J-1TEVs in South Carolina between 2016 – 2019. The numbers reveal a steady increase of J-1TEVs between 2016 – 2018 and a 14% decrease in 2019 compared to 2018.

Table 1

Total Number of New J-1TEVs in the U. S from 2016 – 2020 and the Top Ten Sending Countries

Country	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
(Total J-1TEV)	2723	2876	3252	3252	398
Spain	664	551	523	531	101
China	378	390	348	282	1
Philippines	318	474	786	932	84
Jamaica	301	325	386	385	2
France	221	216	194	227	102
Mexico	169	157	166	179	24
Columbia	151	146	167	178	2
United Kingdom	69	56	53	51	3
Israel	55	40	51	45	1
India	54	141	154	176	2

Note. This information was taken from BridgeUSA (2021-c) that publishes J-1 visas basics, facts and figures. The significant reduction in 2020 was due to the COVID 19 pandemic when travelling was restricted.

Table 2

Number of J-1TEVs in South Carolina from 2016 – 2019

Year	**Number of J-1TEVs**

2016	227
2017	346
2018	350
2019	301

Note. This information was taken from BridgeUSA (2021-c) that publishes J-1 visas basics, facts and figures.

The J-1 teacher exchange visitor program is open to foreign nationals interested in sharing their knowledge and culture at accredited K-12 schools in the U.S. To participate in the program, foreign teachers must be qualified teachers in their home country with at least two years of teaching experience. They must be knowledgeable in English and have a bachelor's in education or the subject they intend to teach (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n. d.-b).

J-1TEVs are non-immigrants. They are sponsored by private and public organizations that are eligible to conduct the exchange visitor program based on the U.S. Department of State requirements. J-1TEVs are granted a certificate of eligibility, also known as the DS-2019, which allows them to stay a maximum of five years in the program before returning to their country (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). Some of the sponsors are Clear Horizon, LLC, Educational Partners International, LLC (EPI), Foreign Academic and Cultural Exchange Services (FACES), Global Teaching Partners (GLOBAL), Participate (Formerly known as VIP), and TPG Cultural Exchange, LLC (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-b).

Sponsors such as EPI follow the basic steps in the recruitment process. Foreign teachers create an application online that profiles their eligibility. Once approved and interviewed by

school personnel, they are placed at schools as certified international teachers (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-a). The next step prepares them for arrival and orientation into the new school system. On arrival, they attend induction workshops designated for beginning teachers. In South Carolina, for example, the first three years are defined as the induction period (Hodges & Roy, n. d.). Among the topics discussed are policies and procedures, oriented services for teachers and students, special education and English learner students, teacher evaluation system, and the districts' mentoring plan (Barker, 2020). J-1TEV are paired with a mentor from mainstream culture to coach them as they transition into the system (Barker, 2020; Hodges & Roy, n. d.). Finally, they are considered cultural ambassadors with the expectation of sharing their culture with the school while experiencing the cultural practices of the host country (Education Partners International, 2022).

A main component of the program is J-1TEVs creating cross-cultural activities to enhance U.S. students' knowledge of foreign countries' traditions and cultural practices. At the end of the program, J-1TEVs are required to return to their country and share the knowledge and skills they garnered (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2018).

Potential Benefits of J-1TEVs

Host countries' educational systems can potentially benefit from the presence of J-1TEVs in several ways. J-1TEVs occupy hard-to-fill positions in unpopular schools (Bartlett, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019); they raise cultural awareness in students (Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017); and they are ambassadors for immigrant students (Dunn, 2011; Furuya, 2019).

J-1TEVs Fill Vacancies in Hard-to-Fill Positions

Over the years, school districts in some states in the U.S. have employed EVP sponsors to recruit J-1TEVs to fill vacancies in math, science, and foreign language (Furuya et al., 2019; Savious & Sadhana, 2021). With the promise of personal and professional developments (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Geist & McManus, 2012; Mishra, 2011; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2019; Sharma, 2012), J-1TEVs accept the offer to teach in the United States. Despite their personal goals, they help fill the gap in teacher-shortage, especially in rural school districts hardest hit by shortages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gross, 2018; Showalter et al., 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016; Tran & Smith, 2019).

Raising Cultural Awareness

J-1TEVs raise cultural awareness in students. The literature shows that American students know very little about cultures beyond their borders and have difficulty valuing and respecting other cultures (Bednarz et al., 2014; Dunn, 2011; Halvorsen, 2017; Modesto, 2020; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Their global knowledge and intercultural competencies are poor (NAEP, 2018; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Ganley et al. (2019) describe them as ethnocentric, believing that their culture is ideal and others are not (Ganley et al., 2019).

Apart from the standards embedded in the social studies curriculum and textbooks (Ganley et al., 2019), evidence from NAEP (2018) (National Assessment of Educational Progress) shows that little is done in K-12 classrooms to expand students' intercultural knowledge and global understanding. Today's global community calls for globally minded students who understand people and cultures (Serin, 2017). Global education is a requirement for students to develop intercultural competence to function effectively in today's pluralistic society (Canli & Demirtas, 2017; Guven, 1999). With the global education that J-1TEVs can provide,

students can develop the skills and attitude to adapt to and sustain themselves in a socially and economically diverse society (Canli & Demirtas, 2017; Guven, 1999).

Teachers who work abroad are essential workers in today's global community (Serin, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020). The interconnectedness between peoples and countries warrants an education beyond borders (Merryfield, 1994; Serin, 2017), and the EVP with J-1TEVs serving as ambassadors of their countries meets this need. J-1TEVs bring rich, diverse cultures (Lockhart, 2021) that can broaden students' geo-cultural and geographic knowledge of people and places (Ganley et al., 2019). Ganley et al.'s (2019) study evidentially shows that students who interact with international teachers develop a global awareness of people and places (Jon, 2013; Soria & Troisi, 2014). One thousand and eighty-two U. S. K-12 students interacted with international teachers who visited the U. S for six weeks for professional development. The pre and post-tests analyses revealed positive improvements across all levels in receptiveness to the cultures of non-U.S. countries/ peoples and increased specific knowledge of the way of life of the international teachers. Students were willing to be receptive to new friendships, learning, and gaining new experiences.

J-1TEVs can help students become culturally sensitive (Dunn, 2011, Halicioglu, 2015; Serin, 2017) by integrating cross-cultural activities into lessons. As cultural ambassadors, they are required to promote cultural exchange between their countries and the U.S. by engaging students in cross-cultural activities (Canli & Demirtas, 2017). Such interactions can nurture open-mindedness, flexibility, and tolerance in students (Deardorff, 2006; Hayden et al., 2000; Ospina & Medina, 2020). J-1TEVs can expose students to different pronunciations and accents that represent the varied voices in today's global village (Lee, 2015). Lessons can be enriched with stories and various materials to expand students' global vision (Serin, 2017). By listening,

observing; and reflecting, students can become aware of their own culture while appreciating other's cultures (Deardorff, 2006).

Ambassadors for Immigrant Students

Another potential benefit of J-1TEVs is that they serve as ambassadors for immigrant children (Dunn, 2011; Furuya et al., 2019). Immigrant children experience challenges in racism, communication, isolation, and bullying (Fernandez, 2015; Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2020; Marishane, 2013) while trying to assimilate into new school environments. Some are challenged to adjust to the instruction given in a second language or be subjected to assessments that are inappropriate to their needs and performance (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2020). As expatriates, J-1TEVs have a general understanding of the nuances that characterize the lived experiences of immigrant students (Furuya et al., 2019; Serin, 2017); hence, they can empathize with them and develop open relationships built on trust (Altun, 2015; Griffin, 2018).

J-1TEVs can help in Students' adjustment process through culturally responsive teaching (Banks, 1990; Furuya et al., 2019; Serin, 2017), thus making students feel included in the lessons. Griffin (2018) conducted a study with Black and Latino teachers in North Carolina, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, California, and the District of Columbia. The aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of non-White teachers to find out their reasons for teaching, the challenges they face, and how they contribute to immigrant students' experiences. A focus group of 90 Latino teachers shared that cultural similarities can build a bond between Latino teachers, immigrant students, and their parents (Griffin, 2018). The Latino teachers also saw themselves as role models to students, highlighting their success as a possibility for immigrant students. As ambassadors, J-1TEVs can advocate for immigrant students and present them positively to others who have difficulty understanding the immigrant experience (Furuya et al., 2019).

Reasons for J-1TEV Immigration

With globalization and the increased political and economic connectedness between countries, there has been an increase in the movement of people across borders (Serin, 2017; Smith, 2018). J-1TEVs are among the people who respond to programs of host countries to promote the interchange and enhancement of knowledge in education, arts, and science (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). They migrate to countries that share linguistic and cultural similarities with their home countries or have communities where large settlements of their nationality live (Modesto, 2020). The literature shows four main reasons for J-1TEVs migration: They are recruited to help fill vacancies (Bartlett, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019); they migrate to improve their personal lives (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Geist & McManus, 2012; Modesto, 2020); they migrate to enhance their professional experiences (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Furuya et al., 2019; Ospina & Medina, 2020), and to satisfy the desire to develop cultural awareness by teaching internationally (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Mizzi, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017). Considering the reasons – to fill vacancies, to improve personal lives, to enhance professional experiences, and to develop cultural awareness – teacher immigration brings personal gains and benefits to the U.S. education system.

Teacher Shortage

J-1TEVs are recruited to help fill the gap in teacher-shortage (Bartlett, 2014; Irvin et al., 2020; Savious & Sadhana, 2021). At the state and local levels, teacher shortages continue to plague America's public school education system (American Federation of Teachers, 2021; Furuya et al., 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019). School districts in Virginia reported nearly 5,000 vacancies (American Federation of Teachers, 2021). Illinois schools struggled to fill teaching

positions a few days before the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year (Broaddus, 2021). Six thousand nine hundred teachers and service educators did not return to their positions in the same school district in South Carolina for the 2021-2022 school year (Garrett, 2021). As of February 2022, 74 of the 79 South Carolina school districts reported 1,121 vacant teaching positions (CERRA, 2022). Unfortunately, schools in poor, rural communities, primarily where minorities reside, experience the greatest impact of teacher shortage (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gross, 2018; Showalter et al., 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016; Tran & Smith, 2019).

Several studies have explored the causes of teacher shortage in the U. S. (Schaefer et al., 2016; Showalter et al., 2017; Tran, 2017; Tran & Buchman, 2017; Tran & Smith, 2019). The most significant reason is the low financial compensation teachers receive compared to other professions (Tran, 2017; Tran & Buchman, 2017). Teachers in rural school districts where underrepresented minority students reside are generally paid even lower salaries. In South Carolina, where this study was set, teachers' salary is below the national average (Irvin et al., 2020; Showalter et al., 2017, as cited in Tran & Smith, 2019). With low salary offers, few college students are attracted to teaching. In Tran & Smith's (2019) study with 403 college students from different majors at several public universities, the collective response shows participants suggesting an increase in salary, medical, and retirement benefits to be attracted to teaching in the hard-to-staff rural schools.

With fewer college graduates entering the teaching profession and the consequent decline in teacher education graduates (CERRA, 2018; Sutcher et al., 2016), school districts are turning to EVP sponsors to recruit J-1TEV to mitigate the teacher shortage (Bartlett, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Furuya et al., 2019). J-1TEVs from developing countries respond to the opportunity to work in the U. S. for higher salaries and a better standard of living

compared to their home country (Burman et al., 2006; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2019).

Other causes of the teacher shortage are the stressful environment in which teachers work (Garcia & Weiss, 2019) and, in the case of rural school districts, the location's remoteness (Schaefer et al., 2016). The stress of accountability, student absenteeism, lack of parental support, disruptive student behavior, working with economically challenged students, and fear of safety are factors contributing to a tougher school climate for teachers (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Schaefer et al., 2016; Tran, 2016; Tran & Smith, 2019). Concerning location, rural areas tend to be socially isolated with limited community amenities (Showalter et al., 2017). Collectively, the above factors drive teachers away from their jobs, leaving some school districts to resort to J-1TEVs to fill the vacancies (Furuya et al., 2019; Savious & Sadhana, 2021).

Opportunity for Personal Development

Considering developing countries' social, economic, and political conditions, foreign teachers seek opportunities to migrate to developed countries for personal development (Burman et al., 2006; Modesto, 2020). Comparably, teachers in developing countries are paid less than teachers in developed countries like the U.S; hence, foreign teachers migrate for higher salaries and a better standard of living (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Geist & McManus, 2012; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2019; Sharma, 2012). Better salaries leverage financial security for teachers and a chance to improve their way of living (Mishra, 2011; Ospina & Medina, 2020). Some teachers see it as an opportunity to assist family members in their home country (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019), given the exchange value of the U.S. dollar to the native currency. Also, some foreign teachers see it as an avenue for families to migrate to America permanently (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Sharma, 2012).

Opportunity for Professional Development

Migrating for professional development ranks high as a reason for teacher migration (Miller, 2018). Developed countries, like America, offer opportunities for J-1TEVs, especially those from developing countries, to expand their professional practices (Modesto, 2020; Serin, 2017; Sharma, 2012). J-1TEVs are exposed to ongoing professional development in the most recent pedagogies or evidence-based research to improve their practices (Altun, 2015; Miller, 2018; Serin, 2017). Some even pursue master's degrees in education (Miller, 2018). With continual training, they can integrate new strategies into lessons to procure better learning outcomes (Serin, 2017). J-1TEVs also get the opportunity to develop their academic qualifications (Furuya et al., 2019; Miller, 2018) and become more knowledgeable in their content area (Serin, 2017). Generally, working abroad allows J-1TEVs to experience a professional overhaul (Miller, 2018).

Opportunity to Teach Internationally

Going beyond the borders of their native land to teach internationally is another reason teachers migrate to other countries (Sharma, 2012). The J-1TEVs program allows teachers from countries worldwide to teach in America's K-12 multicultural classrooms (BridgeUSA, n.d.-d). The multiculturalism of American classrooms offers a wealth of experience in cross-cultural learning for foreign teachers. Interacting with students and staff of different cultures leverages increased cultural awareness (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Mizzi, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Serin, 2017). J-1TEVs are afforded the opportunity to learn about the values and beliefs of different cultures and how best meet students' needs through culturally responsive teaching (De Villar & Jiang, 2012; Serin, 2017). If J-1TEVs return to their home country at the end of the

program, according to the stipulations of the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, they are expected to be more knowledgeable, skillful, and confident in the profession (Serin, 2017; U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Additionally, teaching internationally is associated with a sense of authority and prestige that local teachers who do not have the experience cannot talk about (Serin, 2017).

Challenges J-1TEVs Face

Relocating from one country to another, regardless of the intended length of stay, is not without challenges. For J-1TEVs, challenges are experienced at the personal and professional levels. The personal challenges surround the cultural adjustments they and their families make as they settle down and perform daily functions in a new cultural environment (Lazarova et al., 2015; McNulty, 2015; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012; Shiva, 2021). The personal challenges also encompass the emotional stress family members experience being separated from family (Ospina & Medina, 2020; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012; Wu et al., 2015). In contrast, professional challenges are the job-related obstacles J-1TEVs encounter while teaching and interacting with students, school personnel, and parents of the host country (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015***;*** Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018). Although the personal and professional levels relate dichotomously to J-1TEVs' private and public lives respectively, there is a cross-over effect of the personal on the professional (Cole, 2011; Foster, 1997; Takeuchi et al., 2002; Van der Zee, 2005; Ward et al., 2001).

Personal Challenges

Settling down, separation from family and family adjustment are three personal challenges literature accounts for in the lived experience of J-1TEVs (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018;

Halicioglu, 2015; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Shiva, 2021; Wu et al., 2015). Personal challenges are both physical and psychological. Relocating from one country to another comes with emotional stress due to being separated from family and friends and settling down (Ospina & Medina, 2020). Settling down means attending to, within a short period, a list of day-to-day necessities for the basic functioning of the family or self if the J-1TEVs is single. In cases where a spouse and children accompany the J-1TEVs, there is the psychological stress everyone experiences as they make the cultural adjustment. Feelings of anxiety may surface because of the fear of an uncertain future (Brown, 2008; McNulty, 2015).

Settling Down. Typical of people who move from one place to another, settling down and finding accommodation is one of the most important challenges that J-1TEVs experience (Ospina & Medina, 2020). As soon as they arrive in the school districts, J-1TEVs and their dependents, if any, must find housing. Securing an apartment is usually challenging because new J-1TEVs do not have credit scores and social security cards (Ospina & Medina, 2020) necessary to rent apartments. Moreover, when they secure an apartment, they may have to settle for housing that does not meet their expectations (Halicioglu, 2015). Furnishing the house becomes a priority, and so is obtaining transportation to move the family around. J-1TEVs must adjust to new driving regulations (Fee, 2011), such as driving on a different side of the road from what they are accustomed to. As the weather changes, they need to consider appropriate clothing (Fee, 2011).

Other concerns are finding suitable schools for their children, becoming familiar with shopping areas, locating hospitals and clinics, and adjusting to America's financial system of credit cards, credit scores, and social security cards (Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Ospina & Medina, 2020). While orienting oneself to these concerns may not be

difficult, having to deal with everything in a short time can be overwhelming and stressful (Cole, 2011; Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Halicioglu, 2015). J-1TEVs may have anticipated the changes through reading or hearing of the experiences of other J-1TEVs. Still, there is no way to fully prepare for the intensity of the changes in a country with systems so different from theirs.

Separation from Family. J-1TEVs are separated from family when they relocate to another country. Although they are allowed to bring their spouses and children (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020), they leave behind family members who may have been integral in their day-to-day living. Some experience loneliness and homesickness (Alred, 2003; Brown, 2008; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Wu et al., 2015) and must rely on electronic devices to stay connected. Making real friends who can provide support is not easy (Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012); hence, they may experience emotional distress while trying to adjust (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012).

Family Adjustment. A significant influence on J-1TEVs' experience is their family's adjustment (Shiva, 2021; Takeuchi et al., 2002; Van der Zee, 2005; Ward et al., 2001). The J-1TEV program caters to families. Spouses and children under 21 years are classified as J-2s. Spouses are allowed to work once they apply for an employment authorization document (U. S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). Previous studies have documented expatriates' familial challenges when relocating to host countries. The challenges include the stressors of trailing spouses adjusting to a new environment (Brown, 2008; McNulty & Inkson, 2013; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012), lack of organizational and social support for spouses (McNulty, 2012), crossover and spillover effects on expatriates' performance on the job (Lazarova et al., 2015), the tension in the home and ensuing consequences such as bankruptcy, depressions, alienation from children, and divorce (McNulty, 2015).

Couples leave their jobs in their home countries, hoping for a better opportunity to improve their family's standard of living (Konopaske et al., 2005), but finding suitable jobs can be problematic at times for J-1TEVs' spouses who were working in their home country (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Harvey et al., 2009; Lazarova et al., 2015). They may experience prejudice against foreigners seeking employment (Cole, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015; Harvey et al., 2009) and consequently feel a loss of professional identity (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012). The setbacks can create feelings of uncertainty about the future (Brown, 2008). Unhappy about the changing family dynamics, spouses may become anxious, and conflicts may arise, leading to a breakdown in marriages (McNulty, 2015).

Relocation tends to create an imbalance in which one spouse, usually the J-1TEV, is in control of residency, bank accounts, insurance, and social network, with the J-1TEV's spouse having little control or entitlement (Eldridge et al., 2007). The undue stress that comes with this is usually negotiated by the spouse, who holds the power to either remain in an unhealthy relationship or move on in what they perceive as a change for the better (Eldridge et al., 2007). In times of stress, partners can become polarized; that is, they can think and behave in ways that create dissonance between themself and their spouse, which aggravates a stressful situation preceding a divorce (McNulty, 2015). The result of polarization is divergence of priorities (Lazarova et al., 2015; McNulty & Inkson, 2013), non-communication, and a dysfunctional relationship that advances toward little tolerance of each other (Baucam & Atkins, 2013; Wheeler et al., 2001). Being in a foreign environment, there is inadequate legal and counseling support for expatriate families; hence, the relationship suffers from a lack of intervention. Spouses experience the brunt of emotional and psychological trauma that can lead to divorce

(McNulty, 2015) and a spill-over effect on the functionality of family members (Lauring & Selmer, 2010; Lazarova et al., 2010; Van der Zee et al., 2005).

Van der Zee et al.'s (2005) cross-sectional study with expatriate families from 21 countries provided empirical evidence that there is a direct correlation between expatriate performance and how well their families adjust to the new environment. If family members are happy or have a favorable opinion about the experience, then expatriates are likely to feel the same and perform well at work, and if family members are dissatisfied, expatriates' state of mind will be adversely affected with the consequence of unsatisfactory performance at work (Cole, 2011; Foster, 1997; Takeuchi et al., 2002; Van der Zee, 2005; Ward et al., 2001). In a qualitative study conducted by McNulty (2012), it was found that 99% of the 264 participants, who were trailing spouses from 54 countries, stated that stable marriages are essential to adjustment in the host country.

The adjustment of children also has a bearing on J-1TEVs, but the challenges encountered depend on the age of the children. Some of the challenges children experience are the loss of friends and having to make new friends in their new community and at school; adjusting to the subtle and overt differences in culture, including language and gender roles (Lazorova et al., 2015; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012); being successful at school; and creating an identity to make them succeed (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018). Weeks et al. (2010) purport that if adolescents adjust positively, the expatriate and family may be encouraged to extend their time; however, there is a need for more research to substantiate this claim (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018; Lazorova et al., 2015).

Professional Challenges

Several studies revealed that teachers migrating to the U.S face language barriers, the challenge of diverse classrooms, difficulty adjusting to the curriculums, classroom management, and lack of support from administration, (Broutian, 2016; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015*;* Koppelman, 2017; Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018). The professional challenges arise from an interaction between J-1TEVs and students, staff, and parents. Because J-1TEVs have different cultural backgrounds from members of the host country, their values, expectations, and perspectives can clash with others whose norms and practices are different (Bartlett, 2014; Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015; Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020). What is most important is how J-1TEVs and members of the host country overcome the challenges. Understanding and respecting each other and being socially conscious of the values that underpin people's behaviors are positive steps toward mitigating the challenges.

Language Barrier. Because J-1TEVs are recruited to the U.S. from India, Mexico, the Philippines, Canada, Cuba, and 151 other countries (Furuya et al., 2019), language barriers inevitably exist and remain the biggest problem between J-1TEVs and members of the host country (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014; Bunyamin, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Safipour, 2017). The language problem of foreign-born teachers has been the subject of several studies, most of them being at the post-secondary level; (Alberts, 2008; Bailey, 1984; Cohen & Robin, 1985; Gillette, 1982; Mellor, 1988; Neves & Sanyal, 1991), however, some of the findings are nonetheless relevant to the experience of J-1TEVs at the secondary level.

Misunderstanding arises due to linguistic and paralinguistic cultural differences expressed in accents, body language, silences, idioms, pauses, intonation, dialect form, and

gestures (Ephratt, 2011; Hutchison & Jazzar, 2007; Mancini-Cross et al., 2009; Ospina & Medina, 2020). J-1TEVs and students and parents can unknowingly offend each other, like in the case of a Latin American teacher whom parents reprimanded for violating the personal space of their child. However, from the teacher's perspective, he only tried to explain the content in detail to the student (Ospina and Medina, 2020).

The complaint of students not understanding foreign-born educators' accents, pronunciation, and intonation is common (Alberts, 2008; Lee, 2015; Neves & Sanyal, 1991; Ospina & Modesto, 2020; Smith, 2018; Williams, 1987). Afro-Caribbean educators, though they are English speakers, are challenged because their English accents are different from the U. S. standard English accent. Afro-Caribbean educators may be stereotyped or ridiculed for differences in diction and pronunciation (Alberts, 2008; Neves & Sanyal, 1991; Ospina & Modesto, 2020; Smith, 2018; Williams, 1987) like the participants in Lee's (2015) and Ospina and Modesto's (2020) research who confessed to being criticized for their accents while working at schools in the U.S. Criticism raises the notion of the dominance of America's mainstream language where foreign-born teachers are expected to speak like natives to be accepted (Lee, 2015; Safipour et al., 2017), or assert themselves as legitimate English speakers to achieve a sense of identity in the U.S. (Smith, 2018).

It is reasonable to believe that non-English-speaking educators face a greater challenge than educators from English-speaking countries regarding language challenges in U. S classrooms. Non-English-speaking educators are knowledgeable in their specific subject area, but they may be challenged to express themselves clearly for students to understand (Neves & Sanyal, 1991; Sarkisian, 1984). As a result, students can become confused and unmotivated (Borjas, 2000; Modesto, 2020). While this raises a legitimate concern, students' attitude towards

foreign-born teachers is a factor that helps determine their success in classes taught by foreign educators (Alberts, 2008). Rubin (1992) found that students' perceptions of the strength of instructors' accent were tied to the instructors' ethnicity; hence, the more different the instructor was compared to students, the stronger students perceived the accent. In his study, Rubin (1992) found that the correlation is weakly supported.

Considering the language issues mentioned above, if J-1TEVs want to remain to teach in host countries, they must get used to mainstream language (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014; Bünyamin, 2017; Byram, 1977; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992). They must learn the communication styles of members of the host country (Dwyer, 2019). However, there is no guarantee that communication problems will be eradicated; they will remain an issue even if J-1TEVs develop a substantial linguistic corpus (Ospina & Medina, 2020).

Teaching in a Diverse Classroom. J-1TEVs are challenged by the diversity of America's K -12 classrooms in several ways. First, they work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Broutian, 2016; Koppelman, 2017; Lee, 2015). J-1TEVs coming from the Caribbean, for example, are used to teaching students belonging to the Caribbean culture. The students may be ethnically different, but they coexist in communities that share a common, Caribbean identity (Premdas, 1996). By contrast, America's classrooms are often comprised of students of different nationalities and ethnicities (Koppelman, 2017) who do not share a common identity. The challenge that J-1TEVs face is inadequate knowledge of intercultural education (Sarı & Yüce, 2020; Wubshet & Menuta, 2018).

An essential facet of intercultural education is intercultural competence, which is the "ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than our own" (Wubshet & Menuta, 2018, Introduction). Being used to a monoculture, Caribbean J-1TEVs tend to teach all

students under the same conditions, although they are culturally and linguistically different (Sarı & Yüce, 2020). This is problematic because students have different needs that must be met equitably (Koppelman, 2017). The lack of cultural competence can lead to cultural dissonance and conflicts between students and teachers (Lee, 2015). Without the relevant training, designing lessons for different learners from different backgrounds is challenging (Gay, 2002; Sarı & Yüce, 2020). Hermans (2002) and Eryama et al. (2011) stressed the need for integrating multicultural teaching in teacher training programs for today's pluralistic society. Perhaps, greater emphasis should be placed on the intercultural component of induction programs and other professional development programs. Administrators must never assume that J-1TEVs, by virtue of their years of teaching, know how to implement culturally responsive pedagogy.

Second, J-1TEVs teach in inclusive classrooms with special needs and non-disabled students, an environment that may be unconventional for some. Statistics reveal a growing number of students with learning disabilities in public schools. In 2018–2019, 7.1 million, or 14 percent of all public-school students in the U. S. received special education services. Among students receiving special education services, 33% had specific learning disabilities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). According to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all children must be educated in the least restrictive environment (Bolourian et al., 2020; Boroson, 2017; Carson, 2015). The rationale behind IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the same learning environment as their non-disabled peers (Bolourian et al., 2020).

Not all countries embrace the same policies as America or have achieved the level of inclusiveness as the U. S. The UNESCO's (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report on inclusion and education in Latin America and the Caribbean shows that the countries in the

regions have a long way to go to achieve inclusion. About 60% of the countries in the region record a definition of inclusive education, yet only 64% of the definitions are broad enough to include multiple marginalized groups. This means many countries have not grasped the full concept of inclusion (UNESCO, 2020). Generally, students with disabilities in the Caribbean and Latin America attend separate schools from public schools. Forty-two percent of the countries have laws legislated for separate schools for students with disabilities, while only 16% promote inclusion; the remaining countries support a blend of segregation and mainstreaming (UNESCO (2020).

It can be concluded that many J-1TEVs from these regions are not accustomed to working in inclusive classrooms or lack adequate training to work with students with special needs. Cheong et al. (2018) affirm that students with disabilities in Guyana are not catered to. Schools do not provide appropriate accessibility to meet their needs, and teachers are not trained to teach them. So, not being trained to work with special needs students who add to the range of mixed abilities is a foreseeable challenge for J-1TEVs who come from Latin America and the Caribbean to the U. S. They may consider it extra work or stressful, as noted by Saloviita and Schaffus (2016).

A third part of the diversity is the inclusion of LGBTQ students and the policies that support their lifestyle and protect their right to individual freedom in the U. S. (Koppelman, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Not every country is proactive in protecting the rights of LGBTQs. There is a global divide on accepting homosexuality in society, and all nations face the ethical challenge of supporting them (Koppelman, 2017; Poushter & Kent, 2020). J-1TEVs from countries where public opinion is against homosexuality may feel awkward interacting with homosexual students because of their traditional aversion to the

lifestyle in their home country (Genrich & Brathwaite, 2005). For example, there is strong public homophobia toward LGBTs in Latin America and the Caribbean despite legislative advancements in favor of them over the past ten years (Corraes, 2015; UNESCO, 2020). The phobia stems from a religious stance that fosters a prejudice toward homosexuals, stereotyping the lifestyle and linking it to HIV/AIDS (Chadee et al., 2013; Genrich & Brathwaite, 2005). In general, J-1TEVs from these regions lack continuous professional development to prepare them to embrace the diversity (UNESCO, 2020) of America's classrooms. Embracing LGBTQ students can therefore be a novel experience for some J-1TEVs.

Difficulty Adjusting to Curriculums. Adjusting to new curriculums can challenge J-1TEVs (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Halicioglu, 2015). Curriculum development takes on national contexts (Gordon et al., 2019); hence, every country's educational system would be unique to the socio-economic and political milieu in which the curriculums develop. For example, the curriculums of Caribbean nations differ from the curriculums of U.S. public schools in terms of content, structure, and assessments (see the curriculum guides of the Ministry of Education, Guyana (n. d.) as an example). Additionally, the U.S. curriculums are standards-based, while the curriculums in the Caribbean are not (see the curriculum guides of the Ministry of Education, The Bahamas (n. d.), as an example.). J-1TEVs from the Caribbean region must adjust to new curriculums that, to varying degrees, are unfamiliar to them. Burman et al. (2006) subscribe to this view by pointing out that teaching in a foreign country is challenging because education systems and curricula differ across regions. Sharplin (2009) adds that adapting to new curriculums can overwhelm teachers. It is exponentially more challenging because J-1TEVs are expected to be versed in everything quickly (Ospina & Medina, 2020).

In Ospina and Medina's (2020) study on the impact of international visiting faculty's teaching experience in the U. S., one of the 22 international teachers said that most of the time, faculty and administrators assume that international teachers know what to do without considering that they were trained under different systems. However, J-1TEVs can make the transition easier if they are willing to learn and adapt to the curriculums (Bunyamin, 2017; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Halicioglu, 2015).

Classroom Management. Previous research shows that classroom management remains a challenge for J-1TEVs (Dunn, 2011; Modesto, 2020). Common behavioral complaints by J-1TEVs are students' lack of respect for teachers (Modesto, 2020), failure to follow instructions (Ospina & Medina, 2020), use of cell phones during class time, disruptive behaviors, saggy pants, and lack of focus (Dunn, 2011). The participants in Dunn's (2011), Lee's (2015), and Halicioglu's (2015) studies shared experiences of students' academic apathy and indifference to foreign teachers. Miller (2018) discusses the pressure to control behavior and impart outstanding lessons. Regardless of the years of experience teaching in their home countries, knowing how to handle the situations poses a considerable challenge to J-1TEVs (Ospina & Medina, 2020). The tendency to compare classroom discipline in their home country to U. S. classrooms is reflexive for J-1TEVs because their native experience is their frame of reference.

In some cases, the problem of classroom management stems from a lack of cultural awareness and clashes between the beliefs, values, and expectations of J-1TEVs and those of the host country (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Halicioglu, 2015; Lee, 2015; Miller, 2018; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Smith, 2018). Halicioglu (2015) cites the case of Western-trained teachers attempting to solicit individual performances from Chinese and Japanese students whose culture promotes group work. The unresponsive behavior of the students caused the teacher to feel

deskilled (Hayden, 2006). Lee (2015) adds to this discourse through the comparative analysis the participants made of U.S. students versus students of their home country. The participants considered the U.S. students rude when they did not stand when the teachers entered the class – as was the norm in their home country.

Not knowing the cultural practices of the host country, J-1TEVs can experience a loss of personal agency that they developed before migrating to the host country (Miller, 2018; Roskell, 2013). When personal agency diminishes, it is likely that J-1TEVs' efficiency expectations will also diminish (Bandura, 1977). To mitigate the challenge of classroom management, J-1TEV can learn about the host country's culture before arriving (Dunn, 2011). Symth and Kum (2010) suggest having work shadowing or buddying systems to provide role models for J-1TEV. Bandura (1977) refers to the buddying system as a vicarious experience that generates expectations to believe one can accomplish a task because others have succeeded at doing it.

Lack of Support from Administrators. J-1TEVs need support to navigate the path to cultural adjustment, but too often, they do not get the level of support they need from administrators (Bartlett, 2014; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018). The cultural adjustment depends not only on the efforts of J-1TEV but also on members of the host country. Savva (2017) states that the reciprocating person's attitude, values, skills, and knowledge determine the immigrant's intercultural success level.

Lack of administrative support is a major source of stress and frustration for J-1TEVs; without it, they feel abandoned while trying to negotiate a balance between what they know as reality and what they are experiencing in the new environment (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Savva, 2017). Some administrators do not value the contributions of J-

1TEVs (Halicioglu, 2015; Schmidt, 2010), who can add to U. S. students' geographic and geo-cultural knowledge of other cultures (Ganley et al., 2019). J-1TEVs come to the U.S. on an exchange program to share their culture with members of the host country, but some administrators demonstrate a lack of cultural awareness by not creating an environment that supports the intercultural exchange (Dunn, 2011; Halicioglu, 2015; Lee, 2015).

The collective assumption of the normality of mainstream, unquestioned ideas (Smyth & Kum, 2010) leave no room for another perspective. Differences can be construed as deficient (Cummins, 2003), as in the case of principals in Schmidt's (2010) critical ethnographic study in the province of Manitoba, Canada, which involved teachers from Croatia, Belarus, Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine. One participant recalled being criticized for her Indian national attire, and another being publicly ridiculed for her accent. In both cases, the principals demonstrated hostility to otherness and an indifference to the multicultural cogency that J-1TEVs can bring to today's diverse classrooms. These examples speak to the power relation between administrators and J-1TEVs, where those who represent mainstream dominate over minorities according to the structures of society (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). Situations like these can lead J-1TEVs to bond in aggrievement with other J-1TEVs (Cohen, 1977) and take a standoffish approach (Roskell, 2013).

A general lack of support can cause J-1TEVs to recluse into groups that signal separation from the host culture (Cohen, 1977). Within the group or the “bubble” as described by participants in Savva’s (2017) study involving international teachers from 17 countries in Europe and two in Asia, foreign-born teachers find safety among people who share similar concerns (Austin 2007; Savva, 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). They avoid cultural assimilation and prefer to operate on the margin (Savva, 2017). Additionally, they can become critical of the host

country's education system and idealize the education system of their home country (Roskell, 2013).

Administrative support is critical for J-1TEVs. When administrators are indifferent to J-1TEVs, J-1TEVs can withdraw (Halicioglu, 2015); conversely, when they believe in them, J-1TEVs can succeed (Modesto, 2020). Such is the case of Modesto's (2020) Filipino participant who confessed to making lots of mistakes at the beginning but was motivated and remained 16 years in the profession in the U.S. because of administrative support. If there is a genuine relationship that reduces cultural differences between administrators and J-1TEVs, there is likely to be a greater understanding and goodwill between the two groups (Brislin, 1981; Hendrickson et al., 2011; Holopainen & Bjorkman, 2005).

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. The literature shows recruitment of J-1TEVs in America's K-12 classrooms is increasing (Furuya et al., 2019; Modesto, 2020; Yan et al., 2019). Using the TSE theory as the framework of the study, the reviewed literature discussed the historical context and major tenets of the theory. It also established the importance of the theory to J-1TEVs who can readily lose their personal agency in an environment where the attitudes, values, and expectations often conflict with their cultural practices. Additionally, recent literature explores J-1TEVs in the U.S. and the reasons for their migration, noting the increasing teacher shortage (Furuya et al., 2019; Modesto, 2020) and the desire of J-1TEVs for personal and professional development (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020). The personal and professional challenges experienced by J-1TEVs were also examined. These included finding

accommodation, adjusting to policies of private and public systems, separation from families, language barriers, teaching in diverse classrooms, classroom management, adjusting to new curriculums, and lack of administrative support (Bunyamin, 2017; Dos Santos, 2020; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Harmsen et al., 2018; Miller, 2018; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Savious & Sadhana, 2021; Smith, 2018; Smith et al., 2018).

Several studies were done on the experience of expatriates (Brown, 2008; Lineehan, 2002; McNulty, 2012, 2015; McNulty & Inkson, 2013; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012; Takeuchi et al., 2002), and a few studies were done on foreign teachers in the southeastern United States (Lockhart, 2021; Modesto, 2020; Obi, 2020); however, a gap exists in the literature about J-1TEVs' personal and professional experiences at RSD in South Carolina. South Carolina is among the states that recruit J-1TEVs, but there is no national database that documents detailed information on J-1TEVs. J-1TEVs are minimally accounted for in CERRA's (2018) annual reports on attrition and recruitment of overseas teachers. Investigating the lived experiences of J-1TEVs is vital to understanding how they cope and how their experiences impact teaching and learning. From the study, administrators and policymakers can initiate changes that benefit the cultural assimilation of J-1TEVs into the system that promotes inclusive education for all groups of people.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Conducting a phenomenological study on J-1TEVs gave voice to their experience (Lather, 2009), and the findings informed decisions and professional developments to improve teaching and learning. Chapter Three presented the research design, research questions, setting, participants, positionality, and interpretive frameworks. Additionally, Chapter Three discussed the researcher's role, procedures, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. The concluding paragraph provided a comprehensive summary of Chapter Three.

Research Design

This study used the qualitative research method, which seeks to understand human experiences that are subjects of inquiry (Fossey et al., 2002; Pathak et al., 2013). Qualitative research examines the intricacies of human existentialism and makes it visible to the world through observation and interpretation. It seeks to interpret things in their natural setting and gives credence to the meanings people bring to phenomena they experienced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Creswell and Poth (2018) opine that qualitative research is appropriate when a group of people is experiencing a problem, and there is a need for a detailed understanding of the issue, or when people are desirous of sharing their stories.

Creswell and Poth (2018) identify five qualitative research designs: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, and ethnography. The designs are similar in the research process; they identify a problem, research questions, and proceed to data collection, data

analysis, interpretation, and report. However, the designs differ in several ways, including the focus of the design, unit of analysis, and strategies for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenology design, which was the design of this study, describes the experience of a group of people who share the same phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). There are two types of phenomenological research: hermeneutical phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A significant difference between the two approaches is that in the former, the researchers describe and interpret participants' experiences, while in the latter, the researchers describe (only) and are expected to bracket their personal experiences to prevent the influence of preconceived ideas (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Hermeneutical phenomenology originated with Heidegger, who reacted to Husserl's descriptive approach by advocating for an interpretive process to arrive at meaning (Mulhall, 1993). For Heidegger, interpretation requires fore-structure (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009). Heidegger believes that understanding emerges from presuppositions that are continually revised as new knowledge is added. He argues that humans cannot escape presuppositions because we are literally present in the world (Peoples, 2021). To arrive at the essence of lived experience, without the influence of foreknowledge – a construct Husserl deems impossible because of his purported views on the influence of foresight – Heidegger introduced the concept of the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1962). Heidegger (1962) claims that meaning- making is iterative and continuous as new information is added to old ones. The overarching idea of the circle is that to understand the whole is to understand the parts and how the parts interact with the whole (Heidegger, 1962). In other words, the whole transcript sheds meaning on parts of the transcripts, and the parts shed meaning on the whole in a cycle of constant revision until the essence of the experience is clear (Peoples, 2021).

I chose hermeneutic phenomenological design for my study. Hermeneutical phenomenology best suited my research because I experienced the challenges of being a J-1TEV at RSD in South Carolina and was able to interpret participants' experiences to bring understanding to the phenomenon. Unlike transcendental phenomenology, I did not have to bracket my presuppositions; I was a part of the research like the participants (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009). It is challenging to set aside one's experience while examining a phenomenon freshly (Moustakas, 1994); thus, my presuppositions gave me a unique perspective to construct knowledge. By utilizing Heidegger's hermeneutic circle of going back and forth through inquiry, I expanded my knowledge of the essence of the J-1TEV lived experience at RSD in South Carolina.

Research Questions

According to Agee (2009), research questions guide the study and articulate what the researcher intends to know about the participants' perspectives. Research questions restate the research's purpose in interrogative sentences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Below are the central research question and two sub-questions that guided the data collection and analyses of the study. The sub-questions were aligned to the TSE theory to show the correlation between the impact of J-1TEVs' personal and professional challenges and J-1TEVs' ability to function effectively in U. S.' K-12 classrooms.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina with respect to their TSE?

Sub-Question One

How do the personal experiences of J-1TEVs impact their TSE at RSD in South Carolina?

Sub-Question Two

How do the professional experiences of J-1TEVs impact their TSE at RSD in South Carolina?

Setting and Participants

In qualitative research, the setting is the location or site of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is the natural or real-life place where a phenomenon occurs (Teherani et al., 2015). In phenomenology research, one or more sites can be used depending on the location of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In hermeneutic phenomenological research, participants share a lived experience and can articulate their experiences for research purposes (van Manen, 2014). This section described the setting and participants used in the hermeneutical phenomenological study of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina.

Setting

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the research setting is the place where the study occurs. For this hermeneutic study, the setting was a school district in rural South Carolina. To protect the confidentiality of the setting, the pseudonym Rural School District (RSD) was used.

RSD is a Title 1 school district in rural South Carolina. The district serves nine schools: five elementary, one middle school, one high school, a vocational center, and a virtual academy that was established post-COVID 19 pandemic. Approximately 2,590 students are enrolled in schools in the district, with a student ratio of 10:1. The ethnic breakdown is as follows: African Americans 57%, Caucasian 38%, Hispanics 2%, and Others 2%. Niche, the American company that reviews schools and colleges, gives the district an overall ranking of C+ with A+ for administration and A+ for clubs and activities; academics and college prep are rated as C. According to state test scores, the percent proficiency in reading is 34%, and the percent

proficiency in mathematics is 36%. The average SAT composite score out of 1600 is 1040, while the average ACT composite score out of 36 is 20. The graduation rate is 81%. All students are on the free lunch program.

The district is headed by a board of trustees comprised of representatives from seven districts in the county. There is a superintendent who manages the entire district; he is assisted by a deputy superintendent. The superintendents head a leadership team comprising of principals and directors of various divisions of the school district. These divisions include safety, transportation, maintenance, special projects, secondary education, finance, student services, and information technology. Vice principals assist principals and supervise department chairs. Department chairs supervise teachers. At RSD, there are 201 teachers: 119 elementary teachers, 34 middle school teachers, and 48 high school teachers.

RSD was selected as the site for the research because the district hires J-1TEVs from the Caribbean, the Philippines, India, and Africa for all school levels. It is also the school district in which I last worked. Being a former J-1TEV at RSD and having experienced challenges, I was interested in investigating the lived experience of other J-1TEVs in the same school district. The choice of using all school levels over a single school was decided based on the number of J-1TEVs attached to the schools – J-1TEVs are dispersed throughout the school levels.

Participants

Participants are the subjects of hermeneutic studies. They provide personal insights into life worlds that bring an understanding of self and a community of people (van Manen, 1990). To meet the sample size requirement of qualitative research, I recruited ten participants from across school levels at RSD in South Carolina. A list of potential participants was given to me by the Director of Human Resource of the school district. Ten participants were adequate for a

phenomenological study because saturation is achieved within the range of 9 – 17 participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Saturation is the point where new data does not add nor provide further insight into the emerging themes (Byrant & Charmaz, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Criterion sampling was used to select participants. Criterion sampling is appropriate when all participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To participate, participants had to be current J-1TEVs (1st – 5th year) or former J-1TEVs, up to four years after functioning as J-1TEVs in RSD. They had to be currently employed in RSD. Additionally, snowball sampling was used to identify additional participants as was necessary. Having worked as a J-1TEV in RSD, I knew at least one former J-1TEV at the high, middle, and elementary schools who were able to provide me with potential participants' names and email addresses. I verified participants' names and email addresses by perusing the staff directories on the district' websites.

The participants were natives of Jamaica, with at least two years of experience teaching in their home countries (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). They were selected by Educational Partners International, LLC, who recruits overseas teachers to fill vacant positions in U.S. schools for 3-5 years. Participants from the high school were specialists in science, English Language Arts, mathematics, and foreign languages, while participants from the elementary schools were generalists. All demographic information was gathered using Google forms, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities.

Researcher Positionality

I worked as a J-1TEV at RSD in South Carolina, which was the setting of this research. Having experienced personal and professional challenges, I was motivated to conduct this hermeneutical phenomenological research on J-1TEVs in the same school district. Because

hermeneutic phenomenology aims at interpreting a phenomenon, I selected social constructivism to frame the research. In social constructivism, researchers seek to understand the nature of peoples' experiences through interaction with them (Andrews, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). My positionality was also reflected through my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions that elucidated my worldview and approach to the study (Rowe, 2014; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive lens through which I explored my research was social constructivism, also known as interpretivism (Andrews, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Martens, 2015). In social constructivism, people seek to give meaning to the experiences of their lifeworld (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The meanings are socially constructed through interaction with others, but they are subjective based on people's interpretations of what they consider reality, not necessarily what it is (Andrews, 2012; Rasmussen, 1998). Researchers using the social constructivist paradigm must be open to many realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018) because each participant experiences the world differently. My research on the lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina identified with social constructivism because I aimed to understand what it meant to be a J-1TEV within the specific context. Exploring participants' personal and professional experiences aided in the construction of knowledge in a socially dynamic way between participants and researcher (Andrews, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In social constructivism, researchers are inherently a part of the research (Andrews, 2012). Since my approach was hermeneutical, I used my prior knowledge to augment interpretation (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009). Not bracketing my experience as is the case with transcendental phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), I was a part of constructing knowledge as

much as the participants. As Heidegger (1962) points out, interpretation of a lived experience is impossible without the researcher's influence.

Philosophical Assumptions

In the study of human science, researchers bring to their studies philosophical assumptions that shape the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These assumptions reflect their ontological, epistemological, and axiological views about the phenomenon being studied. Identifying the assumptions elucidated my perspective on the nature of reality, the theory of knowledge, and my stance on values (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which collectively underpinned my research design and methods (Rowe, 2014). Following is a discussion of my philosophical assumptions on how I viewed the world and approached my research.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology is concerned with issues surrounding "the nature of reality and its characteristics" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20). Hawthorne et al. (2021) purport that ontology deals with what things exist and how they relate according to similarities and differences. The Britannica (n. d.) defines ontology as "the philosophical study of being in general, or of what applies naturally to everything that is real." From the definitions, ontology can be summed up as the nature of human existence. It answers questions about who we are, why we exist, and how our existentialism functions as we interact with others. As a researcher, I believe that an understanding of human life is extrapolated by exploring our lived experiences. Knowledge of human life is not fixed or static in a text; it is dynamic and ever-changing based on our experiences. Against such, I believe there are multiple realities because our unique socialization shapes our view of the world; everyone frames reality differently. In my research on the experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina, my ontological approach was to have an open

mind to multiple perspectives to create a detailed portrait that captures the essence of this experience.

Epistemological Assumption

According to Pritchard (2016), epistemology is about the philosophical exploration of knowledge which he deems as knowing "that such-and-such is the case" (p. 1) after an analysis of the notion. But how is knowledge gained? Knowledge is bound up in people's experiences. I do not believe that knowledge is an object or form that is pre-established and waiting to be explored. Knowledge becomes operable when humans interact with people or things (Andrews, 2012; Heidegger, 1962); outside of the interaction, there is no meaning. Considering this, I supported Creswell and Poth (2018) in saying that knowledge is known through people's subjective experiences (Andrews, 2012; Rasmussen, 1998). This suggests there are multiple realities in knowledge-making and that knowledge is a social construct in the context of phenomenological research (Andrews, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, my epistemological position drove me to work closely with the participants of my study to create knowledge of their lived experiences.

Axiological Assumption

McArdle et al. (2013) define axiology as "the study and exploration of human values, which enables us to identify the underlying beliefs and values that influence our perceptions and interpretation of our life experiences, our decisions and actions – to understand clearly why we do what we do" (p. 84). Researchers bring their values to a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Values are shaped by people's socialization that construes for them what is desirable. My axiological position is rooted in biblical principles of morality. J-1TEVs come from different countries but are part of humanity. Researching their lived experiences gave voice to their

concerns and advocated for educational reforms that are aligned with biblical principles on how to treat others.

Researcher's Role

Moustakas (1994) states that the researcher is the human instrument for the study. The human instrument is the one who collects data, analyzes it, and reports the results of the data. I, the researcher, was the human instrument in this hermeneutic study. I did not have any personal relationships or authority over the participants. I worked at RSD in South Carolina for five years as a J-1TEV and left at the end of my contract. During my tenure, I experienced professional challenges that impacted my self-efficacy. Although I had over 16 successful years of teaching English Language Arts at high schools in Guyana and The Bahamas, when I arrived in the U. S. (being distinguished as the best graduating teacher in Guyana and teacher of the year in The Bahamas), I found my teacher self-efficacy waning in the U.S. classroom because of cultural differences between myself and students. Classroom management and what seemed to be students' indifference to education were my greatest challenges. I also struggled with administrative and parental expectations of students' grades when some students were reluctant to work for passing grades. Some administrators seemed out of touch with J-1TEVs' experiences and were unsupportive. Against these challenges, I became interested in investigating what the nature of the experience was like for other J-1TEVs in the district. To protect the data from my biases, I employed Heidegger's (1962) hermeneutic circle during data analysis. As a starting point, I used my experience (van Manen, 1990) as a previous J-1TEV to situate the research within the context of time and place as I knew it to be. Heidegger (1962) contends that prior understanding is essential to interpreting human experiences. As I gained new information from

participants, I revised my understanding of the phenomenon until I arrived at the essence of the lived experience (Heidegger, 1962; Peoples, 2021).

Procedures

The research process was governed by procedures. Researchers must seek approval from the institutional review board (IRB) before data collection. They must provide evidence to the IRB that the participants are protected from harm and the risks of exposed information. Additionally, they must seek site permission and participants' consent (Creswell & Poth, 2018). What follows is an explanation that includes IRB's approval, soliciting participants, the data collection and analysis plans by data source, and an explanation of how the study achieved triangulation.

Permissions

In keeping with the ethical considerations of research, I sought approval from Liberty University's IRB by applying through Cayuse (See Appendix A). IRB is a committee that helps researchers protect the rights of research participants (Amdur & Bankert, 2011). No data was collected before IRB approved the study. First, I sought site approval (See Appendix B) to access the J-1TEVs' work email to make the initial contact. During the initial contact, I asked J-1TEVs for their personal email address and telephone number to conduct the data collection processes. Using personal email addresses is one way to protect the privacy of participants. After IRB's approval, I sought informed consent (See Appendix C) from the participants by emailing them the consent-to-participate form. Once they consented by signing and returning the form, I proceeded with data collection.

Recruitment Plan

A sample size of 10 –15 participants was selected from a pool of about 30 J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina. Ten to fifteen participants are adequate for a hermeneutic study because empirical studies have shown that saturation is reached with 9-17 interviews or 4-8 focus groups (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). I followed several steps to recruit participants. First, I asked the school district for permission to contact J-1TEVs using their work email addresses. Once permission was granted, I accessed the directory on the homepage of the high school, middle school, and elementary schools at RSD to locate the email addresses of the potential participants. Using the email addresses, I made my initial contact with the J-1TEVs by sending them the recruitment email that contained a link to the screening survey (See Appendix D). The survey helped me determine J-1TEVs eligibility. Participants were current J-1TEVs (1^{st} – 5^{th} year J-1TEVs) or former J-1TEVs, up to four years after functioning as a J-1TEV in RSD. I assumed that up to four years after working as a J-1TEV, participants could recall their experience accurately. For additional participants, as was necessary, I employed the snowballing approach by asking teachers I knew at the school levels to identify the names of teachers who met the participation criteria. Snowballing allows researchers to select participants based on recommendations from people (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Once J-1TEVs agreed to participate, I asked them for their personal email address and telephone number for future contact. Using their personal email addresses, I proceeded to send J-1TEVs the consent-to-participate form that outlined the study's purpose, the confidentiality of participants, the risks and benefits of the study, the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study, and instruction on how to return the signed form to me (Creswell & Poth, 2018). If there was no response after one week, I sent a reminder email to J-1TEVs. If there was no response at the end of two weeks, I considered the J-1TEV a non-participant. There was no

financial incentive for participants, but they were informed in the consent-to-participate letter of the benefits of sharing their experience and receiving a copy of the study after publication.

Data Collection Plan

In qualitative research, data collection involves more than data and procedures. It involves ethical issues, gaining access to sites, sampling, recording information, and dealing with issues as they arise (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study on the lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina, the data collection plan was referred to the actual collection of information. In this hermeneutic study, there were three data collection processes: questionnaires, journal prompts, and interviews. These methods facilitate open-ended questions essential for phenomenology studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questionnaires were used to gather a large amount of data. Additionally, they were easily administered online (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Journaling was used to allow participants to reflect, draft and refine their ideas (Janesick, 1999). Interviews allowed me to understand the how's and why's of the participants' experiences as they shared their feelings and opinions on the phenomenon (Jain, 2021). Using the data collection approaches helped to corroborate evidence and validate the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Questionnaires Data Collection Approach

In qualitative research, a questionnaire is a form that contains closed and open-ended questions that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Jain, 2021). There are two types of questionnaires: mailed questionnaires and online questionnaires. While both have the advantage of gathering a large amount of data (Babbie, 2013; Koh & Owen, 2000) from geographically dispersed participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019), online questionnaires have the advantage of gathering data quicker. One

drawback of questionnaires that concerns authors such as Sills and Songs (2002) is the low response rate of emails (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Additionally, care must be taken to write the questions to avoid misinterpretation (Adams et al., 2007). I administered one questionnaire to each participant. The questionnaires consisted of twelve open-ended questions prepared by me, the researcher. I created the questionnaires in Microsoft Word and sent them to the participants by email. Sending by email allowed me to track participants by name. The questionnaires sought to find out how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire. When questionnaires were returned, I downloaded them in PDF format, identified them by participants' names, and stored them on my password-protected computer.

Questionnaire Questions

1. How did you prepare for the cross-cultural experience before arriving in the U.S.? CRQ
2. What did you know about the culture of the people at RSD in South Carolina before coming to the U. S.? CRQ
3. In what ways did the induction program prepare you or not prepare you for the cross-cultural experience? SQ2
4. Having arrived in the U. S., what motivated you to learn about the culture of the host country? CRQ
5. Describe the personal challenges you experienced when you arrived in the U. S. SQ1
6. In what ways, if any, did your private life affect your professional experience? SQ1
7. Describe your experience during the first six months trying to understand the new school system. SQ2

8. What adjustments did you have to make using South Carolina's curriculum for your subject area? What was that experience like? SQ2
9. What were some of the cultural challenges you experienced in the classroom or may still be experiencing? SQ2
10. In what ways did the challenges affect your self-efficacy? SQ2
11. Were you assigned a mentor? If yes, in what ways did your mentor motivate you? If no, how did you manage without a mentor? SQ2
12. Please share the support you got from administrators and staff. SQ2
13. In what ways were you not supported by administrators and staff? SQ2

Question 1 is the grand tour question (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to get participants to talk about the beginning process of the J-1TEV experience. Questions 2 – 6 are geared towards understanding J-1TEVs' cultural intelligence by examining their personal experiences and the impact of their personal experiences on J-1TEVs' professional experiences. Questions 7 – 9 target J-TEVs' challenges and how they adapt to the new cultural context. Question 10 aims to elicit responses aligned with TSE theory, while the final two questions on support and motivation (11 – 13) elicit responses that reveal how support can influence TSE.

Questionnaire Data Analysis Plan

I followed several steps to analyze the questionnaires. First, I read each questionnaire (one at a time) to get a general understanding of the data (Peoples, 2021). Second, I generated preliminary meaning units (Giorgi, 1985) that suggested ideas about the phenomenon. To generate preliminary meaning units, I coded the data or what van Manen (1990) refers to as isolating thematic statements. Codes are aggregates of the text into small categories of information (Creswell & Poth, 2015). I examined each sentence to determine what it revealed

about the phenomenon. Then, I highlighted phrases or statements that revealed notions about the experience being described (van Manen, 1990) before using words or phrases to summarize portions of the data (Saldaña, 2016). After generating preliminary units, the third step was to generate final meaning units (Peoples, 2021). To do this, I employed a strategy called pattern coding.

Pattern coding is the categorization of similar statements (Saldaña, 2016). Through categorization, themes relating to the research questions emerge (Grbich, 2013; Patton, 2015; Saldana, 2016). Themes consist of several codes that form a common idea (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once the themes are identified, van Manen (1990) suggests follow-up collaborative reflections on the themes between the researcher and participants. van Manen said it is through these interpretive conversations that the significance of the research questions is brought to view. Follow-up reflections were conducted via Zoom. After follow-up conversations with the participants, I proceeded to step four by situating each theme under the relevant questionnaire questions. Peoples (2021) refers to this step as situated narrative. I repeated steps one to four for each questionnaire. At stage five, I generated general themes of the situated narratives under each question by synthesizing the themes from all questionnaires into general descriptions of participants' accounts. Finally, I generated general implicit descriptions of participants' responses. At this stage, I combined the major themes into general descriptions (Peoples, 2021). van Manen (1990) describes this stage as composing linguistic transformations, which are notes on the themes (van Manen, 1990). From there, I launched into the hermeneutic phenomenological writing process.

It is important to note that the entire process was iterative within and between the questionnaires. I revised and refined my understanding of the phenomenon by comparing

participants' responses (the hermeneutic circle) (Peoples, 2021). Throughout data analysis, I journaled my biases to revise them through thoughtful reflection. By journaling, I arrived at the essence of participants' experiences without the distraction of my preconceived ideas (Peoples, 2021).

Journal Prompts Data Collection Approach

In qualitative research, journaling is the process of participants reflecting on their personal experiences (Holbrook, 1995) and documenting their thoughts, feelings, and ideas (Chabon & Lee-Wilkerson, 2006; Hayman et al., 2012). Prompts are statements or questions that inspire people to write. Compared to questionnaires, journal writing is more extensive and requires that participants be given a longer time to complete their responses. Hayman et al. (2012) state that the primary purpose of journaling is to "document and reflect on experiences as a way of thinking, understanding, and learning" (p. 28). Journaling is not frequently used compared to interviews and observations, but it is still useful for gathering data (Smith & Hunt, 1997).

I provided five journal prompts that targeted the personal experience, professional experience, and self-efficacy of J-1TEVs. Before emailing the prompts, which were typed on a word document, experts in the field reviewed the prompts I created. I made follow-up contact to ensure participants understood the prompts. Participants were given two weeks to journal and return their responses to me by email. If there was no response after ten days, I sent a reminder email to participants. When I received the journals, I downloaded them and stored the data on my password-protected computer.

Journal Prompt Questions

1. Describe the personal challenges you've experienced as a J-1 teacher exchange visitor working in the school district. SQ1
2. Describe the professional challenges you've experienced as a J-1 teacher exchange visitor working in the school district. SQ2
3. Describe an unforgettable professional experience you've had as a J-1. SQ2
4. Reflect on your self-efficacy as a teacher in your home country. Discuss the ways in which your experience as a J-1 affected your self-efficacy. SQ2
5. In what way did your private life affect your professional life? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2

Journal Prompt Data Analysis Plan

I followed several steps to analyze the journals. First, I read each journal several times, reading closely every detail to grasp the essence of the lived experience. Second, I generated preliminary meaning units (Giorgi, 1985) by coding the data. To code the data, I highlighted, underlined, or circled words, phrases, or sentences (van Manen, 1990) that expressed J-1TEVs experiences. Third, I used words or phrases to label portions of the data (Saldaña, 2016). After generating preliminary units, the fourth step was to generate final meaning units/themes (Peoples, 2021) by categorizing similar data, a process known as pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016). Having arrived at the themes, I conducted follow-up collaborative reflections via Zoom with participants to verify my interpretation of the data (Peoples, 2021, van, Manen, 1990). The latter process was step five. I repeated steps one to five for each journal. Sixth, I situated each theme under the relevant journal prompts, a process Peoples (2021) refers to as situated narrative. Seventh, I generated general themes of the situated narratives under each journal question by synthesizing the themes from all journals into general descriptions of participants' accounts.

Lastly, I generated major themes into general descriptions (Peoples, 2021) and developed what van Manen (1990) called linguistic transformations, which is composing notes on the themes. Throughout the process, I went back and forth, questioning and revising concepts (hermeneutic circle) until I arrived at the essence of J-1TEVs experience. From there, I launched into the hermeneutic phenomenological writing process.

Individual Interviews Data Collection Approach

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the interview is the primary way to gather experiential narrative information to explicate the lived experience of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews establish a relationship between researcher and participants by which knowledge is created (van Manen, 1990). Using interviews allowed participants to reflect and share their personal and professional experiences working as J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina. I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are designed to garner subjective views of participants on the phenomenon participants experienced (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). To conduct the interview, I followed several steps. First, I forwarded the 13 semi-structured questions to participants one week before the interview for them to organize their responses or clarify any questions if necessary. Second, I conducted the interviews via Zoom, beginning with reminders on the research purpose, participants' right to withdraw, and the procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I recorded the interviews on Zoom and on my cell phone (as a backup) that is password protected. Each interview lasted about 45 – 60 minutes. Third, I downloaded the interview from Zoom to my password-protected computer and created files that identified the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The semi-structured questions were as follows:

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. You left your home country to work in the U. S. as a J-1TEV, please share your experience of adjusting to a new living situation, including finding accommodation, driving, credit cards, and credit scores. CRQ/SQ1
3. Describe your feelings about being separated from family, especially when you first came to the U.S. CRQ/SQ1
4. (For participants with spouses) What adjustments did your spouse have to make? SQ3
5. Describe any cross-over effects of your private life on your beliefs about your ability to function effectively in the classroom. SQ1/SQ2
6. Tell me about your experience adjusting to the new classroom culture. SQ2.
7. Communication is key to successful relationships. Describe your ability to communicate appropriately during cross-cultural communications. SQ2
8. How did your professional experiences impact your confidence to perform your classroom duties? SQ4
9. Describe a time, if any, when your self-efficacy decreased because of the obstacles you faced in the classroom. SQ2
10. At moments of low self-efficacy, what or who boosted your confidence to keep going? SQ2
11. Now that you have some experience, how would you describe your level of self-efficacy functioning in the system? SQ2

12. As a J-TEV, you are expected to conduct cross-cultural activities. Describe the experiences and how they were received by administrators, teachers, and students. SQ2
13. Is there anything you want to share that I missed concerning your personal and professional experience? CRQ

The interview questions were structured to generate dialogues that work toward making sense of the universal essence (Seidman, 2013; Vygotsky, 1987) of J-1TEVs. Beginning with introductions allowed participants to relax and talk about things that were important to them. Question 2 was the grand tour question that encouraged participants to reconstruct in vivid detail (Spradley, 1979) the beginning of their work experience. Questions 3 – 5 targeted personal experiences, while questions 6 – 8 aimed at J-TEVs' professional experiences aligned with the CQ and TSE theories. Questions 9 – 11 focused on J-1TEVs' levels of self-efficacy within the classroom. Question 12 sought to find out if there were cross-over effects of J-1TEVs' personal lives on their classroom experiences, while the final question (Question 13) provided an opportunity to record details the researcher may have overlooked.

Individual Interviews Data Analysis Plan

I followed several steps to analyze the interviews. First, I downloaded the interviews from Zoom and transcribed them using Speech to Text Online: Voice, Typing, and Transcription. Second, I read and compared the transcripts with the audio for accuracy. To assure credibility, I emailed the transcripts to the participants, who confirmed the accuracy and then returned the transcripts to me. Third, I immersed myself in close reading of each transcript several times to get a general understanding of the interview. Fourth, I removed insignificant words such as 'ah' and 'um' (Peoples, 2021) that inhibited the flow of comprehending the transcripts; I also removed my comments. Fifth, I generated preliminary meaning units (Giorgi, 1985) by coding the data. I

employed van Manen's (1990) selective approach by highlighting phrases and statements that revealed notions about the experience being described. Then I used words or phrases to summarize portions of the data (Saldaña, 2016). While applying the selective approach and throughout the analysis, I wrote memos in the margins of the transcripts (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of ideas that occurred to me. The memos were helpful as I went back and forth, examining parts of the transcripts to see how the parts related to the whole transcript and the whole transcript related to the parts – hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1962; Peoples, 2021). After generating preliminary units, the sixth step was to generate final meaning units/themes (Peoples, 2021) by categorizing similar data, a process known as pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016).

Once the themes were identified, I conducted follow-up collaborative reflections (Peoples, 2021, van, Manen, 1990) with the participants to verify the accuracy of concepts (step seventh). This was done via Zoom. Next, I situated each theme under the relevant interview questions. Peoples (2021) refers to this step as situated narrative. I repeated steps one to seven for each transcript. In step eight, I generated general themes of the situated narratives under each interview question by synthesizing the themes from all transcripts into general descriptions of participants' accounts. Lastly, I generated major themes into general descriptions (Peoples, 2021), a process van Manen (1990) calls linguistic transformations, which is composing notes on the themes. During analysis, I modified my understanding as I allowed the parts to make sense of the whole and the whole to make sense of the parts – hermeneutic circle (Peoples, 2021). From there, I launched into the hermeneutic phenomenological writing process.

Data Synthesis

Having analyzed the three data sources, the next step I took was to synthesize the data. In hermeneutic study, data synthesis, also known as triangulation, is concerned with corroborating

evidence from different sources to validate a theme (Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I created a spreadsheet that identified the three data sources. Under each source, I listed the themes and sub-themes. Keeping the research questions as my focus, I engaged in constant comparison (van Manen, 1990) of themes and sub-themes across the three sources. In comparing, I asked myself which experiential themes addressed the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEV? Which themes or sub-themes related to the J-1TEV's classroom performance and their self-efficacy levels? By comparing, I identified recurring themes and grouped them. Grouping was essential to remove clusters and repetition (Moustakas, 1994). Each group had similar themes that were worded differently; hence, I created singular statements that captured the main substance of each category (van Manen, 1990). Once this was done, I engaged in what Creswell and Poth (2018) call the "composite description of the phenomenon," (p. 201) that is, the culminating point of the phenomenological research.

Trustworthiness

For qualitative research to attain the standard of acceptability, it must be trustworthy. Guba (1981) identifies four criteria for assessing trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is concerned with presenting an honest description of the phenomenon. Transferability deals with providing adequate contextual information for other researchers to transfer the study to their situations. Dependability and confirmability are closely related (Shenton, 2004). A study is dependable if there are sufficient details for others to repeat it, but it must be free from researchers' biases or preferences, which define confirmability (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). What follows is a description of how the present study demonstrated trustworthiness and the ethical considerations that governed the study.

Credibility

Credibility is essential in determining the validity of the research (Shenton, 2004). The onus is on researchers to show that their findings reflect reality (Merriam, 1998). I demonstrated credibility by adhering to the protocol of gathering and analyzing data. The ethical considerations surrounding interviews and the types, structure, and organization of interview questions reflected the conventions of qualitative research. Secondly, I engaged participants over a prolonged period to develop trust (Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). With trust, participants shared freely and became co-researchers (Hacker, 2013) to a process that became more believable. Having them scrutinize transcripts for accuracy helped build credibility. Another way I showed credibility was through triangulation. Cross-checking the sources unearthed similar ideas that merged into themes that were explicit to the essence of participants' experiences. Finally, using J-1TEVs from different school levels leveraged cross-checking where information was checked against another (van Manen, 1979).

Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1982), a researcher must provide adequate contextual information for others to determine if they can transfer the study to their situation. The number of organizations in a study, the types and number of people involved in the study, the data collection methods, the number and length of data collection sessions, and the time for data collection are elements that provide contextual information (Cole & Gardner, 1979; Marchionini & Teague, 1987). This study provided transferability through a thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the school district and J-1TEVs. Variation accounted for J-1TEV from different school levels and J-1 status, that is, current or post J-1TEV. Researchers who want to conduct a similar study will have sufficient details to guide their research (Firestone, 1993).

Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the methodological process of research that allows others to repeat it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To repeat a study, investigators must first thoroughly understand it. Understanding is gained through specific details in design and implementation, data gathering, and reflective appraisal of the research (Shenton, 2004). Detailed descriptions of the research design and how the study was conducted can leverage a prototype model for other investigators. Additionally, overlapping methods (Shenton, 2004) such as the ones used in this study – journal prompts and questionnaires – increase dependability. I facilitated an external audit on the process and product of the study (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The audit was conducted by the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, the concept of confirmability relates to care taken by researchers to show that the study is informed by the participants and not researchers' biases (Shenton, 2004). To demonstrate confirmability, assumptions were stated so readers could understand my biases, values, and experiences relative to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Member checking ensured the responses of participants were accurate. Triangulation reduced my biases because of the validating function of each data collection method (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Providing rationales for decisions made in the research process and admitting weakness in techniques were ways I showed confirmability (Shenton, 2004). Finally, auditing trails ensured data collection, analysis, and findings were supported by data instead of researcher's preferences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Shenton, 2004). To create audit trails, I annotated in the margins of transcripts and created memos that were scrutinized by the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director.

Ethical Considerations

In research, ethical considerations relate to principles that protect the welfare, privacy, and respect of research participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ethical considerations of this study were governed by Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). No data was collected until IRB's approval was granted. Site approval was sought to use participants' work emails for the initial contact (after the initial contact, other contacts were made through participants' personal email addresses or personal telephones). Participants signed a consent-to-participate form that detailed data collection, research design, procedure, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time they desired (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Confidentiality risks were discussed with participants, assuring them the information would be stored in electronic files on a password-protected computer owned by the researcher. Using pseudonyms was another form of security to conceal the identity of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All data was destroyed after three years of the publication of this study. As a form of reciprocity, participants received a copy of the research to share in the experiences of other J-1TEVs.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. The hermeneutic design was selected because I, as the researcher, had taught at RSD in South Carolina as a J-1TEV, and I was interested in investigating the lived experience of other J-1TEVs in the exact school district. Ten J-1TEVs participated in the study. The interpretive lens through which I explored my research was social constructivism (Andrews, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Martens, 2015). My philosophical assumptions were presented through my ontological, epistemological, and axiological statements, followed by my role as a

researcher. The procedures were grounded in the ethical considerations of Liberty University's IRB. Three data collection methods were used to gather information: questionnaires, journal prompts, and interviews. I used van Manen's (1990) design for analyzing the data. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) followed, as stated in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1 teacher exchange visitors (J-1TEVs) in a rural school district in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Qualitative research methods can enable a researcher to explore the lived experience of a group of people whose stories need to be heard to gain a deeper understanding of the issues or problems they face (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher sought to find out how J-1TEVs in a rural school district in South Carolina managed in a new cultural setting and how the issues of their private and work lives affected their ability to function in the US K-12 classroom. Chapter four reveals the findings that use thick, rich descriptions to describe the experiences of ten participants who shared their stories through semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and questionnaires. Chapter Four includes a description of the participants, followed by Table 3, which displays the demographics of the ten participants, data findings situated under themes, and finally, the responses to the research questions.

Participants

The rural school district gave the researcher a list of 18 J-1TEVs who met the study's criteria. However, only seven volunteered to participate. To achieve an adequate sample size, the researcher used the snowballing method, and three more participants consented to participate. The ten participants worked in the same school district and were either current J-1TEVs (1st – 5th year) or former J-1TEVs up to four years after functioning as J-1TEVs in RSD. The plan was to achieve maximum variation in gender, nationality, and school level, but only Jamaican teachers, mainly from the high school, were willing to participate. Table 3 below presents participants' demographic information.

Table 3

Participants

Name	Gender	School level	J-1TEV Status	Nationality
Garfield	Male	High	2 years Post J-1TEV	Jamaican
Sonya	Female	elementary	Current - 3rd year	Jamaican
Chinue	Female	Elementary	Current - 5th year	Jamaican
Shelly	Female	High	Current - 3rd year	Jamaican
Sharon	Female	High	Current - 5th year	Jamaican
Rhonda	Female	High	2 years Post J-1TEV	Jamaican
Jewel	Female	High	Current – 1st year	Jamaican
Marva	Female	High	Current – 2nd year	Jamaican
Cheryl	Female	High	Current – 2nd year	Jamaican
Marilyn	Female	Elementary	Current - 2nd year	Jamaican

Garfield

Garfield is a second-year post-J-1TEV at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. He first came to the U. S. as a J-1TEV in 2010 and worked as a science teacher in a rural school district in southeastern South Carolina. His second posting as a J-1TEV at RSD in South Carolina began in 2017. During his first tenure, Garfield received the Golden Apple Award in 2011 for excellence in teaching. At RSD, where he works, Garfield was nominated as teacher of the year in 2019, 2023, and 2024. Garfield taught in Jamaica for seven years before migrating to the U. S. While teaching in Jamaica, he received a letter of recognition in 2009 for outstanding

student performance in chemistry at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate. Garfield has a Bachelor of Science in chemistry in education.

When asked: “What influenced you to apply for the J-1 teacher exchange visitor visa? Garfield said that in 2008, he started to feel bored in his teaching position and needed a change. He had recently gotten a promotion to detention supervisor but felt that it was not enough for further advancement. He said the idea of exploring new opportunities and improving his financial situation in the United States appealed to him, so he applied for the visa.

Sonya

Sonya is an elementary third-year J-1TEV. She has over thirteen years of experience in the teaching profession. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in primary education from the International University of the Caribbean, a certificate from MICO University College in human exceptionalities, a certificate from Sam Sharpe Teachers’ College, where she was awarded excellence for language arts and principles of teaching and learning, and a certificate in information and technology from the Montego Bay Community College. Sonya was motivated to come to the U. S. because she desired a new working environment and wanted to explore teaching in another country. Additionally, she wanted to empower herself with new learning strategies to inspire young minds. Another reason for joining the program was paying off debts in her home country, Jamaica. A memorable experience for her was when fifty percent of her class scored exemplary on the South Carolina College and Career-Ready Assessment (SC READY). Sonya’s teaching philosophy is: “To enhance the teaching-learning process by providing a stimulating and creative student-centered environment that promotes holistic development, maximizing the achievement of all students regardless of their socioeconomic

status.” She believes she can do everything through Christ, who strengthens her (Philippians 4:13).

Chinue

Chinue is a Jamaican native who taught for nine years before relocating to the U.S. as a J-1TEV. She was a senior teacher and vice principal at an elementary school in Jamaica and was recognized as one of the best in the region. She was awarded best teacher at the school for student performance and professional work ethic. Her motivation for coming to America was to experience teaching in a new culture and learn new strategies to enhance her craft. Chinue is fascinated by technology that can be used to help students learn. Chinue teaches social studies, science, mathematics, and English language arts at an elementary school at RSD in South Carolina and is in her fifth year as a J-1TEV. Chinue earned a Bachelor of Education from the Catholic College of Mandeville, Jamaica.

Shelly

Shelly is a third-year J-1TEV at the high school at RSD in South Carolina, where she teaches French. Before coming to America, Shelly taught for five years in the country of her birth, Jamaica. She taught Spanish and French, but primarily French. Because of her astounding work in the profession, she was awarded the position of second runner-up for “Island-wide Teacher’s Day” in 2020. Her motivation for coming to America was to explore the culture of another country and learn new ideas and strategies to improve her professional life. An unforgettable experience she had in the U. S. classroom was the active participation of some students – who would otherwise be quiet – during an observation by the principal. She noted that the students were on task and collaborative during the lesson. Shelly has a Bachelor of

Education, with a major in French and a minor in Spanish from the Shortwood Teachers' College in collaboration with the University of the West Indies.

Sharon

Sharon is a fifth-year J-1TEV teacher recruited to work at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. She is a native of Jamaica and taught for two years before relocating to the U. S. Sharon has a Bachelor of Education in Mathematics from the University of the West Indies. She accepted the offer to come to America because she wanted to experience a new culture while continuing to grow and develop as an educator. Helping others and empowering her students motivate her the most. Sharon believes there are times when the children need an extra drive to keep going, and she relishes the opportunity to reach out. Doing so gives her a sense of confidence and belief that she can be of help. She creates and executes engaging lessons, but her biggest challenge in the U. S. classroom was feeling burnt out from the heavy workload.

Rhonda

Rhonda is a science teacher at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. She is two years post J-1TEV. Her motivations for applying for the J-1 teacher exchange visa were to experience another culture and improve her standard of living. Rhonda served as head of the science department in 2019. She has a Bachelor of Science education in biology and chemistry from MICO University College and a Master of Science degree in biology from Grand Canyon University.

Jewel

Jewel is a first-year J-1TEV student at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. She teaches Spanish. Because of her outstanding performance, she was recognized as runner-up teacher for August 2023 and teacher of the month for September 2023. Before relocating to

America, Jewel taught Spanish for sixteen years at the K-12, college, and university levels. She also taught English literature and English language. Jewel seized the opportunity to come to the U. S. to improve her craft. She claimed that after sixteen years of teaching in Jamaica, she realized she could do more. Jewel has a post-graduate secondary Spanish education diploma from Sam Sharpe Teachers' College and a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics from the University of the West Indies. She is pursuing a Master of Education in leadership. Doing her best motivates her daily.

Marva

Marva is in her second year as a J-1TEV at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. She taught English Language Arts in Jamaica for four years before applying for the J-1 teacher exchange visa. Marva applied to work in the U. S. to improve her financial situation. However, she tries her best to meet the needs of students. Marva has a Bachelor of Education in English and Literature from the Shortwood Teachers' College and a Master's in English Language from the University of the West Indies.

Cheryl

Cheryl is a second-year J-1TEV student at the high school at RSD in South Carolina. She taught mathematics for three years in Jamaica before accepting the offer to teach in the U. S. Cheryl chose to partake in the J-1 teacher visitor exchange program because it allowed her to travel and make money. As an educator, she plans to leave an indelible mark everywhere she goes and positively impact everyone she interacts with. She had an unforgettable experience sharing her culture through dance and having students present it to the entire school. Cheryl has a Bachelor of Education in Mathematics from the MICO University College in Jamaica.

Marilyn

Marilyn is a second-year J-1TEV elementary teacher at RSD in South Carolina. She teaches social studies, science, math, and English language arts. After teaching in Jamaica for fourteen years and serving as a senior teacher and acting principal, Marilyn migrated to America in 2022 to occupy a hard-to-fill position at RSD in South Carolina. She accepted the offer to work in the U. S. because she was uncomfortable in the working environment in Jamaica and wanted to leave. She also saw the move as an opportunity for family development. Despite the professional challenges she faced, Marilyn said she is encouraged by her students' progress.

During her first year, she was given the "slowest students," and at the end of the first quarter, they had improved significantly. Her principal commended her for her efforts. Her daily motivation is her students and her biological children. She knows the needs of both sets of children and wants to meet them. She constantly evaluates herself and asks: "Do I want to be my child's teacher?" Marilyn has a master's in education administration from the University of the West Indies and is pursuing a master's in special education at the American College of Education.

Results

The results of the study were gathered from analyzing data from questionnaires, journals, and individual interviews. Although the interview is the primary source of data collection for hermeneutic phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), it was administered last to allow the researcher to delve deeper into the research questions and to clarify responses shared in the questionnaires and journals. The questionnaires and journals were created as word documents, uploaded to participants’ email addresses, and returned to the researcher via email. The documents were printed for analysis.

Interviews were conducted on the Zoom platform and uploaded into Speech to Text Online: Voice Typing and Transcription. The transcripts were printed and sent to participants to verify the accuracy of the information (Peoples, 2021). After thoroughly reading each data source, a five-step process was applied to arrive at the findings:

1. Isolate thematic statements to create preliminary meaning units.
2. Group similar statements by pattern coding.
3. Generate general themes by situating similar statements under research questions for each data source.
4. Generate major themes by situating the general themes of each data source under the research questions (This was done on a spreadsheet).
5. Generate final themes by corroborating evidence from each data source to validate the themes. (Glesne, 2016; Peoples, 2018).

During data analysis, I did not bracket my personal experience; my foreknowledge was necessary to interpret the experience of the J-1TEVs. Through the hermeneutic circle, I constantly revised my foreknowledge as I read each transcript as a whole and then allowed the parts (codes and themes) to inform my understanding of the whole transcript (Peoples, 2018). By utilizing the hermeneutic circle of inquiry, I expanded my knowledge of the essence of the J-1TEV lived experience at RSD in South Carolina. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were grouped under two broad headings: personal experience and professional experience. The personal experience yielded one theme, stressful transition, and two sub-themes: finding suitable and affordable accommodation and separation from family. The professional experience yielded seven themes and several sub-themes: adjusting to a new school culture with sub-themes adjusting to a new curriculum, teaching diverse students, learning new strategies and

technologies, and heavy workload; culture shock with sub-themes classroom discipline and students' lack of interest in education; cross-cultural communication; classroom management; lack of cultural competence, and support with sub-themes support from administrators, teachers, and students and teacher induction support program.

Personal Experience

Stressful transition emerged as the only theme under personal experience with two sub-themes: finding suitable and affordable accommodation and separation from family. Personal experience referred to any aspect of J-1TEVs' lives that did not relate to work. As expatriates, they were vulnerable to the fatigue of relocating. Relocating to a new environment takes a toll on families (Fillpic Sterle et al., 2018). The change requires families to uproot their livelihood from places they have nestled for years and establish themselves in unfamiliar areas.

Stressful Transition

Relocating to another country comes with the stress of finding suitable and affordable accommodation and being separated from family. In some cases, the living accommodation may not reach the expected standards (Halicioglu, 2015), or it may be costly or not close to the place of work. Separating from family creates feelings of isolation that add to a stressful experience.

Finding Suitable and Affordable Accommodation. Seven of the ten participants stated that finding accommodation was difficult. Also, finding accommodation within their budget took a lot of work. Jewel said:

> Procuring the apartment was very costly because of course you know the legal aspects of it. You're almost bonded to a lease. And so that requires you to pay first and last rent, which ran me about almost 2000 odd U.S. dollars. So, I mean the transition, it took a lot financially; it took a lot mentally, and I am still going through that transition…. You find

> yourself spending a lot on accommodation, especially for my personal preference of living alone.

Marilyn and Marva added that finding accommodation near the school was difficult. When asked in the interview to share their experience of adjusting to the new living situation, including finding accommodation, Marva said that finding accommodation near the school was virtually impossible and that she was forced to find housing 52 minutes away from school. Marilyn endorsed Marva's response when she said:

> Housing wasn't that affordable, and they were far away from work. Housing out of [the school district] was difficult because it's far from work, and it's more expensive…After six months, I ended up getting housing close to school. It was rough…I wanted to go home. But you know, you gave up your home … I held on. But it was rough. Many days I cried.

Several participants also claimed that not having credit scores added to the challenge of acquiring an apartment. Chinue shared: "it was a bit difficult to get housing coming up since I did not have a credit score. I had to be consistent in asking and applying for housing to get one." Adding to the conversation, Sonya stated that "not having credit when I just came was very challenging to get certain things…They wanted things that we just never had."

Given the housing situation that J-1TEVs face, especially when they arrive in the U.S., Marva suggested that foreign teachers should be allowed to live in the new apartments in the teacher village being built in the school district. She claimed that "they're saying only people with tenure will get to live there." But she argued that the teachers who are actual citizens and who may have grown up in the area have established roots, while foreign teachers, who are many in the district, should be given an opportunity to live in the village.

Separation from Family. The J-1TEV program allows teachers to bring their families with them for the duration of the program. Not sure what to expect when they come to the U. S., J-1TEVs came alone and relocated their dependents a few months later. This separation from their family was stressful for them and led to homesickness. Nine of the ten participants expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation during the period they were separated from their families. When asked how did you feel being away from your family? Chinue responded:

> This was one of the most difficult of all leaving my tower of strength behind. My children and I struggled to cope emotionally and physically- being away from them. I struggled with having someone to talk to and help me with my children, especially my five months old child. As I'll say, it was emotionally draining because, you know, being with somebody all the time. And then now it's just by myself, you know, trying to find myself in the world, you know, because being here is like a new world.

Marilyn and Sharon shared a similar experience. Marilyn stated that being away from her family was difficult and that she worried about her young kids. She said she cried at times and became so depressed and thought about going home. Sharon's response was:

> I had sleepless nights…It was very hard to leave them behind… I missed them so much… the little boy was three. So, I had to leave my baby… And that allowed me to be depressed even more. I can imagine just thinking about them back home, and they're so small.

Even the J-1TEvs without dependents expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation. Cheryl alluded to the difference in socialization between America and Jamaica when she declared that it was hard being away from home, but harder because of the socialization in America where

people tend to be more isolated than Jamaica. Below is an excerpt of her response to the question on being separated from family:

> Even though I came with a friend… It was very lonely. I didn't see my neighbor until like a month and four days… And I'm, I'm worried like, you know, it's two of us, two females living together in a new space. We don't know anybody. What if something happened to us … and we couldn't move? All of these things were constantly on my mind. I spoke to my mom every day. The homesickness was really bad. I was nearing losing it, you know.

Most of the participants experienced an urgency to communicate with family. Shelly said she tried to communicate frequently, and Marva said she "spent a lot of time video calling them to keep in touch and get guidance." On the other hand, Garfield shared that it was "difficult to maintain communication" because of the heavy workload and "unfinished business" at his job that robbed him of his time to keep up with his social life. The single participant (Jewel) who said that she was not affected when separated from her family declared that she was accustomed to living away from family while residing in Jamaica; hence, she did not experience the stress of being separated from family.

Professional Experience

J-1TEVs' professional experience included all interactions with students, administrators, staff, and parents while coaching and instructing students in the curriculum to procure learning. Six themes emerged under professional experience: adjusting to a new school culture, culture shock, cross-cultural communication, classroom management, lack of cultural competence, and support. Several sub-themes came to light during the data analysis that can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes and Sub-Themes of Professional Experience

Themes	Sub-Themes
a. Adjusting to a New School Culture	• Adjusting to a New Curriculum • Teaching Diverse students • Learning New Strategies and Technologies • Heavy workload
b. Culture Shock	• Classroom Discipline • Students' Lack of Interest in Education
c. Cross-cultural Communication	
d. Classroom Management	
e. Lack of Cultural Competence	
f. Support	• Support from Administrators, Teachers, and Students • Teacher Induction Support Program

Adjusting to a New School Culture

Each school has a culture unique to its values, beliefs, and traditions of the members of the school (Ismail & Azam, 2022; Senol & Lesinger, 2018). Because the participants were teaching in the Jamaican education system before joining the J-1TEV program, they were exposed to a different school culture comparable to the culture of RSD in South Carolina. Adjusting to a new school culture posed some challenges but was also rewarding for some. Four sub-themes emerged: adjusting to a new curriculum, teaching diverse students, learning new technology and strategies, and heavy workload.

Adjusting to a New Curriculum. When asked to share their experience adjusting to the new curriculum, five participants said they had no problem adjusting because the content was the same as what they taught in Jamaica. What was different, they stated, was the teaching approach or delivery method. Rhonda claimed she had to adjust to a "new format, which was easy," while Cheryl said she had to adjust to new "words and phrases." Shelly responded more positively by saying she was "passionate about the new curriculum as I am learning new methods and

strategies." The other five participants expressed difficulty at first adjusting to the curriculum. Marilyn claimed: "Adjusting to the new curriculum was very difficult as the standards are far more advanced than those used in Jamaica… I was able to adjust, and so did exceptionally well during my first year." Sonya contended that it was difficult to adjust to the curriculum because it was "disorganized," and she was overwhelmed to "teach all components every day in the given time."

Teaching Diverse Students. The response to the question on diversity varied according to the participants' experiences. Coming from the Caribbean, where the students may be ethnically different but coexist in communities with a common Caribbean identity (Premdas, 1996), the J-1TEVs had to navigate the different types of differences that comprised America's K -12 inclusive classrooms. The differences include mixed abilities, nationalities, religious beliefs, and sexual orientations. Adapting to the students' needs was necessary for J-1TEVs to be effective. When asked to share his experience teaching diverse students, Garfield declared:

> I have had to adjust my teaching strategies to meet the needs of my students. Moreover, in an effort to avoid offending anyone, I have had to pay more attention to cultural differences in my classroom as well as with members of staff. That is not something that I had to think much about in Jamaica.

Despite the novelty of teaching diverse students, some participants were excited to embrace the new experience. Rhonda said: "It was very exciting for me to teach a diverse set of students because I was able to learn new things about their culture, and I was also able to share my culture with them." Chinue indicated: "This was very exciting for me as I got to interact with students having different diversity in their backgrounds. I was excited to hear their accents, different languages, and the different learning styles that they have." For Shelly, teaching diverse

students made her “more innovative and better able to teach gifted and talented students.” Sonya admitted that “It can be stressful” but insisted it was an “opportunity to learn how to understand children and accept people despite their differences.” Among the differences Sonya alluded to are students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) that add to the diversity of K -12 classrooms. Understanding the importance of inclusion, Sharon explained that she “gets to know the students” through “their IEPs, data from past assessments,” and their “learning styles.” She added that she groups students according to their abilities and adjusts her lesson to cater to all.

Learning New Strategies and Technology. The findings revealed that all J-1TEVs learned new strategies and incorporated new forms of technology into their practice. Shelly boasted of the 3 “Cs” strategy she used to encourage good behavior in her nineth graders. Each “C” represented an unacceptable behavior that was against the rules and policies of the school. According to Shelly, the first “C” stood for "curse word;" the second “C” stood for "cell phones;" and the third C stood for "candy, chocolate, and chewing gums." Shelly incorporated the 3 “Cs” with a card system called "green, yellow, and red." At the beginning of the week, every student got a green card. If they were guilty of one of the “Cs”, they received a verbal warning and a yellow card. If they continued the misbehavior, they received a red card. Shelly explained that the students disliked the red card and often asked, "When can I redeem myself?" She said it took students two consecutive days of good behavior to redeem themselves.

Sonya was delighted to share about the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program she learned at RSD. She asserted that it is one of the best things that happened to her as a J-1TEV because it kept her organized and built her confidence. Reflecting on his professional experience, Garfield compared his experience in Jamaica to the U.S. and declared:

> I feel like if I were to make a comparison it's like I would have arrived here with a few pages in my book with strategies… And I feel like now I'm going back with that book full of strategies. So that in itself has made me a better teacher.

Four of the participants acknowledged that the use of technology at RSD was more advanced compared to the use of technology in Jamaican K – 12 classrooms. They were eager to embrace technology, but two participants were anxious at first. Chinue mentioned that she was overwhelmed by how much she needed to adjust to technological differences. Marilyn stated that "technology was a major challenge" because she was unfamiliar with "big smart boards." However, she underscored that she "reached out to a coworker" who assisted her.

Heavy Workload. Balancing instruction and administrative duties seemed overwhelming to six participants. Garfield noted that his workload was heavier at RSD compared to Jamaica's workload. For him, documenting and keeping a paper trail of communication with parents, students, and administration was everything at RSD. He pontificated that "everything is meaningless if it is not in writing." Sonya added, "When it comes to paperwork here, it's just all about writing paper, paper, paper, paper and missing the mark still on what is truly important." In Sharon's words, "I was constantly working to juggle all my tasks of educating students, managing behavior, completing administrative tasks, and more." The "heavy workload" or "information overload," as described by Sonya, left some participants feeling "burnt out." Chinue was so adversely affected by the "plethora of responsibilities and expectations" that she wanted to return to her home country. She indicated there were "too many things to adjust to…because elementary is heavier work than high school because you know you have to be responsible for them [students]." From all indications, adjusting to the new school system was a factor that contributed to participants feeling overwhelmed.

Culture Shock

Cross-cultural transition engenders anxiety and stress which come with life-altering changes expatriates make while trying to adjust to new cultural settings (Berry, 1994). Transitioning from Jamaica, where students share a common Caribbean identity, to the U. S., where the classrooms are comprised of students of different nationalities and ethnicities (Koppelman, 2017), all the participants experienced culture shock. There were two sub-themes of culture shock: classroom discipline and students' lack of interest in education.

Classroom Discipline. The findings show that all participants faced challenges with classroom discipline. When asked in the interview: "Tell me about your experience adjusting to the new classroom culture," Cheryl said she experienced a culture shock relating to classroom discipline and that the level of indiscipline was beyond what she was used to.

> When we say our children are indiscipline, it's typically nothing compared to what I've seen here… Indiscipline for us is a child probably talking. But here, it's a different situation. They'll tell you anything that they feel like. “Oh, I'm not going to do that... I don't want to do it.” And that's weird. It is so unusual. And it's a shocking culture because why are you here then? Why are you in class for me to be with you? What do you want me to do?

Adding to the conversation, Jewel indicated her biggest culture shock was students' use of "loud and loose language in front of teachers." She considered their acts a disregard for the space they are in,” a space that "comes with a level of responsibility" that students have not "understood" nor "grasped." What was "mind-boggling" to her was the "extent to which students were given leeway to just be without sometimes any consequences.” Marilyn shared an extreme view on this point and mentioned that "teachers are always blamed for the mistakes of the students… It's

always the teachers' fault for their failure." Marva felt that disciplining children is harder in the U. S. than in Jamaica. She purported that a teacher could give Jamaican kids "one look and they will shape up, but the American kids, "you have to give them the look at least three times before they stop."

Jewel was surprised at what she called “teachers’ lack of autonomy” concerning discipline in the U. S. classroom. She stated that in Jamaica, teachers know what appropriate forms of discipline are and have the autonomy to exercise them, but in the U. S., the administration generally administers discipline.

During cross-cultural adjustments, "expectations provide the yardstick against which experiences and behaviors can be measured" (Ward et al., 2001, p. 76). Shelly expected the students to know certain things about classroom discipline but found it surprising that she had to teach them how to show respect to others. That, she said, was her biggest challenge and culture shock.

Students' Lack of Interest in Education. Four participants experienced students’ apathy toward education. When asked: "Describe the professional challenges you have experienced as a J-1 teacher working in RSD." Cheryl replied: "The general lack of interest in education that children display is not only a challenge but also a culture shock." Her response inferred students were not intrinsically motivated, and it required a lot to keep students engaged. Shelly confirmed this inference when she testified that "you have to come up with new methodologies and strategies"… "and even when it is fun, they still may be disengaged." Sonya believed students did not care. She said the passion for learning was missing despite the extrinsic motivation. She attributed this “don’t care attitude” partially to the system that scored students 50/60 if students got below 50%. Marva added to the conversation by stating that students seemed to be

“concerned with stuff other than their schoolwork.” She declared: “I have kids, you know, we're doing work, maybe not even Chromebook work, but they have the Chromebook out open, and they’re Googling weird things to show their friends and disrupt the class.” Marva considered students’ inattentiveness as apathy toward education.

Cross-cultural Communication

All participants experienced challenges in cross-cultural communication. Communicating with people from another country is different from communicating with local people (Lee, 2015). Misunderstanding can arise due to differences in accent and pronunciation of words. Such was the case with all the participants. They confessed that their Jamaican accent and pronunciation of words were somewhat distracting and hindered communication between themselves and students. Because Jamaica was a British colony, participants seemed more inclined to use British pronunciation and spelling. To mitigate the distraction, Marilyn declared: "I made sure I used the American accent in a way that they would understand what I was saying." Similarly, Garfield added: "I started to use the American sounds and spelling, and perhaps even my accent got further diluted in an attempt to fit in." Sharon and Garfield shared that some words would trigger laughter, and, in some cases, the students made fun of them. Here are some of the words written with the phonetic alphabet to differentiate American pronunciation from British pronunciation: "/ɪnvənˌtər/" instead of "/ˈɪn.vən.tər.i/,” “/ˈlæb.rə.tɔːr.i/” instead of “/ləˈbɒr.ə.tər.i/,” “/ˈwɑː.ɾɚ/ “ instead of “/ˈwɔː.tər/," "labor" instead of "labour," "neighbor" rather than "neighbour," "color" rather than "colour," and “program" rather than "programme." The spelling and pronunciation of the words differ according to American or British use.

In the cross-cultural communication between J-1TEVs and students, J-1TEVs were also affected. Cheryl and Marva described the students' accents as "thick" and admitted that they did

not always understand students until they "got familiar with the accent and jargon." Beyond exchanging words in the communication process, Garfield said the "real challenge lay in delivering" his "messages without unintentionally offending everyone." Sometimes, words appropriate in one culture are inappropriate in another (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Marilyn discovered that "Telling a student that he or she is telling a lie would be offensive to a person at the school." She would have to say, "telling stories." Sonya and Marva also discovered that "dam" and "hell" are offensive to Americans. Sonya said, "The students dived under the desk once" when she used the word "hell. She apologized and used her culture to explain why the word is acceptable in Jamaican culture.

Along with words, tone of voice and body language are expressions that can offend people (Ospina & Medina, 2020). Garfield indicated that he had to adjust the way he spoke and body language to avoid offending others. He further stated:

> Whereas in the past I would just call out negative behaviors and address them, I now felt like I had to be much nicer when addressing student behavior so as not to offend them and trigger additional reactions. That is how I felt initially but now I realize that I can be firm and nice simultaneously.

Some participants switched between Standard Jamaican English and Creole to express their mood. For example, when Jewel wanted her students to know she was upset, she spoke Creole. Similarly, Cheryl said she reverted to Creole to show "excitement, anger, or frustration." Although the apparent switch to Creole signaled a serious mood, Jewel said, "It is fun," and that she used the moment to teach students that it is okay to be themselves. The participants also used Creole to teach students about Jamaican culture. On the flip side, Cheryl stated that she "caught

on to the slang" used by students who appreciated her affinity toward them. She said, "Using their language builds good relationships."

Classroom Management

Classroom management is a recurring theme in studies on expatriate teachers because of the cultural and social differences between expatriates and native students (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Dunn, 2011; Lee, 2015; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Safipour, 2017; Schmidt, 2010; Smith, 2018). Five of the ten participants said they struggled with classroom management. Marva narrated her experience in these words:

> I struggled with classroom management because students were talkative, combative, and entitled. The school and, by extension, the district's culture allowed students to do as they pleased, so respect for teaching and the learning process was not emphasized. I tried several strategies, but nothing seemed to work for too long, and the referral system did not make a difference for students. In fact, students deliberately acted out so they could be sent to ISS. In some extreme cases, students were not even reprimanded by an administrator.

When asked what factors impacted J-1TEVs' ability to manage their classrooms, Jewel said, "Cultural norms impacted gravely on classroom management as many instructional sessions are plagued by behavioral issues." Garfield pointed out that the diversity of the school population partially affected classroom management. Despite the challenges, the five participants quickly declared they had enforced rules and procedures to maintain order in the classroom. Two of the remaining five participants, Cheryl and Chinue, indicated that classroom management was never an issue since it was one of their strengths. The remaining three participants explained that they had developed strategies and methods to help them control students' behavior. Marilyn declared:

“Classroom management was good as I tried different strategies to manage my classroom so that teaching and learning could be effective.” Cheryl added: “Students took to my methods and proved them to be fun and different. This is typically a strong point for me.” Overall, all participants mentioned strategies and methods to cope with student behavior.

Lack of Cultural Competence

When asked, “Do you believe when J-1s come to America, they are culturally incompetent, at least at the beginning,” eight participants said ‘yes’ and two said ‘no.’ Chinue said that J-1TEVs are not incompetent; they are new and must learn the system. Chinue exclaimed: If you go to Rome you have to do like Rome. So, if you didn't have an experience before, I don't know how you could just come and immerse yourself in this and just start.” Marilyn added that J-1s travel to America, so they know the culture. Marva believed that J-1s are culturally incompetent “to an extent.” She stated: “When you come to a new place, you take time to adjust, see how the school operates, and find out how and where you fit in." Their understanding of cultural incompetence is knowing the ins and outs of a system and functioning within it.

Shelly, Cheryl, and Jewel believed that personality type rather than cultural incompetence might be attributed to some of the challenges J-1TEVs face. Supporting her position, Shelly said: "It's just a matter of personality type and not being flexible enough to adapt and adjust to the setting." Cheryl gave an example of a teacher who went home in December and was unsure about returning because of classroom challenges. However, Cheryl pointed out that "even back home, she had problems in the classroom." Jewel summed it up, underscoring that teachers' personality traits supersede their professionalism and classroom management because their ideologies and outlook on life take precedence over everything.

Being flexible in cross-cultural settings contributes to the success of international workers (Authur & Bennet, 1995; Gopalkrishnan, 2019). It requires shifting from set practices that are normative to one's culture to responding positively to new practices of another culture. Speaking on adjustments, Jewel mentioned:

> There are Jamaicans who do not compromise…We are so entrenched in certain sayings: 'spear the rod, spoil the child; Children should be seen and not heard.' When we come here [America] and experience a more fluid culture where they [students] are free to speak their minds and free to be who they want to be, I believe it can adversely affect the J1s who are not able to move away from their cultural experience.

Jewel shared another point on cultural competence, pointing out that J-1TEVs who traveled are usually culturally competent, but the ones who have never traveled abroad before and have never been to the United States are a little bit culturally incompetent. Finally, two participants alluded that for effective cross-cultural communication, both groups must be culturally competent. They feel as if members of the host country do not understand them.

Support

Given the changing locale; possible culture shock; differences in curricula, assessment, and teaching pedagogy; among other logistical issues, support is critical for the adjustment and effective functioning of J-1TEVs (Vincent et al., 2024). All ten participants testified of the support they received, especially from administrators. Under support, two sub-themes evolved: support from administrators, teachers, and students, and teacher induction support program.

Support from Administrators, Teachers, and Students. The findings show an overwhelming testimony of support from administrators. The support varied according to the needs of the J-1TEVs and included the following:

1. Administrators provided resources, feedback, and advice when needed.
2. Administrators gave positive feedback whenever they did a class observation.
3. Administrators were always available when you needed them.
4. Administrators were present to discipline students.

Marva narrated her experience in the following way:

> Administrators are very supportive. They encouraged me every day to speak up about the issues I'm having. They will visit my class to provide support where necessary, and they verbally follow up with me to make sure I am okay. I feel the support, and I feel valued.

Chinue added: "Administrators were very supportive at my school, as they were welcoming and provided mentors and asked me regularly about what they can do to help me function better and even more effectively." In the same spirit, Sonya shared that when it came to discipline, the administrators were supportive and "stood" with her as a "united front to create stability."

Concerning the teachers, the participants also gave overwhelming testimony of the support they received. They claimed there was great rapport among the teachers who advised them and helped them to adjust to the new school culture. When asked to explain their experience with teacher support, Rhonda said: "The teachers in my district are by far the best when it comes to teacher support. These teachers are willing to go above and beyond when it comes to supporting their fellow co-workers." Marilyn added: "My teaching partner held my hand and provided great support as she was never tired of me asking questions about what is to be done or asking for support in completing a task." Marva had a student who was failing her course despite Marva's best efforts. She turned to the ROTC teacher for assistance, and this is what she said:

> I asked her ROTC's teacher for some tips for getting her to do work since that was the only class, she seemed to be excelling in. The teacher took her under her wing and got her to start doing work in class again to bring her grades up, and I was eternally grateful. I told her thanks so many times.

Sharon and Chinue were careful to point out that their Jamaican counterparts were very supportive in helping them adjust to the changes.

As cultural ambassadors of their home country, J-1TEVs must promote cultural exchange between their countries and the U.S. by engaging students in cross-cultural activities (Canli & Demirtas, 2017; Education Partners International, 2022). The staging or hosting of these activities requires the support of administrators, teachers (to a limited extent), and students. Except for one participant, all spoke favorably about the support and appreciation they received from administrators, teachers, and students. When asked to describe the support they received about cross–cultural activities, Cheryl exclaimed: "The APS and principals are very supportive. They'll come, and I will show them my dance, and they'll be like, 'oh get it on Ms. Cheryl.' But you know the kids have fun." Marilyn said: "My principal was very impressed. The students asked a lot about certain words we used back home, and it was good." Shelly added to the conversation by stating:

> They showed interest, and I even had the Spanish teacher who came with her class. Students were not shy. The ones you think were shy, they were the ones who wanted to ask questions. It was a good turn out as well from my coworkers.

Rhonda's response deflected from the overall approval, as shown in her colleagues' explanations. Instead, she pointed out that 70% received her cultural activities, and the 30% did not "open to new things." Her count included administrators, teachers, and students.

Teacher Induction Support Program. Except for one participant, all J-1TEVs said the induction program was useful and provided support. The participants experienced 1 -3 years of a teacher induction program, which was hosted by the school district. Teacher induction is a professional learning program that offers guidance and support to best meet the needs of new teachers during the first three years of entering the profession (Baker, 2020). One of the program's goals is to provide social and emotional development to educators new to the profession and school district (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Baker, 2020). The J-1TEVs were new to the school district; hence, they participated in the program.

When asked: “In what ways did the induction program prepare or not prepare you for the classroom experience,” Sharon stated: "The induction program has helped me to understand the Standards and how to pace my lessons. It also gave me a heads-up on the 4.0 rubric." Both Chinue and Shelly stated that the program gave them tips on classroom management, but Chinue added that it introduced her to the different technology programs for instruction.

Additional testimonies revealed that the program met J-1TEVs' individual needs. For example, Jewel expressed, "It provided me with both administrative and professional tools to be a more effective teacher." Cheryl added: "This was helpful in making me acclimatized to the new space, therefore setting realistic expectations for a new culture." Sonya expressed satisfaction with the program but mentioned that the experience was "unmatched" by what she first encountered in the classroom. She said: "It took more than faith to adjust to the American classroom, especially facing culture shock." The one participant with the diverging view felt that the induction program did not prepare her for the classroom because everything discussed was

information she learned at college in Jamaica. She felt there "should have been more information about the American culture and how Title 1 schools operate" and recommended that experienced J-1TEVs mentor new J-1TEVs.

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Questionnaires, journals, and individual interviews were used to understand how the daily occurrences of J-1TEVs' personal and professional lives influence their teacher self-efficacy. Table 5 identifies the themes and sub-themes linked with the research questions. CRQ means Central Research Question.

Table 5

Themes and Sub-Themes Linked to Research Questions

Themes	Sub-Themes	Research Questions
Personal Experience a. Stressful Transition	• Finding Suitable and Affordable Accommodation • Separation from Family	Sub-Question 1, CRQ Sub-Question 1, CRQ
Professional Experience g. Adjusting to a New School Culture	• Adjusting to a New Curriculum • Teaching Diverse students • Learning New Strategies and Technologies • Heavy workload	Sub-Question 2, CRQ Sub-Question 2, CRQ Sub-Question 2, CRQ Sub-Question 2. CRQ
h. Culture Shock	• Classroom Discipline • Students' Lack of Interest in Education	Sub-Question 2, CRQ Sub-Question 2, CRQ
i. Cross-cultural Communication		Sub-Question 2, CRQ
j. Classroom Management		Sub-Question 2, CRQ
k. Lack of Cultural Competence		Sub-Question 2, CRQ
l. Support	• Support from Administrators, Teachers, and Students	Sub-Question 2, CRQ Sub-Question 2, CRQ

	• Teacher Induction Support Program	

Central Research Question

The lived experiences of J-1TEVs were marked by personal and professional struggles, which in varying degrees influenced their TSE based on the unique circumstances of their lives. Three of the ten participants came with families; hence, managing the nuances of settling down and adjusting to a new cultural location impacted their motivation levels to perform classroom duties – not their TSE. Those who did not have families claimed they separated work life from their personal life. Professionally, the transition of J-1TEVs into a new school system and cultural environment was marked by challenges that indicate that despite their years of teaching, J-1TEVs were trained under a different education system and needed to adjust to the practices of the American K-2 system. The challenges also revealed the conflicts that come with cultural differences, such as cross-cultural communication and classroom discipline. The support J-1TEVs received from administrators, teachers, and the induction program was significant to their adjustment. Detailed accounts of J-1TEVs' lived experiences are discussed in Sub-Questions 1 and Sub-Question 2.

Sub-Question One

How do the personal experiences of J-1TEVs impact their TSE at RSD in South Carolina? Question 7 of the interview targeted Sub-Question 1: "Describe any cross-over effects of your private life on your beliefs about your ability to function effectively in the classroom" (Interview). Most participants mentioned a separation between their private and work lives, inferentially stating that their personal experiences did not affect their TSE. Rhonda said, "As teachers, you are taught to keep your private life out of school. Garfield claimed, "After 16 years, I have developed some skin in the game … and know how to separate personal life from

professional. There is no negative impact on my ability in the classroom." Jewel contended that there is a "clear line of demarcation between private and professional." At the same time, Shelly declared, "There is a balance and no intertwining" between the two domains.

Question 5 of the Journal ("How did your private life affect your professional life?) was intended to garner more information on Sub-Question 1. However, some responses did not directly relate to TSE but to efficiency. For example, Sharon stated:

> Having a family comes with a lot of responsibility, and you know I think sometimes I was overwhelmed. I was so tired, exhausted, and when I went go the classroom, I don't have that much energy to deal with the kids at times. Sometimes I turn in work late. For example, lesson plans.

Chinue added:

> I have to stay up with him [son] and stuff. Sometimes when I go to school, you know, I can't function the way I would want to because I'm lack of sleep. I'm worried sometimes in my head thinking about things that I need to do. Yes, it does impact. So, what I would like to give… it was altered because of all the things that I have to adjust to.

Sharon and Chinue's responses speak to efficiency rather than TSE. Not being efficient because of personal challenges does not negate a person's belief in their capacity to execute a specific task. However, there may be a correlation between efficiency and TSE that this study did not explore.

Sub-Question Two

How do the professional experiences of J-1TEVs impact their teacher self-efficacy at RSD in South Carolina? The abundance of strategies and pedagogies learned during professional development was the main factor that impacted J-1TEVs' teacher self-efficacy (TSE). However,

several personal factors determined the degree to which J-1TEVs' professional experiences influenced their TSE. The factors are J-1TEVs' needs and how well the needs were met as they adjusted to the new cultural environment; the level of confidence J-1TEVs had in their home country and the resilience to maintain that confidence in the U. S.; their ability to apply new strategies, technologies, and pedagogies; the quality of mentorship and guidance they received; their ability to be culturally responsive to the diverse school population; and their sense of identity and self-worth. When asked to discuss the ways in which his experiences as a J-1 affected his TSE, Garfield Stated:

> The challenges and opportunities I've experienced as a J-1 teacher have allowed me to grow personally and professionally. I have learned new strategies and technologies that have made me more effective as a teacher. In addition, I have developed more confidence and resilience since I have adapted to a new environment and culture and engaged with students and people from diverse backgrounds… This ability that 'yes I can do it', that I feel has developed just because of all of the skills and the strategies that I've developed.

Marilyn felt that the abundance of resources boosted her self-worth, and she could now teach "slow" children, which she thought was impossible while teaching in Jamaica.

> My experience as a J-1 teacher affected my self-efficacy in a positive way as it made me realize how resourceful of a teacher I am, and that I am able to teach slow children which I didn't believe I had the ability and patience to do in my home country. My level of self-efficacy is different from that of teaching in my home country because there are certain things I go above and beyond in doing in the US classroom that I wouldn't have done in my home country…I believe I am now equipped with more resources for teaching and learning.

Three other participants - Rhonda, Sharon, and Cheryl - affirmed the significance of strategies and resource adequacy for increased TSE. Rhonda declared: "With the resources, support and opportunity that is given to J-1 teachers, my self-efficacy significantly improved. Sharon stated: "Being exposed to technologies and a host of materials has increased my enthusiasm for teaching." Finally, Cheryl added that having been introduced to a "mirage of new methods and resources," her TSE was positively impacted. A review of the literature shows that adequate resources, among other school climate factors, is a predictor of TSE and job satisfaction (Zakariya, 2020). Jewel affirmed the above statement by stating: “I was given a lot of materials; I was given a lot of methods, a lot of heads up. So, it definitely helped my confidence, and I felt as if coming to work daily was not a threat to my sanity anymore.”

Reflecting on teaching in Jamaica, Shelly praised RSD's induction and mentorship programs. She pointed out that she never experienced such in her home country. When asked "are you more confident now teaching in the U.S. than teaching back home," she said: "Of course, 100%. Because I've learned a lot of different strategies, and I learned how students of different cultures learn, how they receive information, and how they apply information.”

Developing teacher self-efficacy for foreign teachers is a process. The novelty of the new cultural setting engenders challenges that are overcome with time. Chinue disclosed in the questionnaire that she had to “learn the American culture and what to say or do to the children because what is acceptable” in her “country is not acceptable in the American culture.” Although she has been in America for five years, she is still adjusting, she shared. In a longer explanation in the interview, Chinue stated:

> My sense of efficacy is important because I need to feel competent and confident in my ability to teach and reach all students. It [teaching in America] has affected my self-

> efficacy as I am sometimes confused and unsure about what to do in certain experiences. My motivation is cut sometimes as I feel unappreciated in some cases…. Sometimes I have doubts. I was like maybe I need to go back home, or this is not the right place because too many things to adjust to …As the years went by, I started building confidence. 'SC Ready' came, and I saw that my scores were going up… Until my third year, I started feeling okay. Now I'm enjoying this."

Marva was careful to distinguish between a lack of confidence and demotivation. When asked: "How did your professional experiences impact your confidence to perform your classroom duties? She emphatically stated:

> It's not that they negatively affect my confidence, it's just that the students demotivate me from being confident because they don't like the structure of the program. We are doing 'Read 180.' They don't like that… They want fun; they want to move around. So hands-on learning days would be fun for them. Sometimes I just feel like throwing it [Read 180] out and just doing what they want to do, but I can't.

The study's findings revealed that the TSE of most J-1TEVs was positively impacted by their professional experiences. Even among the participants who said their TSE was higher in Jamaica than in the U. S., their narrative revealed that their belief in their capability to engage students in learning increased over time with the resources and support they received.

Summary

This chapter began with an overview followed by descriptions of participants and continued with an explanation of results for each theme and sub-theme originating from participants' shared experiences. Through questionnaires, journals, individual interviews, ten J-

1TEVs shared their personal and professional experiences at RSD in South Carolina and how these experiences impacted their TSE.

The themes that emerged were stressful transition with sub-themes being finding suitable and affordable accommodation and separation from family; adjusting to a new school culture with sub-themes adjusting to a new curriculum, teaching diverse students, learning new strategies and technologies, and heavy workload. Additional themes were culture shock with sub-themes classroom discipline and students' lack of interest in education; cross-cultural communication; classroom management; lack of cultural competence, and support with sub-themes support from administrators, teachers, and students and teacher induction support program.

The central research question and the sub-questions were answered, showing that participants' professional experiences impacted their TSE. However, their personal experiences did not impact their TSE, since participants separated their private lives from their work lives. However, the findings revealed cross-over effects of participants' personal lives on their efficiency in the classroom, not their TSE.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1 teacher exchange visitors (J-1TEVs) in a rural school district in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. The problem addressed in this study was that J-1TEVs faced personal and professional challenges (Ospina & Medina, 2020) that affected their belief that they could engage students in the learning process and achieve the desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). The study was situated within the teacher self-efficacy theory framework, a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). Chapter Five begins with interpretations of the findings, followed by implications for policy and practice. Next, the theoretical and empirical implications are discussed, followed by the limitations and delimitations. Chapter Five concludes with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in a rural school district in South Carolina was explored within the framework of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, which is a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory. This section discusses the study's findings in light of the developed themes. There are five major sub-sections: interpretations of findings, implications for policy or practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Under two broad headings - personal experience and professional experience - seven themes emerged that sufficiently answered the research questions on the lived experience of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina. The questions sought to determine the impact of J-1TEVs'

experiences on their TSE. Stressful transition emerged as the single theme under personal experience with two sub-themes: finding suitable and affordable accommodation and separation from family. Six themes emerged under professional experience: adjusting to a new school culture with sub-themes adjusting to a new curriculum, teaching diverse students, learning strategies and technologies, and heavy workload; culture shock with sub-themes classroom discipline and students' lack of interest in education; cross-cultural communication; classroom management and discipline; lack of cultural competence; and support with sub-themes support from administrators, teachers and students and teacher induction support program. In consolidating the themes and sub-themes, the following headings are used to discuss the findings: stressful transition, adjusting to a new school culture, classroom management/ discipline, cross-cultural communication, and the importance of support.

Interpretation of Findings

This section discusses the interpretation of the findings of this study. It begins with the stressful transition, which falls under personal experience. The proceeding findings – adjusting to a new school culture, classroom management/discipline, cross-cultural communication, and the importance of support – fall under professional experience. Personal and professional experiences are the two broad headings used to investigate the lived experience of the participants.

Stressful Transition

The stressful transition was revealed through the struggles of participants to find suitable and affordable accommodation and to cope with the separation from family members. Once J-1TEVs enter the U.S., they face these challenges that can affect them psychologically, especially if they are married and have children. J-1TEVs are given a 30-day grace period to find housing

(CulturalVistas, n.d.), but acquiring housing remains daunting without credit scores. If, within 30 days, they do not find housing, the situation becomes more stressful since they must juggle searching for housing with the nuances of transitioning into a new school environment. Some J-1TEVs got support from J-1TEVs who were already in the program, which made the transition somewhat manageable, but as stated in the findings, this was the case for only a few participants. The suggestion made by Marva for J-1TEVs to live in the teacher's village in the district is feasible. It may not be realistic for all J-1TEVs to live in the village, but 2 – 3 apartments can be reserved as temporary housing until new J-1TEVs find suitable accommodation.

Adjusting to a New School Culture

Teachers who relocate to another country must make several adjustments within the new school environment. In this study, J-1TEVs had to adjust to new curriculums, new strategies and pedagogies, new forms of technology and delivery methods, and inclusive classrooms that characterize U. S. K-12 education. J-1TEVs were expected to make the adjustments while teaching and learning occurred.

Critical to the participants' success was their ability to adapt to change, which was challenging. Half of the participants embraced the new curriculum easily, while the other half struggled initially but eventually adjusted. The pace at which J-1TEVs adjusted depended on their flexibility and adaptability. For example, Marilyn said: "Adjusting to the new curriculum was difficult…I was able to adjust and did exceptionally well during my first year." Shelly responded more affectively: "I was passionate about the new curriculum because I learned new methods and strategies." Both participants exemplified an attitude that is open to learning. People who are open-minded toward a new culture can cope with stressful environments and adapt to new cultural settings (Bünyamin et al., 2017; Kim, 1988).

It was also necessary for the participants to adjust to the diversity of the classroom. The individualized education program (IEP) was a new component of J-1TEVs' classroom experience. Despite the novelty of teaching diverse students, some participants were excited to embrace the new experience. As a cultural ambassador, Rhonda stated: "I was able to learn new things about their culture, and I was also able to share my culture with them." Similarly, Sonya claimed it was an opportunity to understand children and accept people despite their differences." Rhonda and Sonya exemplified sociocultural adaptation, an essential element in culturally responsive teaching. By embracing the different cultures, they demonstrated an understanding of the importance of cultural background and experiences in learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This approach promotes student engagement by nurturing students' cultural strengths and validating their lived experience and place in the world (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

All participants showed overwhelming appreciation for the new pedagogies and technologies learned. Coming to a first-world country where technology is more advanced than the third-world country from which they came, participants got the opportunity to improve their practice. Four of the participants acknowledged that the use of technology at RSD was more advanced compared to the use of technology in Jamaican's K-12 classrooms. Developed countries, like America, offer opportunities for foreign teachers, especially those from developing countries, to expand their professional practices (Modesto, 2020; Serin, 2017). The J-1TEVs improved their practices through ongoing professional development in the most recent pedagogies or evidence-based research (Miller, 2018; Serin, 2017). Most participants credited their achievement to the resources available to them. For example, Garfield stated that he is a better teacher because of the resources available to him and that he has the tools and strategies that have allowed him to be efficient in the classroom.

Classroom Management and Discipline

People's expectations are framed by their norms and cultural practices (Ward et al., 2001). The participants in this study expected students to behave in a certain way, and when the expectations were not met, they experienced culture shock. For example, Cheryl was surprised at students telling teachers: "Oh, I'm not going to do that... I don't want to do it." She said it is a "shocking culture" because she could not rationalize why the students were at school but did not want to follow instructions. Jewel also indicated that she had the "biggest culture shock" when students used expletives in the presence of teachers. Having a culture shock suggests that Jewel was not used to this student behavior.

In intercultural exchanges, some adjustments are easier to make than others. Adjusting to students' use of expletives and rudeness may be impossible. While it may be a norm for students, expletives and rudeness are generally unacceptable by society's standards, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. Against such, J-1TEVS must know and follow the procedures on how to discipline students.

Responses to the questionnaires and interviews show that Jamaican teachers have the autonomy to exercise "appropriate forms of discipline" when students behave a certain way. However, that autonomy is limited in U. S. classrooms, said Jewel. It was not surprising that Sonya found it "weird" that a teacher could "take the phone up and call a parent, and the kid would adjust." However, Rhonda realized that in the U. S., student-discipline is handled differently compared to Jamaica. There are set procedures that all teachers must follow when dealing with student discipline, including parental contacts. To succeed amid the turbulence of all these challenges, J-1TEVs “need to become active learners to embrace the changes and uncertainties of their new lives” (Ospina & Medina, 2020, para. 4). They need to become

knowledgeable of the policies and procedures of U. S. K-12 classrooms so they would know what to do when confronted with specific situations. Knowing helps to reduce culture shock (Halicioglu, 2015).

Cross-cultural Communication

Several factors led to communication challenges between all J-1TEVs and members of the host country. Being Jamaicans, the participants spoke Standard Jamaican English and Creole, a non-standardized form of Caribbean English (Smith et al., 2018). Additionally, they received formal education in a system that has roots in British forms of education due to Jamaica's colonial history. Against such, the participants spoke in various accents, depending on the parishes they originated from, and used the British spelling of words. Language differences became an issue because of cultural differences in accents, pronunciation, manner of speech, and paralinguistic features such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions (Ospina & Medina, 2020). According to Garfield, this difference in accents and spelling became a distraction in the classroom.

In some cases, students mocked J-1TEVs' accents and pronunciation. Some participants' adjustment to American pronunciation was necessary to mitigate the distraction and mockery. Garfield admitted that his Jamaican accent got "diluted in an attempt to fit in." On the one hand, the adjustment was necessary to procure teaching and learning, but it also diminished the identity of the participants. The dominant culture's language was considered superior to the language of J-1TEVs, hence the ensuing laughter and mockery by some students. On the part of students, there was an expectancy for J-1TEVs to adjust to Standard American English. Therefore, language became a meaning-making process by which the identities of J-1TEVs were constructed and reconstructed (Lee, 2015).

Learning to interact with the host country's language was essential for the J-1TEVs. Garfield alluded to this realization when he said: " Whereas in the past I would just call out negative behaviors and address them, I now felt like I had to be much nicer when addressing student behavior so as not to offend them and trigger additional reactions. That is how I felt initially, but now I realize that I can be firm and nice simultaneously.” The statement suggests that Garfield was comfortable "calling out negative behaviors and address [ing] them" in Jamaican classrooms before coming to America. However, in the U. S. classroom, he had to shift his tone when interacting with American students. His confession that he "can be firm and nice simultaneously" shows a level of behavioral cultural intelligence purported by Early and Ang (2003).

Another example of the importance of learning how to interact in the host country language was evident when Sonya discovered that "dam" and "hell" are offensive to Americans. However, when she apologized, she showed respect and empathy for the students' culture. Empathy has been found to improve classroom teachers' ability to respond to students in ways that engender culturally responsive teaching (Warren, 2018).

Participants switched between Standard Jamaican English and Creole to communicate a particular message to their students. The use of Creole signaled a serious tone, and students understood the teacher's mood and responded appropriately. The use of Creole in this manner proved to be effective for the Jamaican teachers. Despite the dominant language, Creole had its place in the classroom.

The Importance of Support

The results of this study show overwhelming evidence of the support J-1TEVs received from administrators and teachers. The support came in the form of advice; being available when

J-1TEVs needed them, primarily to discipline students; classroom observations and positive feedback; encouraging J-1TEVs to speak up on issues affecting them; providing mentors, supporting cross-cultural activities; and asking J-1TEVs how to best support them. The overwhelming support is commendable; many studies address the lack of support by administrators (Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Smith, 2018), but the current study validates the benefits of support for new teachers.

The participants' belief that they could perform effectively in the classroom partially depended on the support they received. When Marva said: "I feel the support, and I feel valued," she gave credence to Bandura's (1977) proposition that psychological states (emotional arousal) can either debilitate or enhance self-efficacy. In this case, Marva's espousal of self-valued pointed to an emotional arousal that enhanced her self-efficacy. In the same spirit, Sonya shared that when it came to discipline, the administrators were supportive and "stood" with her as a "united front to create stability." Often, people are aware they can perform a task but are daunted because of the unresponsive behavior of others, or as Bandura (1977) states, their actions bear no effect on an unresponsive environment. However, in this study, administrative support enabled participants to function "better and even more effectively," as stated by Chinue, or to better themselves, as pointed out by Rhonda. Schmidt (2010) contends that when school administrators provide a supportive and encouraging environment for those hired from under-represented communities, there is adequate participation and success in the teaching profession.

As cultural ambassadors of their country, J-1TEVs were expected to conduct two cultural activities each year. The overwhelming support they received from members of mainstream culture gave them cultural capital (Lee, 2015) to boost their identity. Students learned about people and places outside of the U. S., fulfilling, the goal of the Fullbright Hay Act

of mutual exchange between America and other countries (BridgeUSA, 2021-a). The cultural activities helped extend students' worldview, which sprang from an understanding of different cultures (Ganley et al., 2019).

Another form of support was the induction program that assisted participants in transitioning into the new education system (Sharplin, 2009). The value of the program is marked by the overwhelming appreciation expressed by 90% of the participants. The affirmations suggest that the induction program goal of supporting new educators' professional and social-emotional growth and development" (Baker, 2020) was achieved. J-1TEVs learned tips on classroom management, how to pace lessons, professional and administrative tools, different forms of technology, the 4.0 rubric of teaching standards, and the standards that govern instruction.

The opinion of the single dissenting voice is significant. Sonya said the induction training was outmatched by what she experienced in the classroom. She felt there "should have been more information about the American culture and how Title 1 schools operate". She recommended that experienced J-1TEVs mentor new J-1TEVs. The first suggestion highlights a need to be filled through the induction program – enlightening new teachers on the nuances of teaching in Title 1 schools. The dynamics of RSD was new to the J-1TEVs; hence, they experienced culture shock. Informing them about the challenges of Title 1 schools would have prepared them for the reality of the classroom, or at least gave them an idea of what to expect and how to manage. The second suggestion about experienced J-1TEVs mentoring new J-1TEVs is also noteworthy. Experienced J-1TEVs are usually familiar with the U.S. education system and can guide and support new J-1TEVs. However, an "experienced" J-1TEV who has not

adjusted well because of personality type can hinder a new J-1TEV from attempting to acclimatize to American K-12 classrooms (Halicioglu, 2015).

Mentorship is another form of support. As noted in the findings, only two participants mentioned mentors. One claimed she was assigned a mentor and got no support; the other said her mentor asked her regularly how he could help her function better. However, the guidance and advice of teachers can be considered mentorship too. There was overwhelming testimony on the support J-1TEVs received from teachers, both natives and their Jamaican counterparts. Bartlett (2014) reports that teachers supported by their administrators and colleagues thrive; their outcome expectancy increases through the success of others (Bandura, 1977). Through verbal persuasion, they internalize the belief others place on them, increasing their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). The support extended to J-1TEVs helped to boost their confidence in believing they could be successful at their job.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have implications for policy and practice. Recommendations are made to effect policy changes that can reduce the stress J-1TEVs experience when settling down in the U.S. Recommendations are also made on how J-1TEVs can improve their cultural intelligence to cope with the new cultural environment.

Implication for Policy

A primary concern of all the participants was finding suitable and affordable accommodation, preferably near the schools. J-1TEVs have a short time before the start of the school year to settle down, and sometimes, they are forced to sublet with other teachers before they can find accommodation. The situation is not always favorable. One of the participants suggested that J-1TEVs be allowed to rent apartments when the teacher village is completed.

However, the district superintendent reported on News19 (Lawson, 2023) that priority will be given to certified staff with the longest tenure in the district. One recommendation that can influence a policy change is to reserve one or two apartments as temporary housing to accommodate J-1TEVs while they are looking for housing. Depending on the need, J-1TEVs can sublet and co-pay the rent. Having accommodation in the school district can reduce the stress level of J-1TEVs who struggle to meet personal needs while adjusting to a new school system (Linehan, 2002; Takeuchi et al., 2002).

Implication for Practice

Implications for practice are concerned with recommendations deemed necessary to improve practice in a particular field. Recommendations require understanding the values of the specific context in which they are intended (Cochrane Effective Practice and Organization of Care, 2017). The implications for practice are for J-1TEVs and the induction program.

Implications for J-1TEVs. Culture shock and misunderstandings during cross-cultural communication generally occur because of a lack of cultural intelligence (CQ) (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2013). There are many examples of culture shock and miscommunications in the findings. It is recommended that J-1TEVs develop their cultural intelligence before and after they arrive in the U. S. Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualized CQ as a multidimensional construct comprising four dimensions within the cultural domain. Metacognitive CQ refers to an individual's mental ability to gain and understand cultural knowledge; cognitive CQ focuses on knowledge and knowledge structures about culture; motivational CQ reflects an individual's drive to understand others' culture and to function effectively in cross-cultural settings; and behavioral CQ is defined as the capability to communicate appropriately during intercultural interactions (Earley & Ang, 2003).

J-1TEVs must first be aware of their cultural skills to develop metacognitive and cognitive CQ. They must be reflective to determine if their behaviors are appropriate during cross-cultural interactions. They must read about the school district and school before arriving in the U.S. Upon arrival, they must observe differences between their culture and mainstream culture and be willing to adapt their behavior and approach to suit the setting. The drive to understand the U. S. culture (motivational CQ) is essential because it is the only way J-1TEVs can function effectively in the classroom. The drive will leverage an interest in culturally responsive teaching and pedagogies for student success. Finally, it is recommended that J-1TEVs learn how to communicate appropriately during intercultural interactions. They must learn the linguistic and paralinguistic elements of mainstream language because tone, expressions, silences, idioms, and types of body language can affect the communication process (Byram et al., 2009). These practical recommendations may help mitigate some of the challenges J-1TEVs experience with tone, pronunciation, and the use of words or expressions that are appropriate in their culture but inappropriate in U.S. culture.

Implications for the Induction Program. Because J-1TEVs face many intercultural challenges, a quality induction program that assists them through their early years is essential for their teacher effectiveness and, most importantly, student learning (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-c). Some of the cultural challenges can be mitigated if cultural intelligence and culturally responsive teaching are included as modules in the induction program. Also, more attention should be given to classroom management and discipline, as they were areas that most J-1TEVs struggled with.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The purpose of this section is to address the theoretical and empirical implications of the study. Theoretical and empirical implications refer to the impact of the study on theory and other research in the field. The theoretical implications address the extent to which this study sheds new light on teacher self-efficacy and cultural intelligence theories. In contrast, the empirical implications focus on how the study supports and extends previous research on the experience of foreign teachers.

Theoretical Implications

The current study is situated within the teacher self-efficacy theory (TSE) framework, a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). The cultural intelligence theory of Earley and Ang (2003) is discussed because it supports the teacher self-efficacy theory when exploring J-1TEVs' experiences in a new cultural context. Investigating the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs, a group of expatriate teachers under the J-1 visitor visa program, reinforces the significance of Bandura's (1977) four sources of self-efficacy and operationalizes Earley and Ang's (2003) four domains of CQ.

Teacher Self-efficacy. The new cultural contexts in which J-1TEVs lived and worked provided an opportunity to examine Bandura’s (1977) four sources of self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, which raise self-efficacy through mastery of tasks; vicarious experience, which increases expectancy through the success of others; verbal persuasion, which leverages expectations of competence by internalizing the belief a person places on another; and physiological states (emotional arousal) which determine levels of anxiety that either debilitate or enhance self-efficacy.

Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is the teacher’s belief that he or she can execute a task to accomplish a desired outcome in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The

personal and professional experiences impacted the psychological states of J-1TEVs positively or negatively, with corresponding increases or decreases in TSE. Participants' psychological states were favorably altered due to the support they received from administrators, teachers, and students. Lack (2016) states that the school climate, including students, administrators, staff, and persons in authority, predicts TSE. The overwhelming support from administrators altered J-1TEVs' efficacy-based futility to develop competencies and outcome expectations that drove job satisfaction amidst personal and professional challenges. Changes in outcome expectations may have occurred because of verbal persuasions from others to believe that they (J-1TEV) can accomplish the task.

Performance accomplishment was operationalized when Marilyn said that her self-efficacy is higher in America than in Jamaica because she could now teach "low-performing students", something she could not do in Jamaica. Her TSE increased by mastering the task through repeated success, with thoughts of failure reducing. A vicarious experience was seen when Marilyn was overwhelmed by the new technology and a coworker taught her how to use the smart board. She was motivated and believed she could if her coworker could do it.

The boosted self-confidence that the participants experienced from the support and encouragement they received and from observing others and believing that they can be successful confirms and corroborates Bandura's (1977) four sources of self-efficacy.

Cultural Intelligence. Cognitive CQ (metacognitive and cognitive intelligence) was lacking in varying degrees among the participants. The premise for this conclusion is the struggles participants shared about their personal and professional experiences. The ensuing struggles reveal the importance of being culturally intelligent when relocating to another country. Some conflicts may not have occurred if participants had a good knowledge of language use and

appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for effective cross-cultural communication at RSD in South Carolina. Having cognitive CQ leverages skills to conceptualize how to operate within a new culture (Earley & Ang, 2003). What is noteworthy is the adjustments participants made over time.

Motivational and behavioral CQs were operationalized in the study when participants showed evidence of adjusting to the new cultural context. They embraced selected behaviors they learned were acceptable. Examples of behavior CQ were changing from British pronunciation and spelling to American pronunciation and spelling, altering their Jamaican accent to sound more American for students to understand instruction, and adjusting tone by being much "nicer" when addressing student behavior so as not to offend them and "trigger additional reactions."

The current study's findings support the TSE theory grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory and the cultural intelligence theory by Engley and Ang (2003). The findings reveal the correlation between CQ and TSE in the lived experience of J-1TEVs. The more culturally competent they became, the more their self-efficacy increased.

Empirical Implications

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. Previous studies focused on the challenges and benefits of foreign teachers living and working abroad with an emphasis on the professional experience (Dos Santos, 2020; Dumlao & Mengorio, 2019; Lee, 2015; Miller, 2018; Modesto, 2020; Ospina & Medina, 2020; Savious, & Sadhana, 2021). The challenges explored in the current study confirm those explored in previous studies. These include finding accommodation, family adjustments, culture shock,

language barrier, classroom management, lack of cultural awareness, adjusting to new curriculum and pedagogy, and heavy workload. Compared to previous studies, lack of administrative support was not a challenge for foreign teachers in this study. There was overwhelming evidence that J-1TEVs gained confidence because administrators encouraged and advised them. The adjustment and cultural awareness that J-1TEVs experienced in the current study are confirmed in previous studies.

The current study extends previous research by focusing on J-1TEVs, a unique group of foreign teachers who come as cultural ambassadors to enrich the cultural experience of American K-12 students. More so, the current study further extends previous research by investigating how the personal and professional experiences of this sub-group of foreign teachers impact their TSE. The investigation of J-1TEVs' TSE is significant because high TSE leads to more engaged students and more excellent student performance. Students are inspired to rise to challenges because the teachers believe that the outcome is possible (Bandura, 1993; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Limitations and Delimitations

This section describes the limitations and delimitations of this research. Limitations are the weaknesses or restrictions of a study that are out of researchers' control. Delimitations are the boundaries intentionally set by researchers to ensure that the study's purpose is achieved. Every research has weaknesses and strengths that need to be addressed. (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

Limitations

The researcher intended to recruit J-1TEVs of different genders, nationalities, and years of service from every school level to gain maximum variation. However, the sample was not

diverse in terms of nationality and gender. The participants comprised ten Jamaicans and one male among nine females. Additionally, no J-1TEV from the middle school participated in the study (see Table 3). A possible reason why maximum variation was not achieved was that the school district gave the researcher a list of potential teachers who had agreed to participate. Being a sensitive topic about their personal and professional challenges, many may have declined to participate. The researcher had to resort to the snowballing technique, and participants suggested people with whom they were familiar.

Delimitations

There was one delimitation of the study, that is, recruiting current and former J-1TEVs up to four years after functioning as J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina. There were current and post J-1TEVs with a range of years of service (see Table 3). The former J-1TEVs had to be employed at the school district at the time of the study. I assumed that up to four years after working as a J-1TEV, participants may be able to recall their experience accurately. This criterion enabled me to conduct a hermeneutic phenomenological study on the lived experience of J-1TEVs in a school district where I was once a J-1TEV.

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the study's findings, there is a need for future research. First, there is a need for a similar study with maximum variation among participants. The variation must include different nationalities, ages, genders, school levels, and differences in years of service. Having J-1TEVs with families is also significant in investigating how personal experience affects TSE. Eight participants were single or lived alone; hence, the challenges of family life on TSE were barely investigated in the study (Only two participants who lived with families - husband and children - experienced cross-over effects of the personal on the professional).

Researchers must intentionally recruit J-1TEVs with families to unearth rich, thick details to help understand the phenomenon. The study can be extended to several school districts in rural South Carolina to recruit adequate J-1TEVs who live with their families.

Maximum variation allows for multiple perspectives on the complexity of the lived experience of participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Maximum variation sampling is purposeful sampling, and the researchers must intentionally recruit participants who meet the criteria (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Not having participants from several countries was one limitation of this study. Being all Jamaicans, the participants experienced the exact challenges with language. Having participants from different countries would have allowed the researcher to investigate the complexities of language among several cultures, thus arriving at a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communications. Another limitation was an imbalance in gender. Several male teachers were on the list provided by the school district, but only one volunteered to participate. Having gender diversity and the views of middle school teachers would add to the variation in perspective of the J-1TV's experience.

Secondly, there is a need for a longitudinal study to compare J-1TEVs' teacher self-efficacy over 3 – 5 years. Three to five years is selected because J-1TEVs are contracted for three years with the possibility of two years extension (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2020). By comparing J-1TEV's time progression with their TSE, a possible determination can be made if their TSE increases as they adjust over time. The study can be a mixed method research with one of the two possible hypotheses: (1) J-1TEVs' teacher self-efficacy increases as they progress in years of service. (2) J-1TEVs' teacher self-efficacy increases as they adjust personally and professionally in the new cultural environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how the personal and professional experiences of J-1TEVs at RSD in South Carolina impacted their teacher self-efficacy. The study was situated within the teacher self-efficacy theory (TSE) framework, a derivative construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). Questionnaires, journal prompts, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from ten J-1TEVs recruited to investigate what it means to be a J-1TEV at RSD in South Carolina.

The findings were categorized under two broad headings: personal experience and professional experience. Stressful transition emerged as the single theme under personal experience, while six themes emerged under professional experience: adjusting to a new school culture, culture shock, cross-cultural communications, classroom management and discipline, lack of cultural competence, and support. Themes were broken down into sub-themes that detailed thick details of the J-1TEV's experiences.

The findings revealed that the personal challenges did not affect the TSE for most participants because they were single or lived alone and separated their personal lives from their professional lives. Professionally, J-1TEVs lacked cultural competence to varying degrees, leading to culture shock, challenges with classroom management and discipline, and intercultural communication. The challenges negatively impacted their TSE, but with support from administrators and teachers, their TSE increased over time.

The study has implications for policies and practices. At the district level, policy changes can be made to provide temporary housing for J-1TEVs in the new teacher village to ease the struggles of settling down when they first arrive in the U. S. For practical purposes, the findings can inform induction programs and professional developments to prepare J-1TEVs for the new

cultural environment. J-1TEVs must recognize their need for and the importance of developing cultural intelligence to fit into the new cultural context to be successful. Their success impacts their TSE and, consequently, student performance.

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Appendix A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 31, 2023

Abigail Ralph
Matthew Ozolnieks

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1349 An Investigation of the Personal and Professional Experiences of J-1 Teacher Exchange Visitors in a Rural School District in South Carolina: A hermeneutic Phenomenological Study

Dear Abigail Ralph, Matthew Ozolnieks,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Cite Permission

May 23, 2023

Ms. Abigail Ralph
Ph.D. Candidate
Liberty University
Abigailralph14@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Ralph:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled "An Investigation of the Personal and Professional Experiences of J-1 Teacher Exchange Visitors at a Rural School District in South Carolina, we have decided to grant you permission to receive a listing of employees who are either current or past J-1 visa holders, and have agreed to participate in the research study. Moreover, indicated below are two additional stipulations:

☒ the district list of employees will include assigned email addresses which are for the purpose of making initial contact. Future communication of any type should be communicated via each employee's personal contact information.

☒ We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

The following information is provided to you to decide whether you wish to participate in my research on the personal and professional experiences of J-1 teacher exchange visitors in the …. I am a PhD student at Liberty University. I worked as a J-1 teacher in …. from 2016 – 2021. I am eager to learn about the experience of other J-1 teachers. The purpose of this study is to understand the personal and professional experiences of J1 teachers in a rural school district in South Carolina. The procedure will be a hermeneutical phenomenological designed that explores the lifeworld of people who share a common experience. At this stage in the research, personal and professional experience will be generally defined as the circumstances surrounding J-1TEVs' private and work life.

The data collection procedures involve interviewing participants, gathering information through questionnaires and journal prompts. The interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or by using the Zoom platform. Questionnaires and journal prompts will be administered via email. Data will be gathered iteratively throughout the data collection period. Information gathered will be stored on my password protected computer and pseudonyms will be used to conceal the identity of participants. I am aware of the sensitivity of the information to how members of the host country perceive J-1 teacher exchange visitors, so I assure you that your information will be held in the strictest confidence. Your name will not be associated with the research findings. Because you are volunteering information, you have the right to voluntarily withdraw at any time if you feel the need to do so.

Participating in this study has benefits. It will give you an opportunity to share your experiences not only with scholars, but also with administrators and policy makers who are positioned to make decisions to improve the experience of J-1 teachers. You can also receive a copy of the study; I will be happy to share the findings with you. Reading about the private and professional lives of your colleagues and comparing your experience with theirs is something I know will be rewarding for you.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before participating in the study or during the time that you are participating. Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

August 23, 2023

……

Signature of Participant

…….

Signature of Researcher

Abigail Ralph, Candidate, PhD, Liberty University

Appendix D

Screening Survey

1. Name: ----------
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Write the name of the school you currently teach at.

   ……..
4. Check the box that describes you (J-1TEV means J-1 teacher exchange visitor.).

   ☐ Current J-1TEV ☐ Former J-1 TEV
5. If you are a current J-1 TEV, check the box to identify the year. If you are a former J-1 TEV, go to question 6.

   ☐ Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐ year 4 ☐ Year 5
6. If you are a former J-1 TEV, check the box that describes you.

   ☐ I am in my 1st year after working as a J-1TEV at FCSD.

   ☐ I am in my 2nd year after working as a J-1TEV at FCSD.

   ☐ It has been more than two years since I worked as a J-1 TEV at FCSD.
7. Write your cell number and email address below:

   …….