8-31-2017

Exploring the Experiences and Effects of International School Changes of ‘Third Culture Kids’

Ryan Dellos
Nova Southeastern University, dellosr@gsis.sc.kr

This document is a product of extensive research conducted at the Nova Southeastern University Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. For more information on research and degree programs at the NSU Abraham S. Fischler College of Education, please click here.

Follow this and additional works at: http://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons

Share Feedback About This Item

NSUWorks Citation
Exploring the Experiences and Effects of International School Changes of ‘Third Culture Kids’

by
Ryan Dellos

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2017
Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Ryan Dellos under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Gordon Doctorow, EdD
Committee Chair

Barbara Christina, EdD
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD
Interim Dean
I declare the following:

**Statement of Original Work**

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author’s ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author’s ideas by citing them in the required style.

Where another author’s words have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author’s words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this applied dissertation manuscript.

Ryan Dellos
___________________________
Name

August 15, 2017
___________________________
Date
Acknowledgments

I will be forever grateful for all the love, help, and support I have received on this doctoral journey. First, I would like to thank my mom and dad for always believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my dreams. I couldn’t have accomplished this dream without you and I’m grateful for your continual care and love. I want to say thank you to Dr. Doctorow, my dissertation chair for guiding me and always pushing me to do my best throughout the entire dissertation process. I’m thankful for each of my students that were willing to share their stories with me and for contributing to this important area of research. I have been inspired by your vulnerability, courage, and resilience in the midst of your international lives. I want to thank Dr. Penland, my friend and boss who has always gone the extra mile to help me accomplish my career goals. I want to thank Dr. Moore-Jumonville for helping me get started and encouraging me throughout this journey. I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Rader for coming alongside of me and supporting me in the dissertation process. Glory to God alone.
Abstract


This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted in order to better understand the multiple multicultural educational experiences TCKs have as a result of their unwanted/unpredictable international moves. The transcendental approach included semistructured face-to-face interviews based on a questionnaire with 12 TCK students at an international school in Korea. Students were asked to share their emotional, academic, and social experiences. The three research questions underpinning the questionnaire were: What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? What are the academic experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? What are the social experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? The participants had attended at least three different schools K-12 and had attended schools in at least two different countries.

Results revealed that although TCKs are fearful of moving to a new school in a new country they are excited about the new experiences they will have as they transition to a new place and new school. Academically, the International Baccalaureate Programme is the curriculum TCKs prefer and find the most suitable to their international experiences. The most unique experiences TCKs face moving from one school to another in a different country revolve around relationships. The most difficult part about moving is leaving friends and family behind. While TCKs moving to a new school in a new country face complex challenges forming close relationships, they are open-minded and are able to relate to people from a variety of different backgrounds and nationalities.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance to the Practical Situation of TCKs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Culture Kids</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disrupted Educational Experiences</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Frameworks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of the Literature</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aim of the Study</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Research Approach</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection Tools</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential Research Bias</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Findings and Their Relationship to Previous Research</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions and Recommendations</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Questionnaire Adjustment Request</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Study Questionnaire</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C  Researcher’s Responses to the Study Questionnaire ..................................117
D  Biases and Bracketing Thought ..................................................................124
E  Site Approval Letter ....................................................................................126
F  TCK Interview Participation E-Mail .............................................................128
Chapter 1: Introduction

Not only is technology making it more convenient to travel, communicate, and access information, but it is changing the way in which we function as a world (Inglis & Donnelly, 2011). Some researchers have noted that families are becoming more global as a result of faster travel methods, search for employment, career advancement, facility or assignment relocation, improved economic conditions, the increasing number of international schools as well as a willingness to move and live abroad (Madison, 2006; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). According to Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010) as well as Hoersting and Jenkins (2011), as the world gets smaller through globalization, the number of children that spend a significant amount of their developmental years adjusting to unfamiliar cultural environments is growing rapidly. Cultures are defined by beliefs, attitudes, norms, customs, and language; therefore, people moving cross-culturally or to another country find that behavioral and social patterns differ from one community to another (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; UNFPA, 2008; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

Statement of the Problem

The TCK (third culture kid) term is defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having a full ownership of any” (p. 19). In other words, the concept of TCKs refers to children that experience a blend of two-cultural status as a result of their highly mobile lifestyles (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2014). The problem addressed in this study is that many times the frequent, unpredictable and/or unwanted moves by families of TCKs cause TCKs to wrestle with academic issues as well as issues dealing with emotional stability, social interactions, belonging, identity formation,
and rootlessness (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2010; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Shah & Sha, 2005). The focus of this study was an investigation of how the frequent, unpredictable and/or unwanted moves by families of TCKs cause TCKs to wrestle with academic issues as well as issues dealing with emotional stability, social interactions, belonging, and identity formation, because of circumstances that force them to adapt to new academic environments and to different cultures (Shah & Shah, 2005; Nette, & Hayden, 2007; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010; Shimomura, 2014; Désilets, 2015; Trąbka, 2015; Davis, Edwards, & Watson, 2015). According to Hoersting and Jenkins (2011), “Repeated cross-cultural moves at a young age may have consequences for development of cultural identity” as well as the fact that TCKs “experience difficulty finding groups and a culture to which they feel a sense of belonging and being understood, and may develop cultural homelessness” (p. 18).

Ultimately, the culture that surrounds the individual has an influence on whom the individual will become (Lyttle et al., 2011; Ormod, 2016). Although research has been conducted on the benefits and challenges of Third Culture Kids growing up abroad over the past 30 years, the literature is limited on how disrupted (defined as dislocations in their) educational environments impact the emotional and social development, and academic achievement of TCKs (Bikos et al., 2009; Cornille, 1993; Nette & Hayden, 2007, Pollari & Bullock, 1988; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2014) explained that although there is prior research on the emotional development of TCKs, the research has been hindered by the lack of vulnerability on the part of TCKs to express their feelings on self-report surveys. Furthermore, Lyttle, Barker, and Cornwell (2011) indicated that prior research on third culture individuals has focused mainly on adults.
Not only are TCKs transferring from schools in other countries, but they are also coming from schools with a different curriculum, such as Advanced Placement (AP), Common Core, and British curriculum. Students entering into a new curriculum, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, need to adjust to the instructional approach, curricular philosophy, and the school’s expectations. Therefore, in order to better understand their social, emotional, and academic experiences, this study sought to explore the numerous multicultural school disrupted educational experiences of TCKs.

**Phenomenon of interest.** TCKs also referred to in different contexts over time as military brats (Hall, 2012), missionary kids (Bikos et al., 2009), or global nomads (Schaetti, n.d), are children of mobile families. TCKs most commonly come from families that are involved with the government, military, education, business, medical fields or religious missionary organizations (Lyttle et al., 2011). This phenomenological study explored the potential benefits and challenges third culture kid students face as a result of their cross-cultural and multiple school experiences. The focus of this study was on TCKs that mainly come from business- or education-related families.

**Background and justification.** Sociologist Ted Ward (1989) stated that “TCKs are the prototype [citizens] of the future…” (n.p.). In recent years, the trend to move and live abroad has become more and more common. According to Costanzo and Klekowski von Koppenfels (2013), current estimates of U.S. citizens living abroad are 2.2-6.8 million. International mobility is not only a U.S.-citizen trend, but it is also evident on a global scale. According to the United Nations (2013), 232 million people migrated in 2013, which is a 33% increase since the year 2000. Glass (2014) explained that, with this growing trend, the number of international schools is
at an all-time high with over 7,000 schools worldwide, serving over 3.5 million students.

The United Nations Population Fund report (2008) stated, “Culture–inherited patterns of shared meanings and common understandings–influences how people manage their lives, and provides the lens through which they interpret their society…” and continued with, “Culturally sensitive approaches call for cultural fluency–familiarity with how cultures work, and how to work with them” (p. 1). Not only is the world population shifting as a result of globalization, some researchers point to a need for skillful intercultural communicators in the workplace in order for intercultural relations to happen (Lyttle et al., 2011; Ting-Toomey, 2012).

According to McDonald (2011) and Pollock and Van Reken (2001), TCKs acquire a unique view of the world, a global awareness, and cross-cultural enrichment that benefits TCKs in the ever-developing globalization of the world. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) stated that TCKs are also known for their adaptability, their ability to blend into cultures; they can be less prejudiced than their peers, make the most of opportunities and moments, and can have a healthy appreciation for authority. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) claim that through their unique experiences, TCKs also develop enriched observational skills, social skills, linguistic skills, and cross-cultural skills.

Despite some of the benefits TCKs gain as a result of their experiences, TCKs also encounter challenges that can be difficult for them to overcome. Many times, according to Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010), Hoersting and Jenkins (2011), TCKs wrestle with their sense of self as they try to fit in and establish membership within a culture. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explained that TCKs are faced with emotional, relational, and identity issues. Various researchers have concluded that the
issues revolve around their sense of belonging, ability to maintain relationships, unresolved grief, confused identity, delayed adolescence, delayed adolescent rebellion, uneven maturity, and transition (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Hervey, 2009; Moore & Barker, 2012).

Regardless of the reason for moving, students that have had multiple changes in their academic setting are identified, by some researchers, as being affected specifically in areas of emotional and social development and academic achievement (Pollari & Bullock, 1988; Cornille, 1993; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Lin, Twisk, & Rong, 2011; Wood, Halfon, Scalata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993; Walls, 2003; Rumberger, 2003). According to Simpson and Fowler (1994), highly mobile children are at risk of emotional, behavioral, and school-related problems. Compared with children who have never moved, “Children who had moved three or more times were 1.6 times more likely to be in the top ten percentile of scores on the Behavior Problem Index” (p. 303).

In order for TCKs to be successful through their developmental years and into adulthood, international school administrators, educators, and counselors need to understand the disruptive educational experiences of TCKs. Awareness by these adults of the issues that arise as a result of TCKs’ mobile lifestyles could potentially provide TCKs with the necessary support they need during this period in their lives.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand the social, emotional, and academic experiences of TCKs in the midst of their multiple multicultural school disruptions. Through this scholarly research, international educators may be better prepared and equipped to create and establish a healthy
learning environment for highly mobile TCKs. Accordingly, this was addressed by a set of interviews.

**Relevance to the Practical Situation of TCKs**

Because there is a limited amount of research conducted on the educational transitions of TCKs, the findings from this study might provide insights on how to better meet the needs of each student. Understanding the needs of the TCK students at international schools provides a framework for administrators, counselors, and educators to meet their students where they most need guidance, direction, and support in order for them to truly be successful. Because of the importance of better understanding student mobility in an international context, insights from the study could help bridge relational gaps within the international school setting.

**Deficiencies in the evidence.** Much of the literature revolves around specific TCK subgroup experiences. Many studies focus on the re-entry experience or the effects the TCKs experienced as a result of living in a culture different than their passport culture (Cottrell & Downie, 2012). Also, most of the studies were U.S.-centric and involved individuals from the United States or were about U.S. citizens repatriating to the United States (Hylmo, 2002; McDonald, 2010).

Because of the paucity of TCK research in the literature, Lambiri (2005) suggested the inclusion of TCK research that includes the role of international schools, transition issues during cultural adjustment, and TCK experiences from different countries as well as different cultures. Exploring international school transitions and providing international school TCK students the opportunity to articulate their lived experiences could contribute valuable insights for international school educators. Similarly, Diener, Oishi, and Lucas (2003) stated, “The effects of culture change are potentially quite important and deserve much more research” (p.
In addition, Lyttle et al. (2011) suggested an investigation be conducted to examine intercultural adaptation measures, emotional attachment, relationship building, marginality, and self-perception.

Nette and Hayden (2007) proposed that:

> It would undoubtedly be of interest and relevance, both within the context of international schools and of globally mobile children more widely, to follow up this small-scale study in other broader contexts as a means of contributing to better understanding not only of such childhood experience, but also of the effects, short term or long term, this experience may have on later developments in adult lives. (p. 443)

Furthermore, according to Lyttle, et al. (2011), “The difference between developmental and adult intercultural exposure and adaptation is an area that needs greater examination” (p. 692). Because of the strong correlation between geographic mobility and children’s emotional, behavioral, and academic issues identified in Simpson and Fowler’s (1994) study, they argue that there is a need for more research on family mobility. According to Nuqul’s (2014) study, there is a need for future research on the topic of nondominant culture TCIs (third culture individuals) who attend encapsulated international schools.

**Audience.** Policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, counselors, students at international schools, educators, and parents of TCKs, may directly benefit from the research. Because the study revolves around international school high school students, the findings on the experiences of social and emotional development and their academic achievement in the context of international mobility may benefit educational research as well as communities at international schools.
Definitions of Terms

Key terms that were used throughout the study are defined as:

**Academic Achievement.** A student’s test scores, school grades, and grade point average are how academic achievement is measured (Fraser, Welch, & Walberg, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1981).

**Disrupted Educational Experiences.** A disrupted educational experience means that a student changes academic settings multiple times throughout his or her developmental school years.

**Emotional Development.** According to Trentacosts and Izard, (2005) “Emotional development is comprised of the experience, expression, understanding, and regulation of emotions from birth and the growth and change in these capacities throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood” (p. 456).

**International School.** According to Nagrath (2011, para. 9), the definition of an international school fits the following eight criteria:

1. Transferability of students’ education across international schools;
2. A moving population (higher than in national public schools);
3. Multinational and multilingual student body;
4. An international curriculum (i.e. IB-DP, MYP, PYP);
5. International accreditation (e.g. CIS, IBO, North Eastern ASC, Western Ass. of Schools and Colleges, etc.); 
6. A transient and multinational teacher population;
7. Non-selective student enrollment;
8. Usually English or bi-lingual as the language of instruction. (IASL Criteria for International Schools section)

**Social Development.** According to Trentacosts and Izard, (2005) “Social development is the change over time in an individual’s understanding of, attitudes concerning, and behavior towards others” (p. 1191).
**Third Culture Kid (TCK).** Pollock and Van Reken (2001) defined a TCK as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having a full ownership of any” (p. 19).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review both discusses and explores TCKs and their disrupted educational experiences. The history of TCKs, as well as an examination of disrupted educational experiences, are included to provide a context for the literature review. The details of the theoretical framework of the study follow the context section. After the theoretical framework, there is a section exploring and analyzing themes in the literature regarding experiences that impact TCKs. The research questions, which reflect the focus of the study, are included after the theoretical framework section. The conclusion section highlights the importance of the present study and how it extends current knowledge gaps. Lastly, the literature review highlights the uniqueness of the study.

Third Culture Kids

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) stated that even though TCKs have existed all throughout history, there is a growing need to research and understand TCKs, as they are an expanding phenomenon. The term Third Culture Kid has evolved since the time Ruth Useem first coined the term in the 1950s (Useem, & Downie, 1976; Tanu, 2015; Zilber, 2009). Originally, Useem’s definition was: “children who accompany their parents into another society” (Useem, 1993). Cottrell (2011) quoted Useem, Useem, and Donogue’s (1963) definition of the TCK experience as: “The behavior patterns created, shared, and learned by men (sic) of different societies who are in the process of relating their societies or sections thereof, to each other” (p. 61). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) further developed Cottrell’s definition and define a TCK as:

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK frequently
builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (p. 13)

According to Vidal (2000), because of their unique experience and cultural identity development, TCKs cannot be understood within the traditional framework of culture. As a result of globalization and the blending of cultures, the different response aspects of culture that TCKs experience are used in emerging definitions of culture (Vidal, 2000). In order to understand the term Third Culture Kid (TCK), one must understand what is meant by the “third culture”. According to Pollock and Van Reken (2009), the third culture is defined as the process of learning how to relate to another culture. Cottrell (2011) described the third culture as a culture between cultures that includes an internalization as well as a manifestation of blended cultures. The blend of cultures is rooted in the first culture, which is the “home culture” or the parents’ original culture along with the second culture or the host culture where the expatriate family currently resides (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

**Disrupted Educational Experiences**

Although the multicultural existence and the challenges of assimilating to various cultural behaviors are some of the most difficult challenges for a TCK, they are also faced with the expectation to make new friends and to adjust to new schools’ curricula and schedules (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003). There are a variety of ways in which children have their educational experiences disrupted. Some of these disruptions happen within the family (Steele, Sigle-Rushton, & Kravdal, 2009), through domestic and international travel (Keller & Decoteau, 2000; Mok & Saltmarsh, 2014), and school mobility (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000; Mehana &
Reynolds, 2004; McClure, 1999; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Walls, 2003; Rumberger, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the focus of disruption of educational experiences will be school mobility (multiple changes of school) within the context of international travel.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

The relating of educational experiences to the impact on TCKs during their developmental years is to be grounded in Baker’s relational-cultural theory, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, and Maslow’s motivational theory (Walker, 2004; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Comstock et al., 2008; Melles & Frey, 2014; Mitchell, 2009). According to Walker (2004), one of the central components of Baker’s relational-cultural theory is that growth and maturity of a person are dependent on their ability to relate to those around them. Other key components include relationships, social identity, connection, empathy, and authenticity (Comstock et al., 2008; Melles & Frey, 2014; Jordan, 2013). Within this theory, Baker postulated that, because the individual is operating in multiple identities depending on their cultural context, contextual and sociocultural challenges hinder the individual’s ability to build and maintain healthy relationships.

Furthermore, Vygotsky’s (1934) sociocultural theory had a major influence of the development on constructivist ideas. While Piaget’s stage cognitive theory focused on the intellectual development of children, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory approach focused on culture, social structures, and social interactions to form learning experiences. The question Vygosky sought to answer through his studies revolved around the impact social and cultural experiences had on an individual’s thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). The major components of the sociocultural theory include networking, socially negotiated meaning making, experimentation, the role of
language in development, working together in collaboration, adults and higher achieving peers facilitating the learning environment, social and historical aspects of learning, problem solving, and active learning (Jaramillo, 1996; John-Steiner, & Mahn, 1996). In comparison to Piaget’s theory that accepts learning through a response to the environment, Vygotsky’s theory emphasized culture and the social interactions of an individual with the world around them. Contrary to Piaget’s theory, Vygotsky believed learning happens before development and is a thoughtful process (Vygotsky, 1978). When it came to subject matter, both Dewey (2013) and Vygotsky (1978) believed that there was no universal truth. Russell (1993) proposed that what this means for the classroom is that when a subject such as social studies is presented, it should be explored from the perspective that people made attempts that either failed or succeed, and the results of the methods used to respond to the environment help guide one to understand how to respond to their current environment. Additionally, Russell argued that subject matter is not a storehouse of information or behaviors to be acquired, but rather, it is a dynamic interpretive activity, a network of meaning, and an individual and collective reconstructive experience. Bandura (1991) asserted that the main components of this social learning theory revolve around self-monitoring of one’s behavior, its determinants, and its effects. According to Russell (1993), Dewey (2013) and Vygotsky (1978) understood that the mind and body worked together. Furthermore, Russell (1993) points out that constructivists argue that habits are not a response to stimuli, but rather a transformation and creation of stimuli, which can directly influence the environment. Despite the similarity with behaviorist thought in terms of behavior being part of the learning process, Vygotsky (1978) reasoned that people do not passively receive information, nor are their minds empty slates where building blocks of information provide the basis of their
knowledge. Another aspect that Vygotsky emphasized in his theory was that individuals are not prisoners of their culture. Because everyone has the choices to accept and reject the social and historical norms placed before them, they react and respond in such a way that can have an impact of lasting change on both their culture and the world around them. Furthermore, similar to the Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire (2000), Vygotsky stressed the importance of dialogue and social interaction. He argued that higher level learning happens through communication between teacher and student.

In addition, Maslow’s (1964) theory based on the problem of the hierarchy of human needs is grounded in the motivation theory. Ormrod (2016) described Maslow’s theory as a fundamental focus of humanism and that it was primarily used to study human motivation, personal development, and the acquiring of emotions, attitudes, values, and interpersonal skills. Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs, in its first presentation in 1943, indicated that humans have five specific types of needs. The five needs included biological and physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and need for self-actualization. Cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and transcendence needs were also included in the hierarchy in 1970 (Maslow, Frager, & Cox, 1970; Maslow, 1964). In terms of education, Maslow (1971) argued that “education should be a matter of learning what is desirable and undesirable, learning what to choose and what not to choose” (p. 178). Maslow’s theory proposes to not only identify the basic needs of every human being, but also to provide a framework for understanding the social and behavioral choices humans make.

Because TCKs encounter varying cultural factors and expectations throughout their educational and developmental years, they face unique challenges in forming
and fostering relationships. This study seeks to understand how TCKs respond socially and emotionally to their culturally unique educational experiences. Therefore, Baker’s relational-cultural theory, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, and Maslow’s motivational theory provide frameworks for understanding the needs and context of the students’ experiences.

**Analysis of the Literature**

**International School Settings.** With high global mobility and an estimated seven thousand international schools worldwide providing an education for TCKs, international schools are constantly confronted with educators and students going through transitional experiences (Glass, 2014; Lambiri, 2005; Taylor, 2014). Morales (2015) described the international school setting as being a cornucopia of cultures, languages, ethnicities, and educational curriculum. Although there is no globally accepted definition of international school or international education, it has been proposed that since the 1950s the number of international schools has increased dramatically because of the growth of expatriates sojourning in foreign countries (Heyward, 2002; Langford, 2012). According to the 287 international school teachers and administrators that were surveyed, Langford (2012) concluded that there was a consensus that international schools create or adopt a curriculum that serves international pupils and orients them upon arrival to their school, there was agreement that TCKs develop differently from children who experience domestic stability.

In an effort to evaluate the potential for critical, transnational, and multiple citizenships, Alviar-Martin (2011) conducted a qualitative case study with two international school teachers. The instrumental case design was used to interview two teachers about their beliefs regarding citizenship and their teaching. An International Baccalaureate school in the southeastern part of the United States was selected as the
site for the study through the purposeful sampling method. The two teachers chosen for the study were found through an informal form of community nomination. Interviews, observations, and documents were used to collect data. Before the ten observations in each of the classrooms, interviews were conducted with both teachers. Documents regarding school goals, learning objectives, curriculum, and assessment were also collected. The analysis consisted of a constant comparative model throughout the data collection process. It was concluded that “multiple, contextual, and overlapping citizenship are not unreachable ideals, but are genuine feelings of attachment that can be cultivated to build a just and ethical society within nations and an interconnected human community” (Alviar-Martin, 2011, p. 47-48).

In terms of international schools and the issue of transition, Morales (2015), asserted that few international schools have implemented transition programs that support TCKs in their transitions. Bates (2013) identified a need for greater awareness among administrators regarding transitional issues associated with international mobility and stated that systematic transition interventions are underutilized to assist TCKs. He went on to explain the need for interracially educated students to be supported in their transitions. It was also recommended that international educators should be at least one step ahead of understanding the unique academic, transitional, cultural, and pastoral developmental needs of TCKs (Heyward, 2002; Langford, 2012; Morales, 2015; Taylor, 2014; Morales, 2017).

**Transition.** McKillop-Ostrom (2000) stated that “change and adaptation to change are constant features of the lives of internationally mobile children” (p. 75). Furthermore, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) identified five stages that a TCK experiences in a transition, which include involvement, leaving, transition, entering, and involvement. Galton, Morrison, and Pell (2000) suggested that both a child’s age
and development stage are factors that impact a child that transfers from one school to another. Rumberger (2003) determined:

Although mobility can actually be beneficial if the reason and timing represent a ‘strategic’ move to a better educational placement, a substantial body of research shows that students can suffer psychologically, socially, and academically from changing schools. The impact of mobility depends on such factors as the number of school changes, when they occur, the reason for the changes, and a student’s personal and family situation. (p. 18)

Other studies have concluded that emotional and psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress are common consequences of transition and have an influence on TCKs’ experiences (Davis et al., 2010; Lambiri, 2005; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). Davis et al. (2010) stated that, although research is increasing in the area of TCKs, interventions that aid TCKs in their unique adjustment process are lacking.

According to Bikos et al (2010) and Dixon and Hayden (2008), transition programs are vital for assisting TCKs both for arriving and adjusting to a new environment as well as leaving one environment for another. Dixon and Hayden (2008) studied the transition process of primary age students in order to better understand the challenges that students face in the midst of international school moves. Participants selected for the study were primary-aged children from an international school in Thailand. A total of 30 students (20 boys and 10 girls) ages 10 and 11 from 13 different countries that had recently moved to the school were selected to participate in the study. The questionnaire created for the study was based on Pollock’s (1999) transition model and was accessible through a school website. In the data analysis, the Dixon and Hayden (2008) noted that there was no attempt to use
any form of correlational analysis or inferential statistics, while qualitative data was supported by small amounts of quantitative data. It was found that the anxiety the children felt is likely related to the anxiety of the parents. Also, in the midst of the transition, what brought the students the most anxiety was leaving friends behind and having to try to make new friends at their new school.

Bates (2013) explained that “transitional programs could serve as a bridge between the student’s personal cultural identity and the greater culture of the school community” (p. 86). Results from Hervey’s (2009) study revealed that negative experiences in transition had similar effects on the TCKs both in their moves as children as well as in their transition to college. Hervey (2009) recognizes the challenges TCKs face preparing for college and adjusting to their new lives in college. Her study focused on the relationships between the pattern of transitions during childhood and the success in adjustments of TCKs into college. She surveyed 109 participants regarding their experiences. The problem statement pointed to TCKs’ mobility and belonging questions, as well as their need for support during the developmental years, the reentry process and in their adjustment to college. The purpose of the study was to evaluate if TCKs negative experiences in transitions earlier in life made it more challenging to adjust to college, if the amount of support and interaction with Western friends affected their transition to college and whether or not students further along in their education were more adjusted than students who were just entering into college.

Participants were volunteers who were recruited through different TCK organizations. The survey was an Internet-based survey that included screening questions and questions from the Cerny-Smith Adjustment Index. The 27 questions were rated on a Likert scale 1 to 5. TCK students were the only ones surveyed. All of
the participants were college-age students who grew up overseas. Out of the 109 participants 62.4% were female, while 37.6% were male (37.6% freshmen, 22.0% sophomores, 18.3% juniors, and 22.0% seniors). Hervey (2009) stated that closures and goodbyes are a significant part of a transition, which explains the correlation between challenges in transitions early on in life as well as the challenges to adjust to college life.

According to Langford (2012) as well as Dixon and Hayden (2008), not only is it important for schools to help their mobile pupils adjust to the new school, but to also assist parents in their anxieties about the transition because many times the child will respond with a similar attitude to that of the parents. Also, in a study by Marchant and Medway (1987) that investigated the personal well-being and academic achievement and social competence of army families found that highly mobile military children are more likely to get involved in social activities at school the more they move. The General Well-Being Schedule, Identification with the Military Scale (IMS), Revised Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist, and the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) were the four instruments used to evaluate the transition experiences of forty military families. Although there were limited correlations between academic achievement and the well-being of military members as a result of mobility, a correlation was found between mobility and an increase in student participation in social activities. Marchant and Medway (1987) concluded that it is important for organizations to attempt to make living conditions as in the new locations as similar as possible to the previous place of residence in order to help families build social networks. Similarly, Walls (2003) advise schools to foster a “culture with high expectations for school success; a welcoming school community; school counselors trained to understand and advocate for the needs of students; the
expectation participation of parents in the child's education through parent meeting
attendance and volunteer work” (p. 5).

Contrary to Merchant and Medway’s (1987) study, that found no correlation
between military children’s mobility and academic achievement, Mao (1997) found
that there was a direct connection between mobile students and state required tests
scores. The longitudinal and cross-sectional statistical methods study included 1,000
school districts and 6,000 campuses throughout Texas. Data was gathered from the
Texas Education Agency's PEIMS database and TAS files that measure student math
and reading achievement levels. Data were analyzed using multivariate analyses,
which includes survival analysis and hierarchical linear modeling. Among many of
the findings of the study, it was concluded that “In general, the academic performance
of mobile students is worse than that of stable students” (Mao, 1997, p. 45). In
addition, Lyle (2006) found that although test scores are negatively affected by
children who experience military household relocations, children who experience
household relocations with parental absences have the greatest detrimental effect on
test scores. The reported effects are most evident among children with single parents,
children with mothers in the army, children with lower-ability parents, and younger
children.

Rumberger and Larson (1998) also argued that there is a limited amount of
research done on the educational consequences of student mobility. Therefore, they
conducted a quantitative study regarding student mobility conducted that examined
the experiences of students moving schools between eighth and twelfth grades in
order to evaluate whether or not students with highly mobile educational experiences
increased their chances of dropping out of high school. Based on existing data from
the National Education Longitudinal Survey and from the National Center for
Education Statistics (NCES), the study sought to evaluate the effects of changing schools. In order to evaluate the data, three models were constructed based on theories regarding students dropping out of school, post-secondary departure, and student transfer adjustment. These models were tested on two groups of students who had changed or dropped out of school between eighth and twelfth grade and students that had completed school through the twelfth grade. It was concluded that “students who made even one nonpromotional school change between the eighth and twelfth grades were twice as likely not to complete high school as students who did not change schools” (Rumberger & Larson, 1998, p. 1). In addition, Rumberger and Larson found that “student mobility is both a symptom of disengagement and an important risk factor for high school dropout” (p. 1). Similarly, in a quantitative study, Sanderson (2004) found a direct correlation between mobility and academic test scores. From a transient elementary school outside of Philadelphia, the reading test scores of fifth-grade students from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) were analyzed. Sanderson (2004) concluded that “what has been documented in this study shows that not only can mobility affect those students who are changing schools; it also more generally can disrupt the functioning of classrooms and perhaps all the basic operations of a school” (p. 234).

According to both Mclachlan (2007) and Cockburn (2012), transience is a major factor in TCK families. Lambiri (2005) stated that certain experts on international school transition estimate that an average of 30% of students move every year. Relationships are impacted because of constant transition in the life of TCKs at international schools. TCKs may be challenged to establish relationships as adults as a result of leaving and/or losing friends because of their many moves as kids (Mclachlan, 2007). According to Mclachlan (2007), while transience can be
challenging, it can also provide opportunities for social and emotional advantages as well as growth.

Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010) studied personality development of TCKs and suggested that advantageously students who spoke multiple languages scored higher on open-mindedness and on cultural empathy, while disadvantageously scoring lower on emotional stability. The connection between multilingualism/multiculturalism acculturation and the personality profile was the focus of the study conducted by Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010). Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010) tested personality types in the context of multilingualism and multiculturalism. The intent was to evaluate whether or not multilingualism and multiculturalism impacted TCKs’ personality. All 79 London (UK) teenage students were surveyed and half of the 79 were born abroad and had settled in London during their childhood years. Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) developed the multicultural personality questionnaire (MPQ) questionnaire to investigate four hypotheses that revolved around the TCK experience and whether their multiculturalism or multilingualism had an impact on their personality. The questionnaire was designed to measure the multicultural effectiveness of expatriated employees and students.

Out of the 79 participants, all of them were ninth-grade students at a Roman Catholic school in London (41 TCKs and 38 locals, born in London). There were 53 males and 26 females with ages 13-15. According to the results, the personality of teenagers is impacted by their multilingualism and multiculturalism. Students who spoke multiple languages scored higher on open-mindedness and on cultural empathy but did score lower on emotional stability. It is stressful, concluded Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010), for a teenager to learn a new language and to try to acculturate,
which creates challenges emotionally for the TCK. However, they noted, TCKs benefit from being more open-minded and being culturally sensitive as a result of their experiences.

Peterson and Plamondon’s (2009) study focused on repatriated TCKs and examined the effects of their experiences on their emotional development. The study honed in specifically on how their mobile lifestyles impacted their repatriation, acculturative balance and the development of their personalities, particularly authoritarian tendencies. The problem statement mentioned factors that contribute to positive or negative experiences when a TCK repatriates. The intent of the study was to add to the information on repatriation outcomes. It also sought to better understand the level of comfort of TCKs in multiple cultures, to provide data on TCK personality constructs such as authoritarianism as well as other factors such as acculturative balance, and positive effect (Peterson & Plamondon’s, 2009).

The study was restricted to U.S. citizens between the ages of 18-25 who had repatriated to the United States. Methods of communication such as Facebook, magazine advertisements, emails to friends and acquaintances were used to recruit participants for the study. Out of the 180 people who filled out the survey, 170 met the criteria (48 males and 122 females). Data were collected through SurveyMonkey. The data were analyzed on the basis of correlations and path analyses.

Results revealed that men and women did not differ on levels of positive affect or balanced acculturation (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). Peterson and Plamondon concluded that the number of years abroad had no impact on the indication of authoritarianism of TCKs, sense of multicultural balance, nor positive effect; yet the number of repatriations was problematic for TCKs. In fact, Peterson and Plamondon stated that living in many foreign countries reduces authoritarianism. It was also
concluded that TCKs thrive when they are given the opportunity to express themselves. Therefore, a strong relationship with their parents proved to be an essential factor for balance in acculturation for TCKs.

**Relationships.** Karagiannopoulou (1999) found that there is a direct connection between school change and the reduction of mastery of the psychosocial environment. According to Pollock and Van Reken (2009), “Relationship is the single most significant factor in determining how TCKs ultimately fare” (p.173).

Furthermore, according to Bagnall (2012), because of the specific experiences growing up, TCK students find it difficult to find friends with whom they can relate to and feel comfortable with. Cockburn (2012) further stated that relationships are constantly changing for a TCK requiring them to learn how to make new friends as well as to make their goodbyes. There are both positive and negative consequences as a result of the way in which TCKs interact in relationship.

Hervey (2009) explained that leaving friends and family behind and needing to build new relationships are the greatest difficulties for a TCK. According to Hervey, building relationships is the most important part of the transition process but can be difficult because of the ways the child changed as they adapted to each new environment.

Furthermore, Lyttle et al. (2011) highlighted the effect of immersion in a foreign culture on TCKs and monocultural individuals (MCIs) and the impact it has on the emotional sensitivity for a TCK and MCI. Of the 142 participants that were surveyed, 74 of them were TCKs, and 68 were MCIs. Participants were mainly U.S. citizens and were recruited through a snowball sampling method at a large liberal arts university in Virginia. The 74 TCKs included 27 males and 47 females with a median age 22-25, while the 68 MCIs included 28 males and 40 females with a median age
They used a social sensitivity survey (Self-Reported Social Sensitivity Survey), missing cartoon test (Missing Cartoon Test), emotional sensitivity survey (Self-Reported Emotional Sensitivity Survey), diagnostic analysis of nonverbal accuracy test (Diagnostic Analyses of Nonverbal Accuracy) and a questionnaire in order to gather information about the experiences of the participants. From their study, Lyttle et al. (2011) concluded that TCKs demonstrated more social sensitivity than monocultural individuals.

Additionally, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2014) concluded that TCKs struggle when committing fully to social interactions, intimacy, and long-term companionship. According to Lyttle et al. (2011), while some TCKs form stronger relationships with their family members and are able to relate to a variety of people, many TCKs often form coping mechanisms that hinder their ability to form intimate relationships. Cockburn (2012), Dixon and Hayden (2008), and Ittel and Sisler (2012) all explained that many TCKs are hesitant to develop new friendships out of a desire to protect themselves from the loss of another relationship. The findings from Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk’s (2014) study suggested that, although TCKs are able to form friendships quickly, these friendships remain superficial.

Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2014) studied TCK relationships during their developmental years. They wanted to understand the levels of commitment and reticence of TCKs while establishing relationships during their developmental years. The problem statement focused on the personal distress of loneliness and isolation, because of their challenge to form friendships. The purpose of the study was to explore how TCKs commit to social interactions in order to form friendships. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants for the study. Data were gathered from collages (participants constructed these by selecting images from local
magazines to answer a guiding question about relationships being memorable or important in their lives) and semistructured interviews with 10 TCKs (8 females and 2 males). Participants were 18-22 years of age and had lived in at least three or more countries by the time they were interviewed. The Collage-story Elicitation Technique (CLET) was the nonverbal way in which the TCK could express their life story. The semistructured interview allowed the TCKs to explain their experience verbally. Anastasia Lijadi (the first author) conducted roughly 90-minute interviews individually and face-to-face in a private setting. The findings from the study expressed some observations on how TCKs respond to the lifestyle and how it impacts their relationships. Apparently, TCKs thrive on the highly mobile lifestyle, despite the many challenges they face because of the constant changes. The authors concluded that although TCKs were able to form friendships quickly, these friendships remained superficial and the TCKs struggled in committing fully to social interactions, intimacy, and long-term companionship. The identity development of all TCKs is directly impacted by these constant changes and challenges (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2014). Because of the ongoing nature of loss and separation TCKs experience, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2014) argued that they fear commitment and exhibit avoidance to try to cope with the frustration, anger, and exhaustion related to all of these losses.

A quantitative study conducted by Oishi and Schimmack (2010) tested two questions to evaluate whether or not there is a correlation between mobility and individual well-being. The first question was, “What are the psychological correlates of frequent residential moves? While the second question was, “Are frequent moves more negatively associated with the well-being of some individuals than others?” (p. 982). A total of 7,108 American adults between the ages of 20 to 75 at the beginning
of the study were followed for 10 years. There were 3,395 men and 3,632 women and 81 participants that did not specify their gender. A nationally representative random digit dialing was the method used to recruit participants. A simple slope analysis was applied to the data to determine the correlation between mobility and the well-being of introverted and extroverted individuals. Oishi and Schimmack (2010) found that the more residential moves participants had as children, the mortality rate later in adulthood was higher and their well-being as adults was likely to be lower than their counterparts, particularly among introverts.

**Identity development.** According to (Blumer, 1969) identity is formed through a response to lived experiences, social interactions, and the interpretation of these experiences. In terms of cultural identity, Easthope (2009) argued that “mobility and place are essential components of identity construction” (p. 61). The data from Sears’ (2011) study suggested children and young people that move to communities where global mobility is the norm quickly identify themselves as people who move. There was a total of 76 participants interviewed through semi-structured interviews as well as documentary accounts as the researcher moved around an international school. Participants of the study included students, teachers, administrators and parents from the school. Sears (2011) concluded TCKs become a mix of identities or have multiple identities because of all of the different contexts in which they find themselves.

Additionally, according to Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009), transitions disrupted the development of the identities of TCKs. Walters and Auton-Cuff hypothesized that TCKs accept an identity or a blend of identities because of the challenging factors they faced adapting, coping, and surviving all of the changes in their transitions. The study conducted by Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) explored the identity development of TCK women using a life story interview method. The goal of
the study was to gain insights into the identity development of women who had grown up as TCKs. The study revolved around a problem statement that focused on the challenge TCKs face when trying to form their sense of identity and sense of belonging. Themes regarding the identity development of TCK women were revealed through the interviews with eight TCK women.

Purposive sampling was the method used to recruit participants for Walters and Auton-Cuff’s (2009) study. Email, word of mouth through staff and students on campus, and a weekly advertisement publication on the university campus were used to find suitable participants for the study. The design of the study included a face-to-face, life story interview in which the participants explained their life stories. The format of the interview was open-ended, which allowed the participants to explain their life story in detail. Ten of the 14 women who volunteered for the study met the criteria. The participants lived in at least one other culture different than that of their parents’ home country for at least three years between 8-18 years old. Voice-centered, known as the Listening Guide (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), was the method used to analyze the narrative interviews. Themes of how TCK women formed their identity were discovered through the analysis.

The conclusion that the identities of the women were formed in the context of mobility followed from the consistent mentioning of transitions in all of the stories the women shared. Spirituality and interactions with other TCK friends provided comfort and strength for the development of the identity of the women. Despite some of the comfort Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) found the women were hesitant to build relationships because of the constant change in their lives. Transitions disrupted the development of their identities, because of the challenges they faced adapting, coping and surviving all of the changes in the transitions. Walters and Auton-Cuff noted that
TCKs accept an identity or a blend of identities in order to cope with the different situations they experience.

In a qualitative study conducted by Bagnall (2012) explored the social, psychological, and academic challenges students face when their parents move from one continent to another for work-related purposes. The method used to collect data was in-depth interviews with 9 students (5 females and 4 males) at an international school in Rio de Janeiro. Their ages ranged from 15-19 and were specifically chosen for the study by the headmaster of the upper school. Data were analyzed by grouping statements into categories based on themes and identifying connections between themes. The three themes that emerged from the data include affiliation, technology, and school culture.

For Bagnall (2012) identity and affiliation are mostly synonymous and found that students identified with their own national culture, an uncertainty of what culture they identified with, or a global identity since they could relate to any culture. Based on the findings of the study, Bagnall (2012) concluded that TCKs struggle with a sense of belonging because while some TCKs enjoy the opportunity to travel and experience new cultures, other TCKs miss their original home. Furthermore, as a result of the many factors TCKs face during their developmental years, Cockburn (2012) suggested that a TCK could be confused trying to form their identity. According to Cockburn (2012) factors such as race, culture, gender, and nationality influence the development of an individual’s identity, therefore making it confusing for an individual to embrace identity factors that change with each new living environment.

Lee (2010) conducted a quantitative study that evaluated the correlation between dual cultural identities and intercultural effectiveness. Through an online
questionnaire, data was collected from managers and workers that had spent at least six months in a country other than their country of origin. Of the 89 people that responded to the initial questionnaire, 82 them submitted valid questionnaires. Their average age was around 38 years old. The polynomial regression and the response surface method were used to analyze the data. It was found that participants that have a strong sense of identity in both their country of origin as well as their host country are most effective in intercultural interactions, while participants that had a weak sense of identity struggled in intercultural settings.

In an attempt to better understand place identity Marcouyeux and Fleury-Bahi (2010) conducted a study with the goal of identifying connections between the “perceived value of a place’s image and their various modalities of their high school pace identification that includes place attachment, place dependence, and group identity” (p. 7). The study participants were from six high schools in a large city on the western side of France. Data was collected by interviewed 542 high school students with an average age of 16 through a self-administered questionnaire that lasted approximately 15 minutes. Over half of the participants were female students (54.43%).

Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The data discovered that the perceived image of the school influenced the level of place attachment. Based on the findings of the study, Marcouyeux and Fleury-Bahi (2010) concluded that there is a “positive relationship between the students’ evaluation of his or her high school’s image and his or her place identity” (p. 1). Moreover, findings revealed that although their high school was considered be of lower social prestige, some students still identified strongly with their high school. It was also found that such place identification occurred through strong attachment ties which included activities for
male students and affective links for female students (Marcouyeux & Fleury-Bahi, 2010).

Likewise, Moore and Barker (2012) studied the cultural identity of third-culture individuals. A variety of aspects of identity were studied, such as a sense of belonging, multiculturalism, positive and negative factors related to their experiences, and intercultural communication competence. There were 19 (11 females and 8 males) from six different countries. Represented in the study were six different nationalities, 23 countries of residence, and each continent. Participants were recruited through the snowball sampling method as well as personal networking. The background of the participants varied between missionary children, business employee children, and one diplomat child. The approach to gathering the qualitative data was semistructured interviews via Skype with open questions. According to Moore and Barker (2012), the results from the study showed that, for the most part, participants found their experience to be positive despite some of the challenges they faced. TCKs have multiple cultural identities because they are able to shift their identity in response to their cultural settings. On the other hand, Moore and Barker (2012) pointed out that TCKs are also able to embrace an identity by blending the different cultural experiences and expectations.

**Belonging.** Dixon and Hayden (2008) found the following:

How each child deals with the experience of mobility, the notion of “home”, and issues of self-identity would seem to be a multi-dimensional matter relating to their individual coping ability, personality and how different a new context is from those with which they are familiar. (p. 485)

According to Brown (2012) “We all want to matter and belong” (p. 235). A sad, but true reality for TCKs is their loss of a sense of home, commented Sand-Hart
Gilbert’s (2008) study found that existential loss is evident in the lives of TCKs, specifically those that focused on safety, trust, personal identity, and the loss of home. Both telephone and e-mail in-depth interviews were conducted with each of the participants. TCK participants were recruited if they were over the age of 18 and had spent at least one continuous year as a minor dependent of a parent or guardian living in a country other than their “passport country.” A total of 43 participants were interviewed: 31 women and 12 men from South American, African, European, and Asian countries. The study was qualitative and naturalistic, and data were analyzed using prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member-checking.

The purpose of Sellers’ (2011) study was to explore the effects on TCK adults that grew up in a country different than their passport country during their developmental years. Through a snowball sampling method, a total of 16 participants ages of 19-55, who had spent at least a year in a country other than their passport country and had spent at least one year back in their passport country were selected to participate in the qualitative study. In-depth interviews were conducted to allow the participants to explain their experiences growing up in a foreign country and how it had affected them later in life. Grounded theory was used to analyze that data. Through the study, two conclusions were drawn. First it was confirmed that “the experience was valuable and influential; however, unique challenges in the complexity of relationships, acculturation and struggling to achieve cultural efficacy are also evident” (Sellers, 2011, p. 92). Second, “TCKs develop skill sets that can benefit them in coming to terms with their experience, including utilizing change as a source to achieve equilibrium in their lives” (Sellers, 2011, p. 92).
Moore and Barker (2012) stated that, although TCKs are flexible in their ability to adjust and blend in, they lack a sense of belonging to any specific culture and desire very much to belong somewhere. In addition, Gillies (1998) concluded that TCKs are prone to loneliness because of their transient lifestyles. TCKs are continually changing friendships as a result of the continuous coming and going they experience (Gillies, 1998). Gillies suggested that often times these relational patterns lead to interpersonal problems or the sidestepping of potential conflicts because the TCK assumes that the problems will go away by themselves.

Hoersting and Jenkins (2011) further explored cultural homelessness in a study that examined the relationship between cross-cultural geographical mobile childhood and adulthood “cultural homelessness” as well as identity and self-esteem. The snowball-like design, newsletters, emails and members of organizations that worked with international travelers were the main avenues used to recruit participants. They used a survey that was offered to people at the authors’ institution in order to gather data. When the survey was made available, 520 people filled out the survey, but only 475 met the criteria of being younger than 18, of having lived more than two years on one or more occasions in a country that was not their parents’ home culture, and of having returned to their parents’ home culture. The survey included a general demographic questionnaire and self-labeled identity measure. Answers were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale. Data were collected through self-rating scales and open-ended questions. The study highlighted that cultural homelessness is directly correlated with the amount of affirmation and belonging the individual received during their developmental years. The study also found that there is a negative correlation between self-concept as well as emotional security with respect to cultural homelessness on both TCKs and Adult TCKs. In addition, according to Heyward
(2002), teachers and counselors need to understand and recognize the stages of development of TCKs in order to support them, especially in crucial areas of engagement or distancing.

A study conducted with globally mobile children in Botswana by Nette and Hayden (2007) sought to better understand what it means for mobile children to be part of a home country. The study involved four independent schools in Botswana that was comprised mainly of expatriate, globally mobile families. There were 120 students chosen for the study from eight different classrooms with an age range of 9 to 11 years old. Data were collected through interviews with each student, while follow-up interviews were conducted with a smaller number of students from each class. The study found that although “primary-age, globally mobile children do indeed have a sense of belonging, they have difficulty with identifying a specific place of belonging” (p. 442).

**Disrupted educational experiences.** According to Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, and Splittgerber (2000), “the less prepared students are for systemic transitions, the greater the support they need in making them” (p. 33). Furthermore, Alderson (2000) stated that while international schools acknowledged a substantial amount of mid-year entrants, there is little evidence that schools are providing students with any added assistance or procedures for being successful. In addition, Alderson argued that the two major problems for students transferring international schools are fitting in socially and catching up academically.

Bagnall (2012) also studied identity and belonging among students in an international school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The study was qualitative, and nine students ages 15-19 were interviewed. The participants were randomly chosen by the head master of the upper school. The data were analyzed by grouping the data into
themes and evaluating the relationship between the themes. Bagnall (2012) explained that TCKs are faced with the dual challenge of adjusting to new cultures and to new school environments. The teaching environment, new and different curricula, grading systems, new teaching methods, reinforcement techniques as well as the demeanor of the teachers are all components that complicate the experience for the TCKs (Bagnall, 2012; Ezra, 2003; Goldberg, 1980). It was identified in the study that moving from one country to another, TCKs not only face challenges of adjusting to a new culture, but are also challenged to adapt to a new school environment and educational experience. New and different curricula, grading systems, new teaching methods, and the reinforcement techniques, as well as the demeanor of the teachers, are all components that complicate the educational experience for TCKs.

A quantitative study conducted by Steele, Sigle-Rushton and Kravdal (2009) examined the relationship between family disruption and students’ educational attainment and concluded, based on their data, that students who experience a family disruption are affected academically and are less likely to make successful transitions from lower secondary school (ages 13-16) to secondary school (ages 16-19). A random sample of data were collected through linked files including information on the educational and marital status of Norwegian families from the Norwegian Population Register, the Population Censuses, and Statistics Norway’s Educational Registration System up until 2003. The sample included 197,638 children from 113,980 mothers who had 129,189 marriages.

In addition, the objective of Jelleyman and Spencers’ (2008) study was to evaluate the negative impact of residential mobility during childhood on one’s health throughout life. Two reviews assessed 22 articles that studied residential mobility. Data were analyzed using a structured form. The systematic review of the literature
study, Jelleyman and Spencer (2008) found a strong correlation between highly mobile lifestyles of young children and emotional as well as behavioral problems. The effects that were evident in young children included: indirect aggression, property offenses, and severe behavioral issues. The effects on teenagers included: exposure and struggle with drug use, depression, and among adolescent girls, an increased risk of both premarital sexual behavior and teenage pregnancy (Jelleyman & Spencer, 2008, p. 584).

Simpson and Fowler (1994) analyzed data from the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Children’s Health (NHIS-CH) and narrowed the population of students to 10,362 children in grades 1-12 across the United States that had moved during their time in school. Socioeconomic factors were taken into account in the statistical analysis. Percentages of each were reported based on behavioral outcomes by geographical mobility. Simpson and Fowler (1994) conducted a quantitative study including 10,362 U.S. school-age children and their families. Data were collected through multistage probability sampling based on the 1988 National Health Interview Survey of Child Health. According to the data, Simpson and Fowler (1994) concluded that children that move three or more times are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children who experience more stable upbringings.

Although there have been studies about school mobility, there is a limited amount of research on how international school moves from one country to another impact TCKs during their developmental years. The articles reviewed highlighted the fact that, with the growing number of international schools around the world, internationally mobile students are being significantly impacted by having disrupted educational experiences. Issues regarding transition, identity, belonging, and relationships are all part of the formation of TCKs. Not only are TCKs faced with
cultural challenges in their transitions, but they also experience educational differences from one place to the next that they need to learn how to navigate (Bagnall, 2012).

**Summary**

The review of the literature addressed the differences between highly mobile students and those that experience domestic stability. TCKs not only develop differently from children who experience domestic stability but also struggle in their academic performance and are less socially and emotionally secure as children with more stable upbringings (Mao, 1997; Dixon & Hayden, 2008; Rumberger, 2003; Langford, 2012; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Steele, Sigle-Rushton, & Kravdal, 2009). Also, the review noted how relationships factor into the well-being of TCKs. Although the cultural and emotional sensitivity of TCKs helps them relate to a variety of people, it also leaves them insecure and challenged as they try to develop relationships (Lyttle et al., 2011; Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk’s, 2014; Pollock & Van Reken (2009).

Disrupted educational experiences within the international school context contribute to a TCK’s ability to form an identity or to identify a place of belonging; thus the inclusion of these topics in the literature review. These moves also impact their identity development. According to Eidse (2011) and Easthope (2009), the identity of a TCK is shaped primarily by the cultural context, relationships, and experiences of ongoing transitions and changes in their lives. Baker’s relational-cultural theory, Piaget’s cognitive theory, and Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory underpin the study as it revolves around relationships, social identity, and the ability of a person to relate to those around them depending on the cultural and social context.
Research Questions

In this study, the researcher explored the phenomenon of disruptive education through student social, emotional, and academic experiences:

1. What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?

2. What are the academic experiences of TCK high students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?

3. What are the social experiences of TCK high students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?
Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The problem addressed in this study is that many times the frequent, unpredictable and/or unwanted moves by families of TCKs cause TCKs to wrestle with academic issues as well as issues dealing with belonging, identity formation, and rootlessness. Therefore, in order to better understand their social, emotional, and academic experiences, this study sought to explore the numerous multicultural school disrupted educational experiences of TCKs.

Qualitative Research Approach

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research explores a particular phenomenon, seeks to better understand the phenomenon, and strives to obtain insights into that phenomenon. Through the inquiry into the phenomenon, the researcher is able to describe the nuances of the phenomenon through the telling of a story (Creswell, 2013). A German philosopher, Husserl, developed the discipline of phenomenology (Beaney, 2013; Groenewald, 2004). Husserl defined transcendental phenomenology as a “pure standpoint which ‘suspends’ the transcendent in every shape and form; therefore, phenomenology comes inevitably on its own ground of pure consciousness to this whole system of problems which are transcendental” (Husserl, 2012, p. 180). Furthermore, according to Nicholls (2009), phenomenology is underpinned by a philosophical understanding that reality needs to be interpreted. In Nicholls’ view, because each human being is unique, the goal of a phenomenological research study is a systematic and exhaustive journey into exploring and interpreting their reality. In addition, within this phenomenological analytical framework, Eagleton (1983) cited Husserl’s argument that, “Everything not ‘immanent’ to consciousness must be rigorously excluded; all realities must be treated
as pure 'phenomena', in terms of their appearances in our mind, and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin” (p. 48) Through this analytical lens, Husserl defined phenomenology or the philosophical method as a “science of pure phenomena” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 48).

According to Vaslavsky (2013), the phenomenological approach offers a researcher rich and descriptive data. The aim of the researcher’s study was to better understand the emotional and social development and academic experiences of TCKs that undergo multiple school moves leading up to their high school years. Therefore, the researcher’s use of the phenomenological method was meant to allow the researcher to explore the experiences of the TCKs and to identify commonalities they share as a result of their experiences.

Participants

For the purpose of inquiring about TCK experiences with international school moves, the target population of this study included both male and female high school students at an international school in Korea, ages 15-18, who have attended another school (elementary or secondary levels) in a different country. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) define a TCK as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having a full ownership of any” (p. 19). Therefore, eligible participants needed to have moved to a different school in a different country at least one other time between kindergarten and eighth grade and must have attended different types of schools, such as public, private, or international.

Although the perfect number of participants for qualitative studies is debatable, Mason (2010) argued that the concept of saturation is the most
important factor to consider in the selection process. In an attempt to saturate the data, the researcher secured the participation of 12 students who fit the appropriate criteria of the study and conducted semistructured interviews with them (Boyd, 2010; Trotter, 2012). Because the participants must have experienced the phenomenon as well as be able to communicate these experiences in detail, the purposeful sampling method was used to recruit participants for the study (Creswell, 2013). Purposeful sampling is meant to allow the researcher to target a population of students that embody the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. According to Trotter (2012), the purposeful sampling method targets a certain population of experts or individuals who have experienced the phenomenon or fit the expected criterion of the desired study. In addition, Creswell (2013) stated that “a qualitative purposeful sampling strategy [is one] in which the researcher selects an exceptionally vivid case for learning about a phenomenon” (p. 619). By selecting from a specific population, high-quality information may be gathered about the phenomenon (Trotter, 2012; Suri, 2011).

**Data Collection Tools**

Prior research has found that a child’s development is affected by geographic and academic mobility (Pollari & Bullock, 1988; Cornille, 1993; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Lin et al., 2011). According to Simpson and Fowler (1994), “Children who had moved three or more times were 1.6 times more likely to be in the top ten percentile of scores on the Behavior Problem Index” (p. 303). When compared with children who had never moved, highly mobile children were found to be at risk of emotional, behavioral, and school-related problems.

The research questions that framed the questionnaire of the study included
the emotional, social, and academic experiences of TCKs. Some of the questions included on the questionnaire were adapted from research studies conducted by Vaslavsky (2013) and Nuqul (2014) regarding mobility and international school experiences. Permission was obtained from Julia Nuqul (see Appendix A) to use and adapt the questions from her instrument, and Vaslavsky’s (2013) study was found on the ProQuest dissertation database. To validate the accuracy of the conclusions of the participants, Nuqul provided the participants with the compilation of the description of the experience. Furthermore, feedback regarding the validity of the conclusions was given by an American adult TCI that read the transcripts. In terms of reliability, Nuqul found consistency in the pattern of responses from the 27 interviews. For Vaslavsky’s study, the researcher was the instrument. To ensure validity, Vaslavsky read her findings to her participants.

The questionnaire that was created for this study was based on prior research (see Appendix B) and was reviewed and validated by Dr. Ann Cottrell, an expert in the field, to enhance the effectiveness of the questions. Dr. Ann Cottrell studied sociology under Dr. John and Dr. Ruth Hill Useem at Michigan State. Dr. Cottrell taught sociology at San Diego State University from 1967 until 2000 (Cottrell, 1999). Adult third culture kids begun by Ruth and John Useem is currently the focus of her research (Cottrell, 1999).

**Procedures**

Because the study is phenomenological, the recruitment process included several steps. First, the researcher sought written permission to conduct the interviews with high school students at the target international school from the high school principal (see Appendix E). Second, the researcher went through the process of obtaining IRB permission. Third, eligibility based on school records indicating
that the students had experienced multiple multicultural school moves during their developmental years, 15 students who were believed to be able to provide rich data regarding their experience were asked to participate in the study. Fourth, the researcher sent an email to 15 of the participants who fit the criteria with potential times to meet for the interview and notified them that the procedures of the study were included in their consent form (see Appendix F). The researcher interviewed 12 students that were willing to participate in the study, submitted their forms, and provided a time they are available to meet. The interviews were semistructured and were estimated to last 30-45 minutes each. Fifth, the interviews were audio-recorded and every participant were subsequently notified of the transcript and were invited to review the analysis of the interviews to check for authenticity. Once the study was completed, an email was sent to each of the participants thanking them for their willingness to share their experience and to contribute to the study. All stakeholders and all participants involved in the study were given the opportunity to receive a copy of the results from the study.

**Data Analysis**

According to Kvale (2007) “the method of analysis should not only be given thought in advance of the interviewing but should be built into the interview itself as the researcher clarifies meaning of what is said” (p. 102). Yin (2015) recommends that a researcher take three precautions during the analysis. First, he/she has to check and recheck for accuracy of the data. Second, the researcher has to confirm that his/her analysis is as complete and thorough as possible. Third, the researcher will constantly acknowledge the potential unwanted bias throughout the analysis. In the dissertation study, throughout the analysis process, the researcher evaluated his own experience with the phenomenon, while also providing his own
responses to the questionnaire (see Appendix C) for the sake of authenticity and transparency.

In terms of analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the transcendental method. The transcendental approach was a systematic analysis of data developed by Moustakas (1990) based on Husserl’s (2012) phenomenological philosophy. The approach is stated as providing logical, systematic, and clear design elements to synthesize and organize the experiences of the participants (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

The transcendental approach involves first, identifying a phenomenon, and second, bracketing (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher tried to maximize both the authenticity and transparency throughout the study by providing the participants’ responses in their own words as well as including his own responses to the same questionnaire (see Appendix C). Also, the transcendental approach involves collecting data from several participants who have experienced the chosen phenomenon, analyzing the data (which involves searching for themes from the information), and finally developing both a textural and structural description of the overall experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Because the purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand the social, emotional, and academic experiences of TCKs in respect to their multiple multicultural school disruptions, the questionnaire was divided into three parts. Each part was focused on one of the three research questions.

**Research Question 1.** What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? Part 1 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) aimed to explore the feelings TCKs are experiencing in the midst of their transition.
**Research Question 2.** What are the academic experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? Part 2 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) aimed to discover the perspective of TCKs on how they socialize and relate in their new environments.

**Research Question 3.** What are the social experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions? Part 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) aimed to seek a better understanding of academic experiences of TCKs as a result of the change in their international school and cultural setting.

To further discuss the analysis process, Yin (2015) explains the five steps that are required. First, the researcher compiles the data, meaning the information is formally organized. Second, the researcher disassembles the data or breaks down the compiled data into smaller parts or fragments. Third, the researcher reassembles the data using themes to rearrange the fragments or parts into groups. Fourth, the researcher creates a new narrative using the reassembled material and supplements the narrative with tables and charts to better interpret the data. Fifth, the researcher draws conclusions that are drawn from the study.

For this study, data were gathered through interviews and were audio-recorded using the QuickTime Player platform on the researcher’s password-protected personal computer. Once the data were collected through the audio-recorded, semistructured interviews and had been fully transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions several times to analyze the data from the responses that were grouped into thematic trends according to the steps outlined above (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2015).
Ethical Considerations

To maintain ethical integrity throughout the research study, each potential participant was provided with an assent form which explained the study in detail and which clearly articulated the rights and protections of the participants. Also, parents of each of the potential participants received a consent form containing the same information and which granted the researcher their willingness to permit their child to participate in the study (if the participant was under the age of 18). All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Furthermore, to protect the data, the survey data files, the audio-recorded interviews, the digitized transcriptions of the interviews, and the analytic notes in digital form were saved on the researcher’s secured and password-protected personal computer. Only the researcher had access to data materials. In addition, all research materials will be destroyed after 3 years of the study.

Trustworthiness

According to Buchbinder (2010), member-checking is one of the main avenues for confirming credibility; therefore, member-checking was applied to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. In order to enhance the reliability and validity of the collected data from participants, every participant was sent a copy of the final copy of the study. All participants from the study were allowed to verify the data from the interview as well as add or subtract anything that was missed during the interview. The option to review or decline any edits to the transcriptions were given to each participant.

Potential Research Bias

According to Creswell (2013), a reflective approach is necessary in order to minimize potential bias throughout the research process. The problem was selected because the researcher has experienced a disrupted education first hand, attending
seven different schools in four different countries from the beginning of kindergarten to the completion of twelfth grade. The researcher worked to reduce bias by modifying the questionnaire questions from previous questionnaire studies about TCK students at international schools and the effects of school mobility. The studies found that TCK students face specific challenges as a result of their mobile lifestyles (Nuqul, 2014; Vaslavsky, 2013). Also, in the service of transparency with respect to potential researcher bias, the researcher provided his answers to the questionnaire as he made every effort to be authentic throughout the research process.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Because TCKs face potential challenges with academics and encounter issues dealing with emotional stability, social interactions, belonging, identity formation, and rootlessness as a result of the frequent, unpredictable and/or unwanted moves by their families, the aim of this phenomenological study was to better understand the social, emotional, and academic experiences of TCKs in the midst of their multiple multicultural school disruptions (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2010; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Shah & Sha, 2005; McLachlan, 2007). A qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research method was used to conduct the study and to analyze the data. Through purposeful sampling, the researcher e-mailed 15 students who responded positively to an initial demographic survey and met the necessary criteria. Based on a questionnaire, semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 students who completed the adolescent consent and parent assent forms and set up a time for the interview with the researcher. This chapter begins with the research procedures, the method used to conduct the study, and the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data from the three research questions. Also, a summary of experiential themes of TCKs moving from school to school in different countries is provided.

Procedures

The researcher interviewed 12 (3 female and 9 male) students at times when they were available to meet. The one-on-one semistructured interviews were based on a questionnaire that included open-ended questions that allowed the participants to share their stories. The interviews were conducted between May 16 and June 2, 2017. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours. All of the interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed and analyzed. Each participant
was notified of the transcript and was invited to review the analysis of the interview to check for authenticity of the interpretation (Terrell, 2015).

**Method**

Because the transcendental phenomenological approach was the method used to conduct the study, the researcher made every effort to remain objective throughout the study as he sought to describe the lived experiences of the participants. To remain objective, the researcher, a former TCK himself, completed the questionnaire with his personal experiences (see Appendix C). Also, in order to remain transparent throughout the process, the researcher bracketed his thoughts and stated his assumptions of what he believed the TCK disrupted education experience is like (see Appendix D). Once the interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim, the researcher organized the responses of the interviews in order to identify significant statements and grouped these statements into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the study was verified through two forms of credibility: prolonged engagement and member-checking. According to Terrell (2015) credibility means that “the study results are believable and credible from the perspective of a participant in the study” (p. 173-174). Moreover, Terrell stated that credibility is established through prolonged engagement and member checking. Terrell asserted that prolonged engagement “allows you to develop relationships and rapport, and thereby trust and understanding” (p. 174), while member checking means the researcher “shows him or her (the participants) the final report or product and asks if he or she believes it represents their input accurately (p. 174). Out of the 12 students, 11 of them had known the researcher for at least one year. The other student was new to the researcher. In addition, participants received a copy of their interview as well as the
analysis, so that they could confirm the accuracy of the interpretation of their stories. Each of these measures helped strengthen the credibility of the study.

Data Analysis

**Research Question 1.** The interviews began with a discussion of the emotional experiences based on the first research question that asked, “What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

The first section of the interview focused on the emotional experiences of TCKs. There were four main questions with subquestions that were more specific. The first question of the interview asked students, “Looking back on your school moves, how do you feel about moving from school to school?” In order to allow students to elaborate on their experience, subquestions asked them about what aspects of the moving around they found easy and what they found challenging about the transition process. The themes that emerged from the interviews were positive excitement, fear of moving, relationships, moving becoming normal, fresh start, age as a factor, and fitting in. Each theme will be discussed in detail.

**Positive Excitement.** The participants expressed the excitement they had about the new experiences they would have, the cultures they would experience, and the people they would meet. Participant 2 (male) commented, “meeting new people, getting to know more people is a good thing.” Participant 3 (male) said, “I think I felt more excitement than loss or like fear.” For the most part, students were excited about moving to a new place and a new school. Participant 5 (male) said, “It was mostly the excitement I felt when I was told I was moving…” Participant 4 (female) also said, “when I first heard that I was moving I was really, I was really excited.”
The response from Participant 2 (male) focused on his excitement about going to a new school. He said, “I usually am excited to move to a new school, but at the same time I'm kind of anxious and I'm not sure what is to be expected in the new school or a new place.” Other students commented on how they were excited about the adventure of being in a new country as well as the new culture they would experience. Participant 4 (female) said, “Well, definitely I felt excited because I love trying new things and I felt like, and especially moving to Korea, it would be like a new adventure.” Another one, Participant 10 (male), thought the same—he said:

I really think it’s exciting and fun to move around because I’ve had some experiences changing schools, I don’t really say “worried” at this point, I see it as excitement and able to experience new things, cultures, and friends. It’s like a new challenge to me—but not in a negative way.

A different male student, Participant 2 put it this way:

I was mostly excited I think to go to Belgium because you always think of Europe as a fun place to go to. It was a while ago, so it is kind of hard to remember the exact emotions, but I definitely felt excited.

Another one, Participant 5 (male) wanted to grow and push himself in the new environment. He said:

It was mostly the excitement I felt when I was told I was moving because I was always trying to seek and try new things in my life, and I wanted to extend myself, so I felt very excited and like curious about what was going to happen next.

Despite all of the excitement they had, they also expressed that there were mixed feelings throughout the transition process. One of the most common statements from the students was expression of mixed feelings about moving. Participant 8
(male) said, “You feel kind of scared and excited at the same time.” Participant 4 (female) explained her emotions like this, “I felt, half and half, kind of confused… excited, but then at the same time still scared.” In a similar way, Participant 8 (male) said, “You feel kind of scared and excited at the same time.” For another student, Participant 10 (male), “it was both fear and excitement.” In addition, Participant 2 (male) said, “It’s kind of like anxious excitement.”

**Fear of moving.** In the midst of their excitement, students also experienced fear during the transition. Students expressed fear for both the leaving a school for another and the arrival to a new place. The first days of school were also very challenging for the students. Participant 3 (male) said, “I think the thing I remember most was just like fear and anxiety.” He also explained, “When I found out I was moving and I was just in complete shock and I was very scared and I think my first reaction was I didn’t want to move.” Another student, Participant 9 (male) reflected on how everything was going to be different and new for him, especially relating to foreign students. He said:

> I was slightly nervous about what to expect, I was aware that there would be friends of different race and religion, especially since Hong Kong was a big financial hub where there would be many foreign kids, and moving to this school I felt kind of nervous too.

Furthermore, Participant 5 (male) considered what he would encounter and if he would be able to act appropriately in his new country of residence. He stated, “I felt very scared at first about what awaits me and how I should act, but it was mostly like fear against authority, that’s what I felt when I first came when I moved to a different school.” Participant 7 (female) expressed her fear and anxiety about moving by saying, “I’ve been very anxious about moving” and also, “I’m so worried about
where I’m going to end up and who I’m going to meet and it’s scary, but I’m also really excited.” When one of the students, Participant 9 (male) heard that he would be moving to an international school he said he felt frightened. His words were:

So, when I heard that I would be going to an international school in Hong Kong during my time in Australia I felt really frightened. I didn’t know what to expect at an international school and I was pretty nervous about what to face.

Not only did moving to a new school bring fear, but also moving to a new country. Participant 6 (male) student recounted, “When I first got there I was very scared and very, I felt very intimidated because I was the only Asian boy there… although I was a little bit excited. I was very nervous and in some ways shocked.”

A couple of the male students expressed their fear of moving because of the language barrier they would experience in the new country and at the new school. Participant 10 (male) was afraid because he did not know how to speak the language of the country. He explained, “Well, one of the first moves I had was from South Korea to Japan, Yokohama as I said, so, it was really scary at first… I was still worried because of the language barrier.” Participant 2 (male) was worried about not being able to understand the instructional language at the school. He said, “It’s always very—before the first day of school—it’s always very anxious… I was pretty nervous…I didn’t really know what was gonna happen because I had no knowledge of English.”

What brought a couple of students the most fear was that everything would be new. Participant 11 (male) explained, “It’s always nervous that I’m starting new school and meeting new teachers and obviously new students and new friends all who
I never knew and it was a challenge.” Another student, Participant 3 (male) elaborated on all of the different ways things would be new by saying:

I would be very scared and just anxious and everything was so unknown, I didn’t know anything, I just needed to get out to get used to things… when I moved to Poland that that’s when I first felt like kind of scared… moving to a new school I’ve always felt scared.

**Relationships.** Relationships were expressed as an essential aspect of the transition experience. Almost every student explained how difficult it was to leave close friends behind. Participant 5 (male) made the comment, “the number one thing that made changing schools hard was obviously my friends. And it’s hard to leave like people that you’ve known for so long behind.” Participant 9 (male) said, “I remember the most difficult part being saying goodbye to friends.” In a similar way, Participant 2 (male) mentioned, the importance of connections. He said, “Talking about negative things about moving, I think one of the major ones is losing your connection. I think if you’re able to keep those connections it is really good.” Participant 5 (male) said, “I felt pretty excited but also sad at the same time that I’m leaving my friends that I’ve made for the past three years.”

When asked about what the hardest part about changing schools was, one of the female students, Participant 7 replied, “Probably relationships. I’m the type of person who usually finds closer friends, rather than lots of friends. Quality over quantity, I guess, so I develop really close relationships and then it’s always really hard to leave.” She also mentioned how hard it was to leave her family and friends behind, she said, “It’s always been very difficult because leaving friends and family.” She went on to say how difficult it would be to leave her closest friend as well as the close relationships she had with her teachers. She said:
We’ve been really close friends ever since then, so it’s going to be extremely difficult to leave her, also, the teachers since it’s a private school and a Christian school. I have a lot of close relationships with teachers as well.

In addition, Participant 4 (female) commented on how making new friends was going to be one of the hardest parts about moving to a new school. She stated, “It was hard too because I was like, ‘I’ll have to make new friends’ but then coming here to Korea is one of the hardest moves because it is a totally different country.” She also said, “On the last day of school I remember being really sad with friends and emotional and then even at the airport I was like, ‘Oh, I don’t want to leave.’”

A few students reflected on the period of time they had spent in a country and how they were going to have to leave relationships that they had developed over that time. Participant 12 (female) explained:

I would have to say the hardest school was Poland and I lived there for four years, which was the longer period of time I’ve spent in one country and I lived there from fourth grade to seventh grade, so it was kind of, like, my mid teens/pre-teens so, I made a lot of good relationships so that was hard to leave.

She also said:

A lot of the times when I hear that I’m going to move, I have to kind of prepare myself mentally and usually that’s kind of detaching myself from the people around me and kind of preparing myself not to feel a lot of devastation when I leave and kind of in hindsight, I think that that’s not a really good coping mechanism and I kind of wish that I would have accepted my sadness more.
Participant 8 (male) said, “I felt kind of sad because I had to leave my friends behind.” Participant 10 (male) commented, “It was all excitement and fun, but there was also the sadness of leaving my friends.” He also explained:

It was hard ‘cause I was in that school for longest and the country quite a bit and it was hard to leave my childhood culture, I guess, and my identity, ‘cause I had been there since elementary and everything I learned and experienced is in that country and moving to a new school meant losing all my friends when I was starting to get really close to them.

In a similar way, Participant 11 (male) asserted, “The second school was the hardest school to leave because I spent there the longest time and had a lot of friends there, actually shared a lot of experiences with them.” Furthermore, Participant 9 (male) stated:

I think primary school was the hardest to leave from Australia to Hong Kong, the friendships that I made there were the most important to me, and it was just a really nice environment to have fun and to learn and so I really enjoyed it there.

Participant 1 (male) said, “My first school was an international school. It was very hard to leave that school because I had a lot of really good friends and they were really nice in their international schools.” In addition, Participant 8 (male) reflected:

My hardest school to leave was ISB, my last school cause, I am—yeah, it’s a school where I had the most friends and so and I had to leave the country behind and, yeah, it was the hardest ‘cause it was difficult for me because back then it would be pretty like, long time before I meet them again if I ever get the chance.
Another student, Participant 6 (male) stated, “Because I am very emotional towards relationships and it’s one of the hardest times that, hmmm, it’s one of the hardest experiences that I had leaving people and different country and arriving at a new country.” He also explained:

My class, we only had 15 people and we attended all the classes together. So, we were basically like a family. Everyone knew each other very well. We would hang over at everyone’s houses and we were just, together every day, 24/7 so, and when I told them I was leaving, they cried, I cried. I think that was something that made it hard to change schools.

He went on to describe how hard it was on the last day in New Zealand: “I was very sad to leave all those behind. Leave all the relationships I had built behind because I had fairly, a lot of good relationships with my friends. I was very sad to leave on the last day.”

In addition, a couple of male students reflected on how they had spent a lot of years together developing their friendship. Participant 11 said, “When I moved from second school to third school it was pretty hard because I knew friends, some friends for more than six years or five years and had pretty deep bond with them.” He also stated:

When I heard that I would move to Korea in sixth grade, right after graduation, it, was pretty shocking because I went to that school for five years and knowing friends for five years there and the fact that I can not met them again or for long time was pretty distracting me at that time.

Other male students also expressed how sad it was going to be to leave good friends behind. Participant 10 (male) said, “as I got older and tried to move to different schools I think I started to value friendship even more and I really, I was sad
leaving different countries.” Participant 9 (male) included his teachers when he talked about how hard it was to leave behind those people he was close with. He said, “Leaving friends is the hardest and then teachers, saying goodbye to teachers that I was close with.” Participant 3 (male) reflected, “sometimes I develop close friends, I mean I get close friends and after I realize I have to move it makes it so much harder.” He added, “I feel very sad to move away from close friends or from people that I have developed closer relationships with.” He also articulated:

I think Bangladesh was one of the hardest places, even though I was really young because, just I—that was my world—was Bangladesh and everyone I knew, I was young, but I knew everyone so well and like everyone knew me… I remember leaving Bangladesh, and we were all crying because we had like maids sort of… they were like our second parents sort of, and so I never really understood like how hard it would be to move from those people. We just cried a lot and yeah, it was very difficult to move away from people that I had known so well.

Although being sad about leaving friends behind was the case the majority of the time, some students looked forward to moving on to a new place or a new school if they did not have close friends, if the relationships were unhealthy or if they did not feel connected to the community. Participant 5 (male) explained how leaving one school for another was easier because he wasn’t very close to his classmates. He said, “It was one of the easiest schools to leave because there the children there weren’t also really too close to me either.” Participant 3 (male) responded, “When you feel very like distant and you’re not, you don’t feel connected and that makes it a lot easier.” He added, “If you feel very distant and didn’t have a very good experience in the old country, then in the new country usually you feel hopeful and positive and
things are going to be different.” In a more serious way, two male students explained how there were relieved to move to a new school because they were bullied. The first, Participant 1 (male) said:

In the second school I mean they didn’t really like me, I didn’t really like the students either… ‘Cause I speak different languages and not fully German and most of the people were bullying me, a lot of people were bullying me in that school and that’s why I felt I was actually relieved to move to the next school.

The other student, Participant 8 (male) commented, “At that school, I was bullied, not like, it wasn’t that serious, but I was bullied because of my dark skin.”

Many students commented on how they looked forward to meeting new people and developing new friendships. When asked about what they liked most about moving schools Participant 12 (female) replied, “I really like meeting new people.” Another one, Participant 11 (male) said, “I can meet new people and make new experiences through new places.” A different male student, Participant 1 explained, “I wanted to make new friends and this was the opportunity to go into another country.” Participant 7 (female) mentioned, “Getting to meet new people and get new experiences is really cool.” Participant 6 (male) explained how the culture contributed to his enjoyment of meeting new people. He said, “Something that I did like was seeing a new culture, meeting new people, and meeting new people with different skin color than me, as I was able to learn their culture and how they live.” Participant 5 (male) mentioned, “I really liked how, I have like this new systems, and new kids, and new teachers that I could meet and like I love broadening my mutual relationships with others and that’s what I really like.”

Moving becoming normal. The majority of the participants found that as they moved from place to place and school to school that the transition and moving
became easier. Either they understood the process better or they didn’t fear the change as much as they did when they moved for the first time. One of the female students, Participant 12 mentioned, “Moving has kind of become easier for me because I’ve been through it so many times.” Participant 6 (male) said, “I think the more I moved, the more I’m used to approaching something new.” Participant 9 (male) commented on becoming more comfortable with change. He said, “I was more comfortable with this change.” Participant 10 (male) explained how he was able to adjust more quickly, “The first move was definitely a big one. It was hard, but after that, I moved to another place in Japan, which is very similar, so it felt kind of normal to me at that point.” Participant 3 (male) recalled:

Well, I think each change is different and I feel like moving to each school is a new experience, but I’ve kind of grown accustomed to moving. So like, for each school that I move to, I feel, I just enjoy moving sometimes because some places have been worse than others.

Furthermore, Participant 2 (male) reflected on his quick adjustment. He said:

I think I kind of am more used to moving, so even though I think my excitement level isn’t as, I mean, I’m not as excited to move as I used to be because before moving didn’t seem to be a very big thing. But now it’s more of another step in the, like in my future, and but, I think I also handle it better now, even though it’s less exciting I adjust pretty quickly.

As the above quotes indicate, students also explained that their emotions about the whole experience changed over time and as a result of their multiple moves. Participant 8 (male) said, “Your experience was not as scary or concerning as you thought it was, so after that, you don’t feel as concerned as before, you just feel a little more chilled about it.” Participant 5 said he expected and anticipated a move. He said,
“I’m pretty sick of this place, I’m ready for something new.” Participant 9 explained the importance of moving on and being able to settle into the new school. He said, “I tried to forget what happened at the previous school and try to adjust and adapt to what I face in the new school.”

Reflecting on being able to return to visit his previous place of living, one of the male students, Participant 5, said:

I think I kind of got more used to it and when I heard that I was going to come to Korea. Even though I felt really sad it wasn’t as heartbreaking for me because I knew that one day I would return and it’s not like I’m going to some far away place that I’ll never come back from, but yeah, as I grew older my feelings like hardened a bit and I have this independence.

**Fresh start.** One part that students appreciated about the transition was the opportunity to start over. They felt that the fresh slate at the new school was something they could look forward to as they would be able to try to improve on what they learned from their previous experiences. Participant 9 (male) said, “when you move schools, it’s always a new beginning.” Participant 12 (female) explained, “I felt excited to be a part of a new culture and to experience something different and be able to kind of start over from my previous mistakes.” Furthermore, Participant 7 (female) reflected about her future move:

I think it’s all really exciting because you get to kind of establish an identity at a school that you’ve been at for a while and then going to a new school you get to reestablish that, you get to recreate yourself, kind of, start over. So, I’m looking forward to that, just starting with a blank slate.

Although students mentioned challenges in the changes of place and school, many saw positives in the changes. Participant 3 (male) stated, “So transitioning made
me feel very hopeful like I was thinking, ‘yes I’m moving from this place, I’ll have a fresh start here and everything can be better in the next place.’” He also explained, “I always felt kind of happy, I’m starting fresh, I think that’s a good thing about moving is that you always, you feel like you’ll be able to have a fresh start… that’s always a good thing.” Participant 9 (male) said:

You can always try to achieve the goals you couldn’t achieve at your previous schools, try to join more clubs or trying to do better at academics. It’s always a chance to change your lifestyle than what you had at your previous schools.

Participant 12 (female) reflected on how being able to transition well helped her to start fresh and adapt better in the new place. She said, “The more I am accepting of my feelings of leaving and saying meaningful good-byes and, kind of, really accepting my sad feelings helps me to start over fresh and more peaceful.”

Other students also commented on feeling hopeful and excited about moving to a new place and a new school. Participant 3 (male) said, “I still felt kind of hopeful and excited that there would be a fresh start.” Participant 12 (female) described her feelings by saying, “I feel really excited to kind of be able to start over and meet new people and go to a new school, but at the same time, I obviously feel sadness.” She went on to explain that she was glad she would be able to start over, “I felt excited to be a part of a new culture and to experience something different and be able to kind of start over from my previous mistakes.”

**Age as a factor.** Many students found that as they grew older and more mature that their relationships and their roots were deeper, making it harder to make the move to the new country or new school. Participant 2 (male) reflected, “I think as I got older so moving to Korea with a little bit more emotionally burdening.” He also stated, “When I was younger I didn’t really feel that sense of loss, but then afterwards
Participant 3 (male) explained that being younger made it easier to move:

I was really young and during that time I just, I didn’t really think about anything, I was more open to the culture and to new things, I was just able to adjust to things more quickly, I think that when people are younger they are able to learn very quickly, but then after I turned 12, I became more closed and I always wanted to like defend myself, I was always on guard and so that kind of, that distance, I became very distant from everybody, because I wanted to make sure that I’m safe and I think moving to new places you always feel very vulnerable.

Participant 4 (female) answered:

I think definitely, because when I was younger, when we moved to the States I didn’t really, I guess I was just excited because I was also just a little kid, so I was, ‘Oh yeah we’re going to a new country, yay!’ Then coming here, ‘cause I was at a teenage age, I was like, ‘I’m going to miss all of my friends’ and I could think of more fears and more things to worry about since I was a little older, so yeah, age definitely made an impact.

Participant 5 (male) described the importance of going to high school. He reflected:

Yeah, I think age contributes a lot to when you move school and if it has an effect on someone, like 9-12 is when the most important parts I think of your childhood because it impacts you greatly. I think it has a great impact on that kind of age area because like that’s when, I think, you’re the most sensitive. I did move schools at that age and it had like the biggest impact on me in than Grade 6 to 7 transition because I moved into high school at that age and ‘cause
I wanted to go to high school with the kids I knew from before, I felt like I was the person left out in the first place and everyone knew each other.

Participant 6 (male) explained how maturity and age made a difference in their moving experience:

I think that as people age, they learn social skills so when we are a kid, most of us are all shy and tough to talk to each other at first, but as we grow up and mature, we are able to create this social skill to approach others first and build relationships. So, I think this age level and maturity level was impacted how we, how I, felt about changes.

Similarly, Participant 7 (female) commented on growing up and maturing as an important factor:

Definitely, back in elementary school, I was pretty carefree and very self-assured, and very ambitious and now I think I’ve, just with the way that I have matured, I’m more calm and more of an introvert now, I’m pretty quiet typically around people, I’m also, like I’ve said, anxious and very worrisome, so I don’t know. It’s been really freaky, like the idea of going to a new school because I have been here for a while…when you’re young it doesn’t really matter, but when once you’re older you take things more seriously. Now, I really think about things and I’ve built relationships.

Participant 8 (male) discussed how he had become more aware. He said, “Like as you grow up you’re starting to be more aware of your surroundings and how people judge you and things like that, so I think it’s a little tougher sometimes.”

Participant 11 (male) expressed:
I would have to move and I started to worry about the future and what if other students and other school hates me or does not like me once I get there. I think age actually affected greatly to my moving schools.

Participant 12 (female) shared:

I feel like when you’re younger, it’s easier to make new friends because people are… I just feel like younger kids are more accepting of other people, but then when you’re older, everybody’s just kind of more self-aware, so they have already formed their group of friends and it takes a bit longer when you’re older.

Contrary to those that felt like older age made it more difficult to move, a few male students explained that it was actually easier for them to move as they got older because they understood better how to adjust to the new school and didn’t feel connected to those they interacted. Participant 9 (male) said, “As I moved on to high school I just accepted it as a part of life and then so then it wasn’t as difficult for me changing schools because I was more familiar with changing school.” In the same way, Participant 10 (male) stated, “I think I was able to develop my skill on meeting new people, how to like understand them and their differences, like stuff like that.” Also, Participant 2 (male) explained, “I understand what it means to move from one place to another and how much you kind of have to adjust.” Participant 8 (male) stated, “after puberty, I kind of overcame it then. Like moving school again. I like became kind of chill about moving school.” Participant 3 (male) commented on being disconnected from the community. He said, “I think, in Hong Kong, I became very distant and just didn’t know how to interact, that made it so much easier for me to leave.”
**Fitting in.** Students found that they were able to adjust the quickest to schools where they fit in, where students approached them and made them feel welcome, and where they felt like they were accepted in the community. The fear of not fitting in was one of the most concerning factors for one of the female students, Participant 4. She said, “What if I’m, I will never settle in, that I’ll never really find my place here and what if I really want to go back home, but I can’t?” She also said, “Because the experience is new then there were also emotions of fear and trying to fit into the environment and culture, so although it was fun a good experience, it was very a challenging event.” Participant 11 (male) explained the challenge of fitting in:

> I have to find my belonging and actually place myself where people are actually functioning, where they are already doing that. It’s really hard to find my role in the new place, so it was the hardest thing when I moved to a new school and adjust to new environments.

Many students explained how they felt welcomed by other students and the community and how that really helped them. Participant 6 (male) said, “Luckily some nice friends in both schools in this school and in the school I attended in Incheon were able to help me out, which made me feel comfort and also they create a sense of belonging for me.” Another student, Participant 10 (male), also mentioned how friendly the people were to him. He also said, “I felt like I got taken care of really well by people there.” He went on to say, “That was the main thing that got me into making friends and meeting new people and getting close to them.” Participant 12 (female) explained:

> Because even though it was a homogeneous community and most people were Chinese, or came from America-Chinese, they were really open to international students and they were really interested in welcoming so that
made it easier to talk with people and feel more welcome… I feel like most of
the schools I been to are really international and most of the kids have
international backgrounds but this [Hong Kong] school, in particular, was
really open to international students and I felt the most welcomed there.

Participant 11 (male) student reflected:

My current school was easiest to adjust because actually the other
boys in my
grade let me connect easier with them by asking about my hobbies, or where
I’m from so I can actually be adjust easier… I can form faster relationship
with friends which will make my new school life easier and that actually
happens in this school.

Also, Participant 12 asserted that it was making friends that helped her feel
part of the school community. She said, “Making friends and being able to find
people that relate to you and finding familiar parts of your new community to kind of
ease you in and feel more comfortable.” She also explained other aspects that make it
hard to fit in with the culture, the school curriculum, “Trying to make friends has
always been hard because it takes a lot of time and adjusting to a new curriculum and
learning about the culture and how you fit into all that.” Furthermore, Participant 9
(male) said, “I was able to connect to a lot of the people in this community and I also
recognized that the friends here were much more friendly and extroverted, so they
approached me in the first year so that helped.” In a similar way, Participant 8 (male)
explained, “I met these people who were offering friendship to me at first, in fact,
they were coming to me, talking to me first, so it was a lot easier for me to get
involved in this activities and societies.” Additionally, Participant 10 (male) said,
“making new friends helped me get into school and allowed me to have a more fun
and easy-going experience at school.” Participant 2 (male) expressed, “The
classmates were very welcoming, so I was able to adjust really easily.” Also, reflecting on feeling welcomed and accepted, Participant 1 (male) articulated:

This school as it is quite a small school and everybody knows each other. It’s a lot more friendly than in Germany, that’s why I feel it was really easy to adjust to this school and feel comfortable at this school.

Culture played a role in the experience of a couple of students. They described how different cultures affected how well they were able to adjust. Participant 11 (male) said, “It's been mostly hard to adapt to different cultures and different finding new friends and also having different teachers and teaching styles.” Participant 3 (male) expressed, “I think that I started to lose knowledge of like how to talk to people and how to interact with people of that certain culture.” Participant 7 (female) explained:

Well, I had been in Korea before there was a change in culture there, but somehow I adapted easily to the American culture and I think that’s because I was younger, but then like I said, moving to Korea in the sixth grade that was pretty difficult adjusting to the culture and differences.

She also articulated,

When I got here, I was kind of like, ‘How do I fit in?’ The culture was completely different, so I guess that’s something TCKs might run into, even though I am half Korean I didn’t identify with Korean culture at all, so it was really difficult to fit in with Korean as our school has a majority of Korean students. It was really difficult to just know what the social standards were and how to act and behave in order to be accepted by everyone here.

Participant 6 (male) said, “We all, as Koreans, have common interests and common culture so I think it was able to create a sense of belonging to me. Which I
didn’t really feel in New Zealand to this level.” On the same issue, Participant 3 (male) replied:

I think maybe Poland was easier for me. Bangladesh, the culture in Bangladesh is very different and the community is very different from Poland, but the way people were, the kind of people it was a more Westernized culture and I was familiar with that culture because I have parents and my family in the U.S. that are more Westernized, and so I’m more familiar with that. So I kind of knew a little bit how things were like, and how I would have to interact with people, and like, yeah, how to do things.

Participant 2 (male) explained how he wanted to try something other than his own cultural experience:

I felt I fit in pretty well, I didn’t have any feelings of like of being excluded, really, and I played with all the children, the kids and actually there were some Taiwanese people in the school and they tried to make me like their friend of their group. But I wasn’t very interested in sticking with my own country, my own people, kind of, like I played with them, but I wasn’t just playing with them because like, I saw what they were playing and I saw how British people are playing and then I was like, ‘Oh, I want to try that.’

**Research Question 2.** “What are the academic experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

The second part of the interview focused on the academic experiences of TCKs. There were two main questions and each included a subquestion. The first question of the interview asked students, “Has switching schools had any effect on how well you do in school?” Along these same lines, the initial question was followed up with a
subquestion that asked students, “As a result of school changes, have you noticed any effects in your schoolwork, grades, homework, and/or behavior?” The interviews revealed mixed results in terms of academic achievement. While many students indicated that they either stayed the same or made improvements in their academics by either working harder or having a better understanding of how to improve their grades, other students suffered initially as a result of the changes in schools. One student, Participant 5 (male), stated, “I did achieve well in my all my academic areas.” While another student, Participant 12 (female), explained that, “switching from Malaysia to here, my academics really suffered.” A couple of students stated that there is an adjustment period. One, Participant 2 (male) said, “there’s usually a one-year adjustment ‘cause it’s talking about academics, grades, and stuff,” while two other students mentioned that they started off poorly in the first semester, but were able to catch up as the year went on. Participant 6 (male) stated, “I don’t think that I was able to get into the system of Cambridge right from the beginning, but after like 2 semesters, or after the first semester, I was able to fit in and understand the system.” Participant 11 (male) explained, “as I move I did pretty poor on first semester but kind of catch up in other or few other semester for the year.”

Four themes emerged from the interviews. The four themes that emerged from the interviews were: culture, the curriculum, teacher expectations, and school environment. Each of these different factors contributed to how well students performed academically as well as how well they transitioned to the new country and new school.

Culture. Some students mentioned that the culture of the country did, in fact, have an impact on how well they performed as well as the stress they felt as a result of the cultural influence. Participant 10 (male) stated:
Moving back to South Korea, I realized that education is very competitive as something a cultural difference, I think, and it made me focus on my academics more and actually achieve, perform better and I think it’s as a result of experiencing new cultures back in Korea. Yeah, so I was able to focus more, take my schoolwork more seriously.…

Participant 9 (male) mentioned the added pressure:

I was really persevering in Hong Kong because the academic pressure is really strong there, so there’s a big urge from the whole student body to do well in academics and there’s a lot of competition in math, English, and other subjects. So I was pressured more to do well.…

He went on to say that the lack of pressure helped him feel more relaxed, “So switching schools to here, this pressure kind of disappeared and so academic behavior-wise I think I felt more relaxed here.”

Curriculum. The impact curriculum has on student achievement level was clear. Participant 2 (male) mentioned his need to try to make up what he had missed as a result of changing schools:

I was having to catch up with the math part especially, so my foundation even today, even now my foundation in math isn’t that strong, I get all the concepts, but then the memorization and the accuracy I struggle with and that’s because of moving from places and different approaches to education.

Participant 12 (female) mentioned, “Well switching from Malaysia to here, my academics really suffered. I think because of the curriculum change.” Participant 7 (female) also explained the effect of the curriculum on academic success. She affirmed, “I think moving to different schools does affect your academics because you have to adjust to a whole new… you have to adjust to the different curriculum.”
In addition, Participant 4 (female) was concerned that she was falling behind because she wasn’t learning what her friends were learning at her previous school. She stated, “In some classes, I really don’t feel like I’m learning the curriculum that my friends are learning...” Participant 2 (male) reflected on how his academic experience had been impacted:

Each school has a different approach and it's very interesting to study every one, study the different approaches. It really affects I think how well... it definitely affects your academic experience. Like, yeah, different approaches, some people are better with the straightforward knowledge approach. I personally, I'm more, I am comfortable with a, I'm comfortable with a conceptual approach.

Participant 11 (male) stated, “I go to three different academic educational styles, I had difficulty being comfortable with one to another and think that there was difficulty as I move and as I move I did pretty poor on first semester but kind of catch up in other or few other semester for the year.”

The curriculum played a role in the amount of effort the student, Participant 1 (male), put forth and also noted the different amounts of work by the different schools:

Normally in Germany, the classes were very easy compared to this school, and I think it wasn’t really a challenge and that made me not want to try hard in school. But I think at first at this school, it was a bit hard to adapt to all the homework and topics that we covered.

The second major question in this academic section of the interview asked students specifically about their curricular experiences and whether they felt more challenged by a certain curriculum and also if they felt more comfortable with a certain
The first subquestion asked, “Has the curriculum at any school been challenging?” The follow-up question was, “Has there been a curriculum you felt most comfortable with?” Although the majority of the students commented on how difficult the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum is and can be, many of them were comfortable with the IB program.

**International Baccalaureate program.** Because the students were currently experiencing the IB program, many of them discussed the different aspects that they liked as well as the aspects they found challenging with the IB curriculum. Participant 2 (male) argued that the IB program best fits TCKs:

> I am most comfortable with the IB and I’m very… I think it was made very like suitable for people like me and I don’t know if it’s true for every third cultural kid. I feel like in most third culture kids the IB works better than traditional like tests and like knowledge-based education.

The same student compared his experiences with the AP and IB curricula. He argued that the IB curriculum was harder because of its philosophical underpinnings:

> The school system in Taiwan it’s more challenging because of how it’s—you have to memorize a lot and you have to put a lot of work into studying for tests and stuff. But I would say IB is even more challenging than that. But it’s a whole different challenge. It’s more of a challenge with your thinking and how you understand it and the reasoning behind the understanding.

Furthermore, Participant 3 (male) reasoned that the IB program curriculum is one of the hardest because of the amount of reflecting, writing, and critical thinking that is expected:

> I think the IB curriculum is one of the hardest. I mean there are some people that say that it’s very laid back like in everything, but in IB you have to really
reflect on a lot of things and you have to really go deep into your mind and ask
yourself questions, and there’s a lot of writing.

The stance of the challenging aspect of the IB curriculum was further
supported when the student (Participant 6—male) who had come from the New
Zealand curriculum into the IB program firmly pronounced the different approach, “I
believe that the IB system was more challenging because we had summatives,
multiple summatives throughout the whole year.” While many commented on the
challenges of the IB curriculum, other students commented on being comfortable with
it. Participant 7 (female) asserted, “I know what the expectations are.” This was
echoed by Participant 12 (female) who said:

Well at first I wasn’t comfortable with the IB program, but then after a while, I
realized that I was. I felt more comfortable with it because there is a certain
pattern when it comes to the IB program. So it was predictable and I knew
how to study for it.

In addition, Participant 1 (male) explained, “I’m most comfortable with the IB and
MYP I think, right now.”

**School environment.** Students also noted that the school environment
contributed to how motivated they were in their academic work. Participant 4 (female)
explained how the school environment impacted her academics:

School environment it seems more easier than my other school because like I
said there was competition in my other school… I think at this school I’m
more challenging myself because since I don’t find like other aspects that
challenge me the only thing I have left is myself to challenge myself.

Participant 10 (male) also explained how the school environment enhanced his
academic experience:
I just really enjoyed being a part of this community and I also want to keep up with my academics so that nothing will be wrong in that area and just end up well and go to college and stuff. So yeah, I think that also helped me with my academics because it kinda motivated me because I like the environment.

*Teacher expectations.* Students expressed the importance of understanding teacher expectations and how understanding the expectations impacted how well they performed in school. Participant 11 (male) commented on how the teaching styles were different. He stated, “I went to one of the public schools of Korea, and their teaching style and international teaching style is totally different.” Participant 3 (male) reflected, “I think over time I just kind of, in each school, I learned kind of like what teachers expected me.” Participant 6 (male) confirmed that his initial drop in grades was a result of changes in schools and understanding the expectations of the teacher. He indicated that “when I first moved to New Zealand, I had troubles receiving high grades, that I used to get because the system was different and I didn’t understand what the teachers expected of me.”

**Research Question 3.** “What are the social experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

Students were asked about what it was like to make friends and how they have adjusted relationally as they moved from school to school and from place to place. The first main question asked, “What was it like to make new friends when you changed schools?” The second question asked them if they had ever felt loneliness and if their loneliness could be attributed to moving schools. The third question asked them, “When you think of your social interactions at school, do you feel positive or negative about them?” The fourth question asked them, “Do you think of where the schools were located made a difference in your social interactions?” The last question
asked them to give advice to a student that would be moving to a new school in a
different country. The themes that emerged from this part of the study were making
friends, challenges making friends, loneliness, being open-minded, and identity
development.

Making friends. What helped students make friends was interacting through
activities and finding common interests with their peers. Participant 6 (male) said, “I
was able to make friends from that sport [soccer] and I would make that relationship
go into deeper relationships.” Participant 10 (male) stated, “I made friends from their
interests.” Participant 4 (female) explained that “making friends is definitely exciting
because I like meeting new people and socially my friends here are different from my
friends back in America. Making friends was a great experience.” Participant 5 (male)
also talked about how exciting it was to make new friends at the new school:

Making new friends for me was very exciting and I loved making new friends
and people I can connect with and I think making new friends is the best thing
that you can do when you are young because you get to know what people are
like and what they think and yes, it was very exciting for me… Most of the
time I felt excited.

Two male students commented on how their peers at the new school reached
out to them helped them make friends quickly at their new school. Participant 8
(male) said, “I don’t think I have a skill at being social as much as I would wish, but I
think people around me definitely helped me make friends.” And, “it’s really a matter
of whether these new peers approach you and whether you can make yourself useful
by approaching them… and just go with what flows.” Another one explained a similar
situation. Participant 1 (male) said, “I think it was easier to make friends here, than in
Germany. Because, like I said, they were… more accepting, more open-minded.”
Culture and common experiences also contributed to connecting and developing friendships at a new school. Participant 2 (male) explained:

Making new friends I think everything, every culture, is different so the way they socialize is also different… I find it actually really nice to make new friends even though you're like you're missing your old friends but making new friends kind of opens up a new kind of view and especially if it’s a new culture. It’s a new way of making new friends… I connect easily with people who are also like kind.

Participant 11 (male) also talked about how common experiences helped him make friends:

It was pretty easy to make new friends because those friends were also one of the people who went through similar experience with me who had a lot of different schools and with different nationalities and they also have friends in different countries so that it was pretty easy to connect myself to themselves.

*Challenges making friends.* Many of the students expressed the difficulties they encountered when trying to make friends at new schools. Although they explained that they eventually made friends, for the most part, they noticed an initial struggle as they settled into the new school in the new country. Participant 12 (female) explained, “When I was younger it was easier but then when I became older it became a lot harder ’cause as I said before a lot of time when you get older, the group of friends are already established.” Participant 9 (male) mentioned it takes time to really form relationships:

You really don’t know anything about the peer you are trying to befriend and so when you change schools you have to make new friends and I think of it as a gradual process where you don’t declare to be friends but it really becomes a
process when you gradually befriend each other and so it’s a daunting experience.

Participant 1 (male) student reported, “In my international school before that in Germany I did have a lot of friends and I think that definitely was hard to find new friends after.” Participant 5 (male) reflected on how he was excited and nervous about making friends:

It was very exciting for me and it was also a bit scary for me because I was worried if the people and the friends didn’t like me or something and I was worried if I had to change myself to fit into certain groups.

Other factors like age and culture contributed to the ability to make friends at the new school. Participant 3 (male) explained how it became harder to make friends as he grew up and moved to different schools: “I think after a certain age, I never made close relationships, they were all distant and like acquaintances.” In a very insightful way, Participant 10 (male) described how the cultural differences influence one’s ability to relate to peers:

I thought I was kind of confident in myself to make new friends, but then the cultural difference was kind of thing that got into me making new friends because a lot of Korean people are in this school in Korea and follow a Korean culture. It’s kind of different than Japan and I had to learn what they thought was funny, what their limits were, what I am able to say, what I should be doing or shouldn’t do in terms of social relationships. Yeah that’s something I had to learn and that made it slightly harder but I was able to understand it pretty quickly, I think.

Participant 2 (male) talked about how initially one will connect and make a friend or a couple of friends, but that after making those initial friends, it becomes
harder to develop friendships with other peers: “It will definitely be harder to make more friends after the first few friends because after like your first few friends, you have to kind of work harder to get more friends.” In addition, Participant 8 (male) said that although it was hard to make friends at first it became easier as he moved from school to school. He stated, “At first, it was challenging, but as time goes it wasn’t as hard as the first time.”

**Loneliness.** Almost every student talked about having some form of loneliness as a result of changing schools in different countries. Although they handled their loneliness in different ways, they all felt loneliness in some way and explained what part of the transition made them feel lonely. Participant 12 (female) said, “Usually, when I change schools, the first couple of months are really lonely because you have to adjust and everybody else is already adjusted so you feel kind of left out of the community.” Participant 11 (male) also commented on how the students at the new school already had formed relationships and that it was hard to relate to them. He said, “I actually felt loneliness a lot because they had their own relationship for pretty long time and it was really hard to actually make my own space out of their relationship and their group.”

A female student, Participant 4, also commented on how the kids at her new school had already formed relationships:

Yeah definitely felt lonely… I was trying to fit in and trying to like to learn how things go like role in here and how people have fun and how people hang out and stuff and I felt lonely when it was like everybody knew each other for a long time. So they had things to talk about and all that and I felt like I wasn’t really able to… people didn’t really understand and they didn’t really reach
out as much as the people that I had experienced back in the States. They reached out a lot and then, so I felt lonely in those aspects and then.

Participant 8 (male) said, “I did feel lonely at times because when I went to foreign school with many foreigners that I was that lonely because I didn’t have that many people to have a conversation with.”

Participant 10 (male) commented on not being able to speak the language in order to communicate with his peers:

I didn’t make friends at first because I didn’t understand the language and I didn’t know how to make new friends ‘cause when I was in Korea the friends I come from was from when I was very little. We lived in the same place, grew up in the same place, went to the same school and stuff. So yeah, I felt a bit lonely at first, not too much, but yeah, I think that came from changing schools ‘cause I didn’t have anyone to like hang out with.

A different male student (Participant 9) explained how it took some time to make friends:

When I first moved from Australia to Hong Kong, I did feel lonely in the first few days, because it did take some time to make friends. And I guess this is as a result of the changing of schools because I wouldn’t have known anybody there at the new school.

Participant 7 (female) articulated her struggle, “Probably when I first moved here, ’cause I really didn’t know anybody and I’m not super close to my Korean family, I definitely felt some loneliness during maybe sixth grade, maybe before my best friend came.” Participant 6 (male) explained how he was alone and didn’t know anything about the country he had just moved to:
Yes, I felt lonely in multiple occasions. Actually, every time I moved schools... but I guess, the time I felt the most lonely was in first grade in New Zealand when I moved. I didn’t know anything about the country. I was by myself most of the time.

Participant 5 (male) said, “I have felt lonely and sometimes I feel lonely in South Korea because I miss my friends and that is obviously because I changed schools.” Moreover, Participant 3 (male) talked about how he felt incomplete and very empty as a result of not being understood fully by his family or his friends: “That makes me feel very lonely and that makes me feel incomplete and very empty.”

Bullying was an issue for a couple of students, but one (Participant 1) specifically connected it to his loneliness. He said, “it was hard to find friends in the Germany school then, ’cause they, as I said were kind of bullying me, so I feel like, I did feel really lonely, ’cause I didn’t have any friends.”

**Being open-minded.** Not only did students find ways to relate to their peers, but they were open-minded about who they interacted with and became friends with. Participant 1 (male) commented, “I don’t care at all what nationality it is as long as their good friends and they care about you.” Similarly, Participant 9 (male) stated, “I really didn’t divide whether I would hang out with friends of certain nationalities.”

Participant 2 (male) said, “I am actually comfortable with nearly any nationality.” A few students (Participant 3—male, Participant 6—male, and Participant 7—female) also listed all of the different countries where their friends were from. Participant 3 said:

I’ve had friends from Israel, Belgium, Finland, Malaysia, India, yeah, just a lot of different friends from different countries... I hung out with people who were just all different... I’m more familiar and comfortable in international
communities… places where there’s just one culture. It’s just always much more difficult for me to make friends.

Participants 6 said, “In New Zealand, I hung out with mostly white kids and some Chinese and people from other Asian countries… Well, it really doesn’t matter for me. It does not—I just approach people that look fun.” Participant 7 (female) replied to the questions about what nationalities she usually hung out with saying, “Just looking at my friends probably more Western nationalities, like Australia, Ireland, Dutch, and Canada.” In addition, Participant 12 (female) said:

I like to hang out with students that have a similar background to me or people that have been exposed to different cultures like I have or are just open to different perspectives… I’m comfortable with a variety [of nationalities]. I’m more open to many different people, but I also feel like I should interact more with even if people aren’t/don’t have the same experiences as me, I should still be open to them and interact with them.

When meeting new people and adjusting to the new school and place, many of the students explained that being open-minded is what they thought was the best way to make the adjustment to the new school and to the new country. Participant 2 (male) said, “Definitely be open-minded and observe… I would say when you’re more open-minded it's easier for you to not be too emotionally burdened because you're able to see the bigger picture. It's not just like you and another culture.” Participant 3 (male) explained, “Instead of being angry or frustrated just be open to it and think of it as an opportunity to become more empathetic with people and just understand people better.” One of the female students (Participant 4) reflected, “Try to be open-minded… definitely be open-minded and try to make the most out of it because you’re at a new country, so eat new food and go to new places.” Participant 7
(female) also agreed. She opined, “The kids with the most success in all areas always had the most open-minded attitude.”

**Identity development.** Moving from school to school played a role in shaping the identity of students and how they viewed themselves as they interacted with a variety of people, were involved in different types of activities, and experienced different cultures. Participant 10 (male) replied, “Yes, definitely. It also shapes what I enjoy and what I dislike, I guess, both their culture and the environment I was in. I think it definitely had an impact on my identity.” He also mentioned how it helped him develop certain skills. He said, “I said how it helped me develop my skills, knowledge, and shaped the way I view people and how I view myself as well, how I respect them when I first knew them other than like expecting things from them.” A couple of male students explained how it helped shape their personality. Participant 1 (male) said, “I guess this school has shaped my personality a lot because I used to be a bit more shy, but now I’m just because everybody can like be friends with you at this school.” Participant 6 (male) stated, “I’m a person that gets influenced a lot. So, going back to different schools, each school was able to change my personality.” Participant 3 (male) commented on how it taught him how to relate to others. He said, “moving to different schools, like the interactions—I’m interacting with different people and different cultures has allowed me to understand like how I normally interact with people.” Participant 12 (female) articulated:

For me personally, I moved around a lot so I learn to find my identity from my experience and myself rather than my environment and it shaped the way I interact with others because I learned about what kind of people I like to interact with.
A couple of male students said that the school helped shape them as Christians and also helped one of them become a leader. Participant 5 (male) said:

Because my old school has shaped me a lot, and as I said before, it shaped me as a Christian and before, prior to attending that school, I think I was a bit more selfish, but when I went to that school and they had events like school camps it made me a bit more open to others and it also empowered me to become a leader.

The other student, Participant 2 (male) explained:

How I see myself I would say, yes in a way, it helps me to see myself. Usually, each school helps you to see yourself in a different way because of the experiences and because of the approaches to academics and also the social interactions… This school really helped to shape my identity and how I view myself because of how we're a Christian school and, really, it really emphasized on knowing who you are.

A couple of female students thought that the school played a role, but so did their other relationships and experiences. Participant 4 (female) commented, “I guess the school, in general, didn’t really impact me, but then the people at the school because each school have different people.” Participant 7 (female) explained:

I mean it’s not only the school, all of my experiences have shaped who I am. I think it’s mainly the relationships, yeah, I think it’s mainly the social interactions at this school that have made me who I am.

Summary

Because the purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand the experience of TCK students that move from school to school in different countries, the findings of the study explain the perspective of the students as they
experience these disrupted multicultural educational moves. The first research question asked, “What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?” The themes that emerged from the responses were fear of moving, positive excitement, relationships, moving becoming normal, fresh start, age as a factor, and fitting in. Students indicated that the anticipation of moving to a new school in a new country brought both excitement and fear throughout the transition process. Although students expressed that they found it difficult to move, students explained that moving became harder as they got older, but that they also became used to moving and it even felt normal to them after they had gone through a couple of moves. What students stated they looked forward to the most in the move was a fresh start. The opportunity to start over with a clean slate in a new school and in a new country was cited as giving students comfort and hope as they sorted through their emotions in the midst of the move. Despite feeling some anxiety about fitting in at the new school in the new country, students related that they were able to fit in well, as they were typically accepted into the community and sought out by students at the new school.

The second research question sought to better understand the educational experiences of the TCKs. The research question was, “What are the educational experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?” The four themes that emerged from the study were culture, the curriculum, teacher expectations, and school environment. The students said that their academic experiences were impacted by the culture of the country where the school was located as well as the school curriculum, the expectations of the teachers, and the environment of the school. Students stated that they performed best when they understood the expectations of their teachers. Students cited curriculum as having
affected how well they did in school. While some students preferred an AP curriculum, many mentioned that the IB curriculum best fit TCK students because they felt they understood the expectations and had to think critically.

The third research question focused on the social experiences, which asked, “What are the social experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?” In their interviews students made it clear that there were both positives and negatives as they interacted with peers at their new school. The themes that emerged were making friends, challenges making friends, loneliness, being open-minded, and identity development. TCKs recounted that they were able to make friends with peers that share similar interests. Students talked about how making friends was an exciting part of moving. Although students liked making friends, there were challenges that they faced as they tried to relate to peers at their new school. Many students explained that because their peers were already connected and had close friends that it was hard to break into the groups or to form meaningful relationships when they first interacted with peers at school. Some students also confessed that it took time to develop close relationships. Because of the difficulty connecting with people early on at the new school, the students explained that they felt some amount of loneliness during the transition process. Being open-minded is what students professed was key in relating to their peers and to the new culture they experienced. In respect to students’ settling into a new school, they explained that their identity was influenced by the relationships and the experiences they had at the different schools in the different countries.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

According to (Glass, 2014), there were over seven thousand international schools around the world, educating over 3.5 million students. Since TCKs are known to face challenges adapting to new cultures and new educational environments as a result of their global moves, the intent of this dissertation was to explore and to better understand the social, emotional, and academic experiences of TCKs in the midst of their multiple multicultural school disruptions (Shah & Shah, 2005; Nette, & Hayden, 2007; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010; Shimomura, 2014; Désilets, 2015; Trąbka, 2015; Davis, Edwards, & Watson, 2015). The qualitative transcendental approach was applied to conduct the study. Semistructured face-to-face interviews were conducted based on a questionnaire with 12 TCK students at an international school in Korea. The participants included in the study met the following criteria: (a) were high school students at an international school in Korea, (b) had attended at least 3 different schools K-12, and (c) had attended schools in at least two different countries. Students were asked to share their emotional, academic, and social experiences based on a questionnaire that provided the data to be analyzed (see Appendix B).

After completing the interviews, the researcher followed the Moustakas (1990) transcendental approach to analyze the data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed. The researcher read through the interviews looking for important phrases and common statements. Themes emerged from the common statements and important phrases. The analysis of the data was shared with the participants to ensure authenticity and credibility of the analysis. This chapter includes a discussion on the results from the study by Research Question and the relationship they have to prior research, conclusions that impact the issues and
practices of international schools and TCKs, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

**Findings and Their Relationship to Previous Research**

**Research Question 1.** “What are the emotional experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

Themes that emerged from the students’ responses about their emotional experiences were fear of moving, positive excitement, relationships, moving becoming normal, fresh start, age as a factor, and fitting in. Although students were fearful of the move, they also found it exciting to start over at a new school in a new country. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have found anxiety and stress as being consequences of moving from place to place and school to school (Davis et al., 2010; Lambiri, 2005; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009; McLachlan, 2007). In relation to Galton, Morrison, and Pell’s (2000) study that focused on students moving from primary school to secondary school that found age to be a major factor in the transition experience of students, students in this dissertation study discussed how age made it harder for them to leave one school and settle into the next one. Also, in a longitudinal study conducted by Tønnessen, Telle, and Syse (2016) that analyzed the relationship between childhood residential mobility and early adult outcomes found that although the outcomes are similar for elementary children that move or stay in the same location, students that move during their adolescent years are worse off than students that remain in the same place.

Although students felt anxiety about fitting into their new school in a new country, students found that it was only a matter of time before they made friends and felt accepted into their new school community. What helped many students feel like
they fit in was when other students sought them out and included them. This finding aligns with Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk’s (2017) study that explored place-identity of TCKs and concluded that “Adapting to the current place requires time and motivation to learn as well as the support from their family, schools, and host countries” (p. 127).

In addition, in an attempt to provide highly mobile students with an effective education, Walls (2013) recommended that schools foster a “welcoming school community that includes school counselors that are trained to understand and advocate for the needs of student as well as expect parents to participate in volunteer work and parent meetings” (p. 5).

**Research Question 2.** “What are the academic experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

The second research question sought to better understand the educational experiences of the TCKs. The four themes that emerged from the study were culture, the curriculum, teacher expectations, and school environment. According to the interviewees, the academic experiences of the students were impacted by the culture of the country where the school was located as well as the school curriculum, the expectations of the teachers, and the environment of the school. Students stated that they performed best when they understood the expectations of their teachers. In Bagnall’s (2012) study that aimed at understanding the concept of TCK identity and home, the conclusion is supported that TCKs face unique academic challenges by moving from one school to another. Also, Ezra (2003) explained that the educational experience of TCKs is difficult because of the new and unfamiliar curricula, different grading approaches as well as new teaching methods and styles as a result of the change in schools. These challenges are a concern for McNulty and Carter (2017) as well as
Morales (2015) as they discussed factors affecting TCKs in transition and argued that more international schools need better support programs to help TCKs through their transitions. In a similar way, Bates (2013) investigated the effectiveness of transition programs at international schools and concluded that administrators need to be more aware of the issues related to international mobility and that interventions have been underutilized to help TCKs in their school transitions. In a study about how TCK students make meaning of their highly mobile lifestyles, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2017) recommended that “parents choose schools with the same curriculum in order to minimize disruption in academic life and to stimulate belongingness” (p. 127).

According to the experiences of the interviewees, curriculum affected student achievement as they moved from school to school. While some students preferred an AP curriculum, many mentioned that the IB curriculum best fit TCK students, which they attributed to the fact that they understand the expectations and have to think critically. In a similar way, Langford (2012), a former TCK herself and a TCK expert, discussed how international schools accommodate mobile students as they are provided with an orientation of the school as well as the provision of a curriculum that suits international students.

School culture was another factor students from this dissertation study agreed impacted their educational experience. As students felt more comfortable within the school community, the easier it was for them to adapt to the school culture. According to Ali, Sharma, and Zaman (2016), school culture is directly related to school effectiveness. Additionally, Langenkamp (2016) concluded that “it is important for gatekeepers within institutions, such as teachers, to help individuals rebuild social solidarity after mobility between institutions” (p. 810).
Research Question 3. “What are the social experiences of TCK high school students at a Korean international school who had multiple school disruptions?”

In their interviews, students made it clear that there were both positives and negatives as they interacted with peers at their new school. The themes that emerged were making friends, challenges with making friends, loneliness, being open-minded, and identity development. TCKs found that they were not only able to make friends with peers who share similar interests but were able to relate to peers from a variety of nationalities. Students talked about how making friends was an exciting part of moving. Although students liked making friends, there were challenges that they stated they faced as they tried to relate to peers at their new school. Cockburn (2012) supported the idea that because relationships are constantly changing that they are constantly forced to make new friends and to say goodbye to old friends. Furthermore, it was concluded by Dixon and Hayden (2008) in their review of research on TCKs in transition that leaving friends behind and making new friends at a new school caused the most anxiety during the transition. Leaving friends, feeling lonely, and feeling fearful about the move were some of the most common statements students made about their social experiences in this dissertation study.

Hervey (2009), in her study comparing childhood transitions and how well TCKs transitioned to college, argued that leaving friends and family behind and needing to build new relationships are the greatest difficulties for a TCK. According to Tran and Gomes (2017), because mobility and being connected are related, the well-being of international students is impacted by their relationships. In addition, according to Winsper, Wolke, Bryson, Thompson, and Singh (2016), children with mobile childhoods are more likely to have experienced challenges making friends than children that stayed at the same school throughout their childhood.
Many students in this dissertation study explained that because their peers at the new school were already connected and had close friends that it was hard to break into the groups or to form meaningful relationships when they first interacted with their peers. Students experienced loneliness because of the challenge of making friends at the new school. Also, loneliness can happen as a result of the many changes TCKs experience (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

Sellers (2011), who studied how adult TCKs were affected as a result of their mobile childhoods, affirmed the unique relational challenges for TCKs. Some students in this dissertation study explained that it took time to develop close relationships. In a study that explored social relationships of TCKs, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk’s (2014) concluded that even though TCKs are able to form friendships quickly, their friendships oftentimes remain superficial. In contrast, Cockburn (2012), Dixon and Hayden (2008), and Ittel and Sisler (2012) argued that in order to protect themselves from the loss of another relationship, many TCKs are hesitant to form new friendships. These contrasting findings further explain the complexities and unique challenges that TCKs experience while trying to make new friends and fit into a new school.

Because of the difficulty connecting with people early on at the new school, the students in this dissertation study explained that they felt some amount of loneliness during the transition process. Kelly (2017) found this to be true in her study of TCK experiences at military schools. She explained that TCK students in her study at a Department of Defense Dependents school also struggled with feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Students in this dissertation argued that being open-minded was key in being able to relate to their peers and to the new culture they experienced. According to Lyttle
et al. (2011), TCKs are more open-minded and culturally sensitive as a result of their multicultural experiences. The study conducted by Lyttle et al. (2011) in comparing the interpersonal sensitivity of TCKs with monocultural individuals, found that TCKs to be more socially sensitive than monoculture students. In addition, Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2010) studied the relationship between multiculturalism and personality profiles and concluded that although TCKs experience these stressful transitions during their developmental years, TCKs benefit from these experiences by becoming more open-minded and culturally sensitive.

In the context of students’ settling into a new school, the students in this dissertation study explained that their identity was influenced by the relationships and the experience they had at the different schools in the different countries. According to Eastope (2009) and Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk, (2017), both place and mobility play a role in one’s identity formation. An identity is created through a sense of belonging as well as an emotional connection through relationships formed during developmental years (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017). Furthermore, in an investigation of TCK identity development at international schools, Sears (2011) found that because of the contexts in which TCKs find themselves they become a mix of identities or have multiple identities. Although there is a potential for certain difficulties and possible identity confusion for TCKs, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2017) argue that with a sense of stability, a sense of belonging, and a sense of direction, TCKs are able to develop a healthy sense of self in the third culture.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study highlighted the challenges of adapting to a new curriculum, new school culture, the country’s culture, new teaching styles, approaches, and expectations. Because of the limited amount of research regarding educational
transitions of TCKs, the findings from this study might help administrators, educators, parents of TCKs, and counselors better assist students as they transition away from or into a school community. It is encouraged that administrators, educators, and parents of TCK students be sympathetic to the adjustments to a new curriculum, the new school environment, and the new teacher expectations that the TCK will face as a result of the change in schools. Implications of these findings could mean providing TCKs with a “grace” period where students receive feedback on their academic performance and achievement before they are given marks for their academic work as they try to understand the expectations of their teachers.

The findings of this study revealed the need to not only accommodate the adjustment and transition of over 3 million TCKs moving between schools globally but for schools around the world to create transitional programs that help TCK students understand the uniqueness of their experiences. This study exposed the anxiety and fear TCK students experience moving from one school to the next in different countries; therefore, it is recommended that schools provide an orientation for incoming students as well as a departing program that explains the typical transitional experience of a student in their situation.

Providing an orientation should help students understand the curriculum as well as inform students on ways in which they can get involved at the school. Helping new students get involved could help TCKs relate to their peers and teachers. It may also help TCKs understand and adapt more quickly to the new school. Additionally, providing incoming students with peer support could help the student feel accepted and valued in the community. A departing program that allows students to express their feelings as they leave the school could be beneficial for the TCK to process their
experience. Also, if the departing program provides a support system that helps students prepare emotionally and practically for their next school could be beneficial.

**Limitations**

Because the site chosen for the study is relatively small (roughly 500 students, Kindergarten-Grade 12) for an international school and because the sample size was small (12 students), there were limitations to generalizability. Another limitation of the study is that students from only one international school were chosen and the ethnic background of these students was similar. The language ability of the participants was also a potential challenge and limitation (Trotter, 2012). While students had a certain amount of English proficiency, not all participants were native English speakers. Some participants were English Language Learners (ELL), which may have limited their ability to fully articulate their experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). Also, depending on the level of relationship the researcher had with individual participants, the willingness of the participants to share their experiences may have been affected (Nuqul, 2014).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although this study revealed many of the factors that influence the mobile experience of TCKs, there is a great need for future research in the area of adjustment to the school curriculum, the role of cultural values, and adapting to a new school environment:

1. It may be beneficial to conduct a quantitative study that compares and contrasts age groups, genders, nationalities, and personalities of TCKs.

2. Conducting a study that allows college students who experienced being TCKs to reflect on what they thought their emotional, social, and academic experiences were in high school could be helpful.
3. Because this study revealed that the cultural values of the country did, in fact, play a role in how students performed in school, studies that compare the experiences of TCKs at different schools in different countries could also be useful to provide a more complete and complex understanding of the TCK educational experience.

4. It would be interesting for there to be a study that compares high school students’ perceptions and adult TCK perceptions of their high school transitional experiences.

5. A longitudinal study that follows up with high school students would reveal the impact of the TCK experiences on their adult life.

6. Because this study revealed that students faced emotional, social, and academic challenges as a result of moving to schools in different countries, a comparison study between TCKs and students that have grown up in a monocultural location and school could provide valuable insights.
References


http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/counting-uncountable-overseas-americans


tr%20copy. pdf


Appendix A

Questionnaire Adjustment Request
Hello Ryan,

I would be happy for you to use any part of my dissertation, cited properly, for your research. If you would like to dialogue more about anything, you may make an appointment with me to talk on skype.

I wish you all the best in your doctoral journey.

Sincerely,

Julia Nuqul
Appendix B

Study Questionnaire
A Phenomenological Dissertation Study:
A Disrupted Education: Exploring the Experiences of International School
Changes of TCKs

– Study Questionnaire –

Part I: Emotional Experiences
1. Looking back on your school moves, how do you feel about moving from school to school?
   - How did you feel when you first heard you were going to move to a new school?
   - Did your feelings change about moving from one school to another at all from one school change to the next?
   - How did it feel to leave each of the various schools?
   - How did you feel about starting at a new school?
     - Did age make any difference on how you felt about changing schools?
     - Was there a hardest school to leave? If so, which one and why?
     - Was there an easiest school to leave? If so, which one and why?
     - Was there a school you were able to adjust to the quickest? If so, what helped?
   - What, if any, emotions can you identify when you leave a place? What, if any, emotions can you identify when you arrive at a new place?
   - Do you think that the transition of leaving one school played a role in how well you adjusted to the next school?
2. What do you remember most about changing schools?
   - What did you like?
   - What didn’t you like?
3. Was there anything that made changing schools hard?
   - Was there anything that made changing schools easy?
4. Did you feel more emotionally secure/stable in one country or another?

Part II: Academic Experiences
5. Has switching schools had any effect on how well you do in school?
   - As a result of school changes, have you noticed any effects in your schoolwork, grades, homework, and or behavior?
6. Has the curriculum at any school been challenging?
   - Has there been a curriculum you felt most comfortable with?

Part III: Social Experiences
7. What was it like to make new friends when you changed schools?
   - Are there students of a certain nationality that you normally hang out with?
8. Have you ever felt lonely and could attribute this loneliness to changes in schools?
9. When you think of your social interactions at school, do you feel positive or negative about them?
   - Do you think the country where the school was made a difference in your social interactions?
10. Do you feel like the school/s have shaped the way you view yourself and the way you interact with others?
    - What advice would you give a student that is going to move to a new school in a different country?
Appendix C

Researcher’s Responses to the Study Questionnaire
Researcher’s Responses to the Study Questionnaire

Part 1: Emotional Experiences

1. Looking back on your school moves, how do you feel about moving from school to school?

   As I think back through my school moves the most difficult part of moving was leaving my friends behind. Although I faced a variety of academic challenges moving from country to country and school to school, leaving my friends was the hardest part about moving from place to place. I remember being afraid of making new friends at my new schools because I didn’t want to go through the process of saying goodbye and leaving friends again. Also, I remember being anxious about going to each new school because I didn’t know if I would fit in, be accepted, or know what the academic expectations would be and if I would be able to handle the work. I think that my anxiety about the academic differences started when I first moved back to the United States after living in Argentina for four years. The academic approach was completely different in both countries and once I moved back to the United States and realized how different it was, I became even more nervous about going into new schools not knowing what the different academic expectations would be. Practical things such as long division in math were done differently as well as history and geography. My English reading and writing ability was not as strong as that of my classmates in the United States, so that was also intimidating and challenging for me to adjust to.

   - How did you feel when you first heard you were going to move to a new school?

     Every time I heard I was going to move to a new school I felt anxious about the move and wondered if I was going to fit in, make new friends, and adjust to the educational expectations of the new school. Although I don’t remember my feelings moving from Costa Rica to Argentina for the first time, I do remember feeling nervous about moving back to the United States from Argentina for the first time. Also, moving to the international school in Ecuador for the first time was very intimidating as I knew I wouldn’t have my family with me and I didn’t know how I would adjust to a completely new environment. I wondered what it would be like to study with other missionary kids and if I would like that better than being the only American in my Argentine school.

   - Did your feelings change about moving from one school to another at all from one school change to the next?

     I don’t think it changed much from move to move. I think that after a couple of school moves and moving from one country to the next helped me realize that it was possible to make friends at each new school I went to. Even though I knew it was possible, I still felt a bit anxious about the process though. I think I began to notice patterns in how I felt before moving to a new place, the feelings of anxiety and insecurity. Because I was able to make friends at each new school, I think I had a bit more confidence that I would likely make new friends as I would start a new school.

   - How did it feel to leave each of the various schools?

     I think leaving was the hardest part about every move. Having to say goodbye to each of my friends and the anxiety of starting over was always really hard. I remember going numb inside and would try not to feel anything when I heard or knew
that I was going to be leaving. I knew I didn’t like feeling sad and so I tried to avoid the feeling. Every time I started at a new school and settled in and made friends made me want to stay there and not move again. Although I never stayed in one school for very long, I hated the idea of leaving. Because I wanted to make friends so badly at each school I attended, I think the sense of loss when leaving was magnified and wore me out emotionally.

- How did you feel about starting at a new school?
  I always felt a bit nervous about it because I wondered how I would fit in and adjust to the culture of the school. Would I be accepted and liked? Would I be able to get good grades? Would I be able to play sports? Those were the questions I wondered as I started at each new school. I remember the first day of school of many of the schools. I also remember the friends that reached out to me and helped me feel welcome. I am so grateful for them because that meant so much to me.

- Did age make any difference on how you felt about changing schools?
  I think as I got older I was more nervous about fitting in and playing sports than I was about the academic part of school. When I was in elementary I was really nervous about being able to handle the academic aspects of school, but as I got older I just wanted to be accepted and liked by my classmates as well as be able to make the sports teams.

- Was there a hardest school to leave? If so, which one and why?
  The hardest school for me to leave was the Alliance Academy because I had spent most of my middle school and two of my high school years there. I had a lot of friends and had built a reputation on the sports teams there. I was really involved at school and didn’t want to lose everything that I had “built” there, from friendships, to spots on the soccer and basketball teams, to relationships with my teachers. I had managed to fit in and feel comfortable and didn’t want to leave that behind.

- Was there an easiest school to leave? If so, which one and why?
  It’s hard to say which school was the easiest for me to leave. I think when I was younger I wasn’t as nervous about making friends than I was when I was in middle school and high school. Because there was a smooth and natural transition from the completion of my 7th grade in Argentina to the continuation of 7th grade in Ecuador in the Alliance Academy, I think that this was the easiest school for me to leave. I had completed elementary school in Argentina and was returning to Ecuador where I had already spent a year studying. I had friends and knew what the school was like, which made the transition pretty smooth. What made the biggest difference in how difficult it was for me to move schools was how many friends and how close I was with my friends at the school.

- Was there a school you were able to adjust to the quickest? If so, what helped?
  Not that I can remember. However, Wheaton Academy was the last school I moved to during my high school years and I felt welcomed and accepted there. I think what helped me adjust quickly was that both students and teachers were very kind and took me in as one of their own right away.
- Can you identify and explain the emotions you had when you were leaving a place/school?

The emotions I remember feeling when I knew I was leaving varied on the circumstance. If the move was preplanned, I mostly felt comfortable with the move and even withdrew emotionally from my friends and my studies a bit. When the move was unexpected, I went numb. I had a hard time feeling much as I was sad and tired of moving from one place to the next. Although I was sad to leave my friends, I would transition myself emotionally and mentally to the place I was moving to. The progression of emotions typically went from disappointment, sadness, and fear, to being numb, excited, and then nervous as I arrived and tried to settle into the new place.

Can you identify and explain the emotions you had when you were you arrived at a new place/school?

The emotions I remember the most are fear, anxiety, and sadness. I was sad that I had left my friends and missed the opportunity to be connected as well as having close friends to share life with. I feared the unknown about the school and what people would be like. I was anxious about the academic work that I would face at the new school as well as wondering if I was going to be able to make friends and fit in. I felt insecure and was curious if I would be accepted and liked. Although I felt many of these emotions during those transition times, I recall not feeling very deeply as I had shut down my emotions early on in life (I believe in 6th grade when I first went to boarding school). I think that I tried to feel less or shut down my emotions in order to handle my day to day life. I constantly worried that I would never be good enough. Because of this perspective, I had a hard time emotionally connecting in an intimate way.

- Do you think that the transition of leaving one school played a role in how well you adjusted to the next school?

No, I didn’t see any connection between leaving one school and starting at a new school. It was only through the many changes of schools that I began to notice some similarities between the experiences and the thing that stands out to me the most was how hard it was to leave my friends behind and then try to make new friends at the new school. Although the more I think about it, I realize that one of the easiest transitions for me was when there was a natural transition, such as moving from elementary to middle school. Although I was moving to a different country and a new school to start middle school, I was able to adjust much more quickly because I was open to the idea of jumping into a new environment and knew everyone else was in the same situation that I was in.

2. What do you remember most about changing schools?

- Was there anything that you liked or didn’t like about changing schools?

What I liked about moving schools was the fact that I could start over. When I thought about some of the mistakes I had made at a school I knew I had a clean slate going into the next school and always wanted to do better at the new school.

3. Was there anything that made changing schools hard? Or easy?

Having my parents and sisters with me helped make the transitions easier, but not easy. Every change of school was hard, but having my family with me helped a
lot. What made it the hardest was leaving old friends and making new friends. That always made me nervous, anxious, and curious about how things would go.

4. Did you feel more emotionally secure/stable in one country or another?

This is a difficult question as I typically felt out of place in each of the countries I lived in. When I lived in Argentina I didn’t feel completely Argentine, when I was in the United States I didn’t feel completely American. I think that I became more comfortable with the Argentine culture, but I also grew to appreciate the feeling of looking the same as people in the United States even though I didn’t fully understand the cultural norms. I think overall I felt insecure about my cultural identity or identity in general because I was always different than my monocultural friends. So I would say that I am more emotionally comfortable/stable in a country and culture that is different than my passport culture.

Part II: Academic Experiences

5. Has switching schools had any effect on how well you do in school?

I didn’t have much effect on how well I performed in school. I stayed pretty consistent in all of my classes and maybe did a little bit better my last two years of high school because I felt comfortable and motivated to do well as it was an expensive school for my parents to send me to and I wanted to do well for them. I do remember I had a better chance for success at Wheaton Academy in my AP Spanish class because of the teacher and the school expectations for students in that class. Although my Spanish teacher in Ecuador didn’t want to recommend me for the AP Spanish course at the Alliance Academy, she was okay recommending me for the AP Spanish course at my new school in the United States. Although I do not know the exact reason for this, I benefited academically because of the change in school although the curriculum was the same.

- As a result of school changes, have you noticed any effects in your schoolwork, grades, homework, and or behavior?

No, I don’t think any of my schoolwork, grades, homework, or behavior changed that much from one school to another.

6. Has the curriculum at any school been challenging? Or that you’ve felt comfortable with?

I remember in elementary school being challenged with the different type of math being taught in the US because I was used to a certain way that I had learned in Argentina, so that was challenging. In high school, I went to two AP schools, so those were quite similar.

Part III: Social Experiences

7. What was it like to make new friends when you changed schools?

Making new friends was what I was always nervous about when I started at a new school. What helped me make friends was playing sports. By playing sports I met a lot of people and usually connected with at least one of my teammates. Once I had a friend on the team I was able to connect with other classmates and make more friends.
- Are there students of a certain nationality that you normally hang out with?
  I didn’t always have an option on which nationality I hung out with because some schools I went to only had students from one nationality. When it came to the international school, I hung out with friends from many different nationalities. Many of my friends had lived in Argentina or another South American country or were Latin American, but I also felt comfortable with my Asian classmates and peers.

8. Have you ever felt lonely and could attribute this loneliness to changes in schools?
Yes, I have felt lonely many times during these transitions. I think I was most lonely when I first arrived at the new school and had no friends. When I was in boarding school I felt lonely many times because when I wasn’t hanging out with my friends and didn’t have my family with me I felt lonely.

9. When you think of your social interactions at school, do you feel positive or negative about them?
I feel positive about my social interactions at school. I was always blessed to make great friends at every school I attended. I still stay in touch with many of my friends that I made during my elementary, middle, and high school years. After the first couple of weeks at each school, I usually had friends to hang out with and was happy to be with my friends. Although I wasn’t always able to accept myself for who I was, I felt accepted by my friends and that made all the difference in the world for me. They helped me enjoy life and because of them, I felt positive about my social interactions at school.

- Do you think the country where the school was located made a difference in your social interactions?
Definitely. I think that I tried to pick up on cultural as well as social cues. I wanted to fit in and so in order to fit in, I had to understand why certain words were used or what kids like to watch on TV or what kind of clothes they were wearing. From my perspective, my interactions in Argentina revolved around me being different and that is what made me interesting to my friends and why they wanted to hang out with me. In the United States, I was also viewed as someone unique, but I think what helped me the most socially in the United States was sports. Being able to play soccer and basketball helped me connect with classmates that would later become close friends. So even though they saw me as unique, we had enough in common through sports that they would accept me and be my friend.

10. Do you feel like the school/s have shaped the way you view yourself and the way you interact with others?
Yes, I definitely do. Because I interacted with a variety of different nationalities and types of people over the years, I am more open-minded to the type of people I hang out with and I am comfortable meeting new people and making new friends. Although it has not always been the case as I had a hard time opening up to make new friends for a while, but as I grew and matured I have seen the importance of being open to new friendships and initiating relationships in new places. I do struggle with shame and insecurities because of all the changes in cultures and schools that I experienced as a kid. I struggle because not everyone has gone through as many changes that I have gone through and it can be hard to relate to monocultural individuals as well as people who have not traveled much. At times, I don’t feel
“normal” and wonder if I’ll be accepted or that my experiences will be valued by those I interact with. Also, schools provided extra-curricular activities that I got involved in, which created a lot of opportunities to develop relationship and leadership skills that have shaped the way I am today.

- What advice would you give a student that is going to move to a new school in a different country?

Identify and embrace your values and don’t be afraid of initiating relationships with your classmates. Get involved in clubs and sports that you enjoy because it is likely that you will be able to connect with others that like similar things and you will form friendships as you go through similar experiences together. Being okay with the different challenges that might come up is also very important because it is through those difficult times that you will learn a lot about yourself and in doing so you will be able to relate with others. I believe that in any country and at any school there will classmates that are looking for a friend, so being open and proactive about trying to connect with a variety of people will go a long way in getting plugged into the new school. I believe that forming friendships can happen with just about anyone if you are willing to consider the other person, care for them for who they are, and be willing to try new things.
Appendix D

Biases and Bracketing Thought
Biases and Bracketing Thoughts

Assumptions of International Education Mobility of TCK’s of the Researcher

1. TCKs face unique emotional, social, and academic challenges such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, a lack of a sense of belonging, and a difficulty relating with peers and teachers as a result of their cross-cultural moves as well changes in their academic setting.

2. Age plays a factor in the transition process. The older the child is, the harder it is to leave one school for another.

3. The hardest schools to leave are the schools where the TCK feels like they belong. They are accepted for who they are and can relate to their friends.

4. Schools that are the easiest for the TCK to leave are where they struggle to assimilate into the host country or have conflicts within their community.

5. The atmosphere of the school can influence how the TCK perceives their experiences and can either be hindered or encouraged for being a TCK.

6. The easiest schools for TCKs to adjust to are the schools where there are other internationally minded students and teachers.

7. Getting involved at a new school is essential for making friends and finding emotional and social stability.

8. The culture of the country where the school is located effects the social interactions and feelings of belonging of a TCK.

9. Moving from school to school can be a lonely experience as it is hard to say goodbye to friends as well as to stay open to making new friends at the new school.

10. TCK’s feel positive about the social interactions if they feel accepted and valued by their peers and teachers.
Appendix E

Site Approval Letter
**Subject:** Site Approval Letter

To whom it may concern:

This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by Ryan Dellos to conduct a research project entitled "A Disrupted Education: Exploring the Experiences of International School Changes of TCKs" and I approve of this research to be conducted at our facility.

When the researcher receives approval for his research project from the Nova Southeastern University’s Institutional Review Board/NSU IRB, I agree to provide access for the approved research project. If we have any concerns or need additional information, we will contact the Nova Southeastern University’s IRB at (954) 262-5369 or irb@nova.edu.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. J.P. Rader
Appendix F

TCK Interview Participation E-Mail
Dear students,

Thank you so much for being willing to participate in my dissertation research study on TCKs (third culture kids). The details of the study are explained in the consent form and I would be more than happy to discuss my study in detail with you at any time. Also, I have attached the guiding questions that I will be using for the interview just in case you would like to look them over before the interview.

I have attached both consent and assent forms that need to be signed and dated before we can proceed with the interview. I will be providing hard copies for you for you to sign and date. No need to print these off, they are simply for you to review before I get you your hard copy.

If you can look at your schedule and reply to me with the 2-3 dates/times that work for you to meet for the 30-45 minute interview in the next 3-4 weeks, I would greatly appreciate it.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you so much!!

Mr. Dellos