

PERSONALITY, WELL-BEING, AND CULTURAL EMPATHY OF THIRD  
CULTURE KIDS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation

by

ALEXANDRA MARY MCCAMMON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Daniel Brossart
Committee Members,	Timothy Elliott
	Rebecca Schlegel
	Myeongsun Yoon
Head of Department,	Shanna Hagan-Burke

August 2020

Major Subject: Counseling Psychology

Copyright 2020 Alexandra McCammon

## ABSTRACT

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are thought to face unique challenges and have distinctive strengths that follow them into their adult years. While the number of publications related to TCKs has increased greatly over the past ten years, there is minimal research comparing this group to others and identifying whether or not this group experiences significant differences in the areas of psychological well-being, personality, and cultural empathy. This study examined those factors and found that compared to a demographically similar sample of Americans who have never lived outside of the United States, statistically significant differences were present on factors of personality and cultural empathy. Results indicated that TCKs scored higher on the personality factors of extraversion and openness as well as several areas of cultural empathy.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Nathan, who has patiently listened to endless conversations about TCKs, always believes in me, and has proofread infinite drafts of each of the chapters to follow. You have been my rock throughout graduate school and have kept me grounded. Thank you for believing in me and supporting my desire to pursue this research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None of this would have come to life if it weren't for my parents who provided me with an amazing childhood filled with culture, diversity, and a chance to travel the world. I know moving to the Netherlands came with many challenges for both of you, but thank you for the amazing lives you provided for me and Nathaniel and the sacrifices you made over the years.

Thank you to my advisor Dr. Brossart, who allowed me to pursue a passion project and supported my research into uncharted territory. Thank you to all of my committee members' thoughtful feedback and their commitment to this study. Thank you to all of the other students and colleagues who brainstormed with me and contributed to the design and analysis of this study. And lastly, thank you to all of the TCKs out there who share so freely about their experiences and make research like this possible.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### **Contributors**

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Dr. Brossart, Dr. Elliott, and Dr. Yoon of the Department of Education as well as Dr. Schlegel of the Department of Psychology.

The data collection and the analyses were completed by the student independently.

### **Funding Sources**

No funding was received to support this work.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
2.1. Defining Third Culture Kids.....	3
2.1.1. Characteristics of a TCK Lifestyle.....	5
2.2. Research on Third Culture Kids .....	7
2.2.1. Rootlessness and Sense of Belonging.....	8
2.2.2. Relationships.....	10
2.2.3. Identity .....	12
2.2.4. Unresolved Grief.....	13
2.2.5. Benefits .....	15
3. METHOD .....	18
3.1. Methodology.....	18
3.2. Participants.....	19
3.2.1. Inclusionary Criteria .....	19
3.2.2. Exclusionary Criteria .....	19
3.3. Sample Size.....	20
3.4. Recruitment.....	20
3.5. Procedure .....	21
3.6. Measures .....	21
3.6.1. Demographic Questions.....	21
3.6.2. Big Five Inventory .....	22
3.6.3. Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being.....	23

3.6.4. Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy .....	25
4. RESULTS .....	27
4.1. Respondent Characteristics.....	27
4.1.1. Participant Demographics.....	27
4.2. Data Analysis.....	34
4.2.1. Big Five Inventory .....	35
4.2.2. Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being.....	37
4.2.3. Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy .....	38
4.2.4. Gender.....	40
4.3. Summary .....	41
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS .....	43
5.1. Explanation of Findings.....	43
5.2. Support for Existing Literature .....	44
5.3. Contradictions of Existing Literature .....	45
5.4. Implications for Future Research.....	46
5.5. Clinical Implications.....	49
5.6. Study Limitations.....	50
5.7. Conclusion .....	52
REFERENCES .....	54
APPENDIX A DISSEMINATION OF SURVEY THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS.....	60
APPENDIX B INFORMATION SHEET.....	61
APPENDIX C DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE.....	63
APPENDIX D PROFILE PLOTS FOR INTERACTION EFFECT OF GENDER AND TCK-STATUS .....	65

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 4.1 Gender.....	28
Table 4.2 Education Level .....	29
Table 4.3 Marital Status.....	29
Table 4.4 Ethnicity.....	30
Table 4.5 Correlations Between Variables for TCKs and non-TCKs .....	32
Table 4.6 Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances .....	34
Table 4.7 One-way MANOVA with Big Five Inventory Scales by TCK status.....	36
Table 4.8 One-way ANOVAs with BFI scales as Dependent Variables and TCK- status as Independent Variable.....	36
Table 4.9 One-way MANOVA with Ryff Scales by TCK status.....	37
Table 4.10 One-way ANOVAs with Ryff Scales as Dependent Variables and TCK- status as Independent Variable.....	38
Table 4.11 One-way MANOVA with SEE Scales by TCK status .....	39
Table 4.12 One-way ANOVAs with SEE scales as Dependent Variables and TCK- status as Independent Variable.....	39
Table 4.13 ANOVA Examining Interaction Effect of Gender and TCK Status.....	41



## 1. INTRODUCTION

We live in an increasingly diverse and globalized society. The number of families that move abroad each year is growing dramatically with accelerated globalization trends. Because of this rapid growth in the number of individuals living in foreign countries, there is a gap in knowledge about the impact of moving and growing up abroad on children and families. In 1990 it was estimated that 3 million Americans were living abroad (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The US government does not formally track or monitor how many Americans leave the country and estimates of Americans living abroad range between 2.2 million to 6 million as of 2013 (Costanzo & Von Koppenfels, 2013). While that range is too large to get a clear picture of how many US families live abroad, even the smallest estimate of 2.2 million is a large population of Americans whose needs are not being considered and adequately addressed in psychology. Researchers dating back to 1957 have studied the effect expatriate life has on families (Useem, 1993), but there are substantial gaps in the literature that need to be explored. This study focuses on filling in some of those gaps and providing a more thorough understanding of the psychological effects that come from living a transient lifestyle.

The children who are brought with their families to live part or all of their developmental years in a foreign country are called Third Culture Kids (TCKs; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This group of children purportedly face unique challenges and have distinctive strengths that follow them into their adult years (Fail et al., 2004;

Mortimer, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). While the number of publications related to TCKs has increased greatly over the past ten years, there is minimal research comparing this group to others and identifying whether or not this group experiences significant differences in the areas of psychological well-being, personality, and cultural empathy. There is minimal research that uses well established measures and instruments and there appears to be no research that utilizes a comparative design to determine whether the differences claimed by TCKs and TCK researchers are significantly different from the experiences of individuals who never move out of their home country. Because of this, there is little to no data to support the testimonials that claim significant differences exist between TCKs and individuals who do not move out of their passport country. This study focused on evaluating whether or not there are statistically significant differences between TCKs and non-TCKs in the areas of personality, well-being, and cultural empathy. It is necessary to address this assumption before additional research on TCKs can be done. This study aims to produce unambiguous data that can be used to better support, or dispute, the assertions made in the literature surrounding TCKs.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Defining Third Culture Kids

Third Culture Kids (TCK) is a term coined by Ruth Hill Useem and John Useem in 1957 while researching North American families living in India (Useem, 1993). The term “third culture” came about as a way to explain the new culture created from the intermingling of an individual’s home country and the foreign country they were now living in. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) are some of the most well-known names in the field of TCKs and have written extensively about the challenges and benefits faced by this group and about their experiences in general. Their definition of TCKs is one of the most cited in the literature and is used in this study as the criteria to classify individuals as TCKs.

“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 builds relationships to all cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background” (2001, pg. 19).

TCKs include Missionary Kids (MKs), children of diplomats, children of business professionals, and children of military personnel who move abroad with their families (Little, 2015). Other terms that are often used to describe this population include Global Nomads, Overseas Brats, and Cross Cultural Kids (Mortimer, 2010). The term

Global Nomad was coined by Norma M. McCaig who spent her childhood living in a number of different countries and wanted to create a more expansive term to describe herself and others that did not include the word 'kid' (Thompson, 2009). Some of the different terms including Overseas Brats and Missionary Kids refer to smaller subsets of TCKs divided by their parent's jobs or the reason for their move, but the individuals within all of these groups share the key trait of spending part of their developmental years living in a country other than their passport country (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011).

This population is thought to face unique challenges that other children who do not move from their home country will never encounter. These experiences reportedly shape them into adults who do not necessarily identify with their home culture, nor do they completely adapt to the culture(s) they were raised in. Generalizations that can be applied to most citizens of their nationality often do not accurately describe TCKs.

Researchers have argued that these reasons necessitate TCKs being studied on their own, rather than as a part of a larger group based on their nationality (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Eakin (1998) believes that the experiences of TCKs, regardless of the number of years spent abroad, the number of countries families lived in, and the frequency with which children were able to visit their home country, all share unifying aspects. These unifying aspects link them to TCKs from other countries, creating more connection within this group than they have with peers of their same nationality who have not moved internationally. For that reason, researchers treat them as a uniform sample and focus less on factors like number of moves, citizenships, and years spent abroad (Eakin,

1998). While questions such as this were included in the demographic questionnaire, they are not the focus of this particular study. This study instead focused on testing whether or not there are statistically significant differences between TCKs and Americans who have never lived outside of the United States.

### ***2.1.1. Characteristics of a TCK Lifestyle***

According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), the defining aspects of a TCK's experience are (1) they are raised in a cross-cultural world and (2) they live in a highly mobile world. This group is separated from other groups like immigrants and minority populations within a country because their experiences growing up are saturated with both high mobility and diverse cultures. Individuals whose childhoods include only one of these components do not necessarily have the same experience. A distinguishing characteristic that separates TCKs from immigrants is that TCKs move abroad for a limited amount of time with the assumption that they will return to their home country, either for education, work, or when their parents' overseas assignment has ended. This assumption keeps them somewhat rooted and tied to their home culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). While immigrant children experience cross-cultural experiences similar to TCKs', they do not experience the same expectation to return to their home country. Immigrants' childhoods are also not characterized by increased mobility because typically the move to their new country is assumed to be a permanent move.

Some individuals in America grow up amongst a variety of cultures or in a diverse environment; however, they are not fully immersed in a culture different from their own like most TCKs are. Additionally, American's lives are not characterized by

high mobility. Mobility is a part of all TCKs' lives, even if they are not the ones moving countries every few years. For example, long trips to their home country every summer force them to switch between cultures (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001), and every time they return from one of these trips they are faced with losses. Sometimes TCKs know when close friends are moving, but often the move is unexpected and happens without an opportunity to say goodbye. TCKs' worlds change quickly and there is little stability in their environment (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

There are a variety of reasons that families may move abroad and raise their children in a foreign country. A few of the most common reasons are one or both parents having careers in international businesses, the diplomatic corps, the military, or as religious missionaries (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It can also be the case that parents are forced to leave their home country due to war or civil unrest. Either way, the children in those families become TCKs with a common thread linking them together. They have the shared experience of living in a foreign country for part, if not all, of their developmental years. TCKs consistently report that this shared experience is often stronger than the ties TCKs have to their home culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

TCKs often report it is difficult for them to relate to individuals from within their own nationality. They quickly discover that common nationality does not mean they share a common culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs are exposed to a wide variety of cultures and experiences that many other children from their home country do not have any experience with. TCKs frequently go to school with people from all over the world, often grow up hearing multiple languages spoken, and have opportunities to

travel more frequently and experience a variety of cultures. Diversity is normal to them and is a part of their daily experience (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This is something many children or adults are never able to experience, and this difference in cultural exposure can make it difficult for TCKs and non-TCKs to relate to one another.

## **2.2. Research on Third Culture Kids**

Previous research on TCKs has looked at this population both when they are children in the middle of this cross-cultural experience, and as adult TCKs (ATCKs), which is someone who grew up as a TCK but is now an adult (Mortimer, 2010). Research on ATCKs focuses mostly on examining the lasting effects of this upbringing on individuals and has been done by conducting interviews with children and parents living abroad (McLachlan, 2007), alumni from individual international schools completing surveys (Abe, 2018), conducting interviews with ATCKs (Fail et al., 2004), and through online surveys (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). The majority of the research to date appears to be based off of qualitative data gathered through interviews with very little research utilizing well-established and validated psychological measures. There also appears to be a lack of studies that utilize a comparative group when collecting data. A comparative design is needed to offer support for whether or not the trends being seen within the TCK population are any different than what is experienced by individuals who never move out of their passport country.

This study utilizes the existing research to inform what areas most TCKs and researchers believed to be of most concern for TCKs in particular and employs a comparative design to determine if statistically significant differences exist between

TCKs and non-TCKs (individuals who have never moved out of their passport country) in these areas. The following paragraphs provide an overview of some of the leading research that has been done to date on ATCKs.

### ***2.2.1. Rootlessness and Sense of Belonging***

Brown (2015) defines belonging as “the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us” (pg. 145). The TCK literature is prevalent with studies showing that ATCKs feel a loss of personal identity and have little to no sense of home or belonging (Gilbert, 2008; Mortimer, 2010). This is thought to be related to their ever-changing environment during their developmental years when adolescents are typically solidifying their identity. TCKs are all exposed to a variety of cultures, whether they make one international move or several, as the people around them are changing constantly due to the transient nature of American and international schools.

Two of the questions TCKs report dreading the most are “Where are you from?” and “Where is home?” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs often remark that they go into adulthood with these nagging questions (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). A unique perspective ATCKs say they acquire from their experience growing up is feeling like they don’t belong anywhere in the world. This is something reported by TCKs of all nationalities, races, and genders (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This is believed to be due to spending part or all their childhood in a country and culture, or in multiple countries and cultures, that is different from the one their passport or parents say they belong to. This experience can lead to cultural homelessness. Cultural homelessness occurs when individuals feel “a lack of cultural or ethnic group membership, emotional



detachment from any cultural group, and a need for a cultural home” (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011, pg. 19). TCKs lack a cultural home or a place where they feel like they fit in. This is a common complaint from ATCKs. A survey of ATCKs revealed that 35% reported no sense of home or belonging and 36% had difficulty with “fitting in” (Mortimer, 2010). Fail et al. (2004) define a sense of belonging as “a subjective, emotional response to a place or community of people” (pg. 326) and found in their research that TCKs may have a sense of belonging to multiple places or communities or may feel no sense of belonging. TCKs were found to be three times more likely to attach their sense of belonging to relationships rather than a particular geographic location (Fail et al., 2004). This kind of attachment can have mixed results, given that interpersonal connections and relationships are another area that TCKs report to be particularly challenging for them (Mortimer, 2010).

TCKs often report difficulty finding a cultural balance, meaning an understanding and internalization of the behaviors of a culture. Cultural balance occurs when individuals know what behaviors are appropriate, offensive, or right in a situation. This allows individuals to feel stable, secure, and provides a sense of belonging to a culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs report they are rarely able to achieve cultural balance when their world changes so frequently. Oftentimes they have difficulty learning the rules of their new culture quickly enough and feel shame and rejection from peers in their new home. This difficulty with relating to others occurs in both the host and the home culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

### ***2.2.2. Relationships***

A benefit of growing up in a foreign country is that TCKs have the opportunity to form friendships with a wide range of people from all over the world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). They typically have diverse groups of friends and have a lot of practice forming relationships. TCKs are often described as being well aware of social dynamics and appropriately culturally sensitive (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs report that typically they are more willing to speak up when a social norm seems morally wrong to them, even when it is accepted by everyone else. This is theorized to occur because while others may be able to ignore misdeeds that occur in other areas of the world, TCKs report feeling connected to individuals in other countries because they feel as if the whole world is their home. This can lead to ostracism and judgment by others within the TCK's home country if they view a TCK's speaking up as defiance or going against their nationality and culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

When asked what concerns TCKs would want to address in therapy if given the opportunity, the top concern was friendships (18% of respondents) with the second leading concern being long-term relationships (15% of respondents; Mortimer, 2010). TCKs note that oftentimes to protect themselves, they do not fully settle into a new home. If they allowed themselves to fully commit to their new address, TCKs feel they are betraying the friends and culture they left behind. Additionally they would be opening themselves up to feeling additional pain if they or their friends were to move again (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Another challenge TCKs note encountering in relationships is the difficulty with maintaining friendships due to frequent moves and having friends in many different countries (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). With increased mobility and frequent transitions, TCKs are forced to say goodbye to friends and family on a regular basis. They have to become independent to survive these transitions, but this comes with the risk of TCKs turning inwards and isolating themselves. When people know they are leaving, they frequently lessen ties to the people they will be leaving behind (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This happens across populations and not just with TCKs, but TCKs experience this more frequently and many TCKs believe this has a lasting effect on their ability to form relationships. Because they say goodbye so frequently and are forced to pull away from close friends, TCKs are often told they appear cold and unaffected by the ending of relationships. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This pulling away and numbing may be an attempt at making leaving as painless as possible, but it often prevents TCKs from saying goodbye and grieving appropriately (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

TCKs also report hesitancy to become close with anyone. A survey revealed that 40% of 300 ATCKs reported fearing intimacy because they feared loss (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Often TCKs are not necessarily aware of why they are putting up these walls, but they report something is keeping their relationships from reaching a deeper level of intimacy (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Even if TCKs are no longer in a position where they have to cut ties every few years, they appear to maintain the distancing patterns of their childhood. This can make establishing relationships as adults challenging (Mclachlan, 2007). Research has shown that physical pain and pain from

social rejection register as the same type of hurt to the brain (Brown, 2015). Researchers hypothesize that this pain sticks with TCKs and increases their hesitancy to be vulnerable and engage in new relationships (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Despite TCKs reporting these many challenges within relationships, they also speak about the benefits of growing up in a highly mobile and cross-cultural world. TCKs are often viewed as more mature because they tend to have a broad base of knowledge about global topics, they are more comfortable with adults because mingling between generations is more common in expatriate communities, they have advanced communication skills for their age and frequently speak more than one language, and they are more autonomous and frequently travel or explore on their own (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). These skills can help TCKs to relate to a variety of groups and have better interpersonal skills than others their same age.

### ***2.2.3. Identity***

Although TCKs appear to adapt easily due to their childhood characterized by high mobility and cultural diversity, a consequence of this lifestyle is that their ability to adjust themselves and their behaviors to fit in with a variety of groups may also prevent them from developing a strong identity outside of these groups (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It is believed that the highly mobile and culturally diverse experiences of TCKs during their developmental years interferes with their opportunity to form a clear personal or cultural identity. A TCK's identity is still being shaped throughout their moves and international experiences, and often there is not sufficient stability to help TCKs independently determine a self-identity (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). When most

children are consolidating their identity and operating from a comprehensive understanding of their group's cultural norms and values, TCKs may still be trying to learn what is socially acceptable in the variety of cultures they operate within (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This is thought to delay their identity formation and cause confusion for TCKs as they work to find belonging within a variety of cultural groups.

#### ***2.2.4. Unresolved Grief***

TCKs report experiencing many losses throughout their adolescent years. They have the tangible losses of losing a best friend or a favorite house as well as many intangible losses that are harder to articulate such as losing the feeling of being at home, the sights, smells, and sounds that have grown familiar to them (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Often, they do not have enough time to grieve when they have to transition to a new life, sometimes as quickly as overnight. The "hidden losses" are those that are intangible and unrecognized, which often prevent TCKs from properly grieving and resolving the loss. Frequently reported hidden losses are loss of their world (their home, friends, culture), loss of status (moving to a place where people don't know their talents or what they can contribute), loss of lifestyle (daily patterns of living, luxuries and comforts), loss of possessions (things with sentimental value), loss of relationships (distance from family members), loss of role model (lacking role models from same culture), loss of system identity (when no longer part of system e.g., Military), loss of the past that wasn't (regrets, things they didn't experience that should have been a part of their childhood), and loss of the past that was (even if you go back to the place, the people aren't there) (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Many TCKs note that as children

they were hesitant to admit that they were grieving because they felt if they were sad it would appear as if they did not appreciate the opportunities they had from their years living abroad.

Frequently TCKs report feeling that their pain is not acknowledged by others, including family. Instead of being given real comfort, kids are given encouragement; for example, “it’ll get better, you’ll make new friends” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). When this pain is not allowed to be acknowledged, it can cause TCKs to feel shame about their grief. Research has shown that talking about experiences, especially traumatic ones, improves the physical health in individuals, compared to the health of those who keep secrets unspoken (Brown, 2015). When TCKs are not given this opportunity, the grief has been shown to remain unresolved and follow TCKs into adulthood.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) have found several ways unresolved grief often expresses itself in TCKs: denial, anger, depression, withdrawal, rebellion, vicarious grief, and delayed grief. When the grief is expressed as denial, ATCKs may refuse to admit that they are hurting, or they claim they have completely overcome it, while continuing to keep people at a distance and building up walls. In anger, ATCKs are often defensive, oftentimes fighting fiercely for or against a cause. This can lead to isolation because others may ostracize a perpetually angry person. When grief is expressed as depression, feelings are turned inwards and suppressed. ATCKs reportedly get stuck in this phase of grieving because they never work through their loss. In withdrawal TCKs may be attempting to protect themselves from future hurt and fear a repeat of painful goodbyes. They refrain from developing close relationships because of this fear. TCKs

who express unresolved grief with rebellion appear to keep their pain buried and refuse to acknowledge or address it. They instead put up a fierce wall and façade of rebellion (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Vicarious grief occurs when ATCKs transfer their personal grief to others and rescue others frequently, rather than focusing on their own grief. In delayed grief TCKs experience seemingly nonthreatening events that suddenly trigger big emotional reactions (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). All of these different expressions of unresolved grief make it harder for TCKs to connect with others in a meaningful way. An inability to connect with and relate to others is a common complaint of TCKs and grief appears to be a contributing factor to that difficulty (Gilbert, 2008).

#### ***2.2.5. Benefits***

Although there are numerous challenges TCKs report experiencing during their time living abroad, they also acknowledge many benefits that come from growing up in a foreign country and being exposed to a variety of cultures. Identified benefits include an expanded worldview, a three-dimensional view of the world, cross-cultural enrichment, adaptability, having friends from diverse backgrounds, and knowing the importance of living in the present (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). ATCKs tend to be viewed as more sensitive and aware of differences and better able to respect others who have differing opinions and beliefs (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Others view them as thoughtful and in tune with how newcomers feel because TCKs have frequently been newcomers themselves. Growing up in a multi-cultural world exposes them to differences in language, religions, values, and beliefs, giving TCKs a better idea of how

diverse the world is outside of their home country, and providing them with skills to help navigate differences at a young age (Faleiro, 2015).

Their adaptability and the skills they learn from living a childhood characterized by change often seems to help TCKs to be confident and self-reliant individuals. They note they are used to dealing with new situations and typically excel at it after having many years of practice throughout their childhoods (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). They also reported often playing the role of mediator during times of conflict as they learned skills to navigate those dynamics at an early age (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs also seem to have an appreciation for differing views and understand that there may be multiple right answers to a question (Eakin, 1998). Often ATCKs can be a bridge between cultures because they are able to adapt to new cultural expectations and manners.

Despite the research regarding challenges faced by TCKs, it is important to remember that “a challenge is something people have the choice to face, deal with, and grow from” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, pg. 78). Researchers and many ATCKs do not see growing up as a TCK to be a negative experience. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) write “being a TCK is not a disease, something from which to recover. It is also not simply okay - it is more than okay. It is a lifestyle healthily enriched by this very TCK experience and blessed with significant opportunities for further enrichment.” (pg. xxii). They believe TCKs should celebrate the uniqueness of their upbringing and the amazing opportunities they have as children (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It is the belief of this researcher that these experiences can lead to greater multicultural compassion in TCKs



compared to individuals who have never moved out of their home country. Due to the lack of comparative studies between these groups, this is something that has not been well-researched to date and will be a question addressed in the following study.

While the descriptive reports of ATCKs' experiences emphasize the challenges and difficulties faced by this population, these are not supported by sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about the impact growing up as a TCK has on long term psychological well-being. A recent study looking at the personality traits, well-being, and cognitive-affective styles of ATCKs showed relatively normative changes in personality and well-being (Abe, 2018). This study utilized well-validated psychological measurements, which was previously lacking in the existing literature. However, it again failed to collect data from a comparison sample of non-ATCK individuals. The literature around TCKs is written as if there are clearly documented differences between TCKs and individuals who never move out of their home country, yet the field as a whole is lacking in comparative studies. This study attempts to address that issue and compares TCKs to a demographically similar group of Americans who have never moved out of the United States.

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1. Methodology

This study focused on identifying statistically significant differences between TCKs and Americans who have never lived outside of the United States on a number of psychological measures. As much of the existing literature discusses the lasting impact a TCK lifestyle has on relationships and psychological health, a personality measure and a well-being measure were used to determine if these claims could be supported by data (Fail et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2008; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Additionally, a measure of ethnocultural empathy was included as researchers have claimed that increased socialization with individuals belonging to ethnic groups other than your own is linked to higher levels of ethnocultural empathy and acceptance of cultural differences (Özdikmenli-Demir & Demir, 2014). The Big Five Inventory (John et al., 1991) was utilized as a measure of personality, the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) as a measure of well-being, and the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (Wang et al., 2003) to test for differences in empathy levels towards individuals with different racial and ethnic backgrounds than one's own.

The null hypothesis for this study is that group means would be equal across all scales, with no significant differences between TCKs and individuals who have never moved out of their passport country. The alternative hypothesis is that at least one group mean will be statistically different between groups.

## **3.2. Participants**

This study looked at two different groups of participants. Group 1 consisted of American individuals who had never lived outside of the United States. Group 2 consisted of individuals of any nationality who had lived outside of their passport country for a minimum of two years prior to the age of 18.

### ***3.2.1. Inclusionary Criteria***

To be included in the study and subsequent data analyses, participants were required to be between the ages of 18 and 35, have facility with the English language sufficient to complete study procedures, have completed some university or greater, and give informed consent. To participate in the survey as a non-TCK, individuals were required to have resided in America for the entirety of their lives. To participate as a TCK, individuals were required to have resided in a country other than their passport country for a minimum of two years.

### ***3.2.2. Exclusionary Criteria***

Exclusion criteria included individuals who were not willing to adhere to study procedures or not willing to give informed consent. One individual declined to provide informed consent and was not permitted to continue with the survey. Additionally, participants younger than 18, older than 35, participants whose education level was less than some university completed, and incomplete responses were excluded from the study. A total of 234 responses were excluded from the study.

The education restriction was put in place in part due to the results of a previous study of TCKs which revealed that 45% of adult TCKs had bachelor's degree whereas

only 21% of the American adult population had bachelor's degrees at the time of the study (Useem & Cottrell, 1996). To ensure that any differences found between the two populations was not attributed to differences in education, the requirement of completing at least some college was included. The age range was also put in place to create a more uniform sample in both groups and to ensure that participants are in similar life stages.

### **3.3. Sample Size**

A power analysis was used to calculate the minimum number of participants needed for the results to have statistical significance. Using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2007) and setting the analysis to two-tailed, with a medium effect size (0.5), an alpha level of 0.05, and power of 0.80, it was determined that a minimum of 64 participants were needed for each group with a total sample size of 128.

### **3.4. Recruitment**

Participants were recruited through a snowball-like design. To participate in the survey, individuals were required to have spent a minimum of two years living in a country other than their passport country or have never moved out of their home country. Individuals who were believed to meet criteria for the study were sent emails containing a link to the survey. They were also asked to forward the email to others who met the criteria for the study. Organizations with ties to TCKs were contacted and asked to share the survey including International School Facebook pages, alumni networks, and TCK online communities. To recruit non-TCKs, an email was sent to the Texas A&M student and staff listserv asking individuals to complete the survey. Additionally, a link to the survey was posted on the researcher's personal Facebook page asking TCKs and non-

TCKs to complete the survey and share with other potential participants. A full list of organizations and their contact information is listed in Appendix A.

### **3.5. Procedure**

Individuals were asked to complete an anonymous survey available through an online survey tool (Qualtrics). Prior to seeing any questions, participants were shown an initial page that provided a brief overview of the study, confidentiality, rights of participants, and any possible risks for participants. It was determined that there was minimal risk for participants completing the survey. A copy of the information page shown to participants is available in Appendix B. After seeing the information page, participants were required to provide consent before they were permitted to proceed with the survey. After being shown the survey they were given resources for several US based and international crisis lines should they feel they needed to discuss any distress experienced from completing the survey. Lastly, participants were given the option of submitting their email address to a separate survey, not linked with their individual data, for a chance to win one of four \$50 gift cards as compensation for completing the survey.

### **3.6. Measures**

#### ***3.6.1. Demographic Questions***

Participants completed demographic questions including gender, age, marital status, education status, nationality, and ethnicity. Those who identified as TCKs were also asked specific details about their experience living abroad including what countries

they lived in, their age at the time of their first move, and number of languages spoken.

All questions from the demographic questionnaire are detailed in Appendix C.

### **3.6.2. Big Five Inventory**

The Big Five Inventory (John et al., 1991) was used to determine personality differences between TCKs and non-TCKs. It consists of 44 items which participants respond to using a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 indicating *disagree strongly* and 5 indicating *agree strongly*. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) provides five overarching domains of personality characteristics that were found to summarize a large number of more distinct personality characteristics. These traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (John et al., 2008). Higher scores on these five domains indicate the individual endorses more traits associated with the overarching personality characteristic. These five personality dimensions have been well-replicated and supported by studies conducted in many different languages including Germanic languages and non-Western languages (John et al., 2008).

The extraversion scale of the BFI measures the extent to which an individual tends to be forceful, energetic, adventurous, enthusiastic, and outgoing. Agreeableness indicates the extent to which a person tends to be forgiving, warm, compliant, modest, and sympathetic. Conscientiousness assesses if a person tends to be efficient, organized, dutiful, thorough, self-disciplined, and deliberate. Neuroticism assesses how much an individual identifies as anxious, irritable, depressed, self-conscious, impulsive, and lacking self-confidence. Openness indicates how much an individual identifies with

being curious, excitable, imaginative, artistic, having a wide range of interests, and being unconventional (John & Srivastava, 1999).

In terms of reliability and validity, the BFI has been shown to maintain strong reliability within American and Canadian samples, with the alpha reliabilities of all of the scales ranging from .75 to .90, averaging above .80. Test-retest reliability after three months ranges from .80 to .90 (John et al., 2008).

### **3.6.3. Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being**

The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) was chosen as a way to measure overall well-being for participants because of its inclusive nature. Ryff developed the scales to measure the six dimensions she theorizes make up psychological well-being. The Ryff scales are informed by psychological theory focusing on the components of positive psychological functioning. The six dimensions are autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Participants endorse how true statements are using a six-point Likert type scale where 1 indicates *strongly disagree* and 6 indicates *strongly agree*. Higher scores on each of the scales indicate the participant has a higher level of psychological well-being on that particular dimension. The autonomy scale assesses how much a participant views themselves as independent and able to resist social pressures. The environmental mastery scale assesses how much participants feel they are in control of themselves and able to act as they wish in their environment. The personal growth scale assesses how much a participant believes they are continuing to develop and improve themselves. The positive relations with others scale measures how well

participants are able to connect with and maintain positive, trustworthy, and satisfying relationships with others. The purpose in life scale assesses the degree to which participants have internalized beliefs that give their life meaning. The acceptance scale measures how positive of an attitude participants have about themselves (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

There are three versions of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being. The long version consists of 86 items, the medium has 54 items, and the short version has 42 items (Seifert, 2005). For this study the medium form of the scales was used to minimize the length of the survey and reduce respondent burnout while maintaining strong validity (Ryff, 2014).

A study examining the construct validity of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being used exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) on data from 3,014 participants revealed six substantive factors, which was consistent with previous studies evaluating the scale using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Hsu, et al., 2017). Well-being has been assessed using the Ryff Scales or using adjusted scales based on the six factor model in studies in many different countries, including Slovenia, Spain, and Columbia (van Dierendonck et al. 2008; Žižek et al., 2015). These studies revealed that this six factor model adequately fit participants responses, providing support for its use with individuals belonging to a non-Anglo-Saxon culture (Žižek et al., 2015). This offers support for its use in this study on TCKs which will include participants from a variety of cultural groups and nationalities.



#### **3.6.4. Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy**

The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003) was developed to measure a participant's level of empathy towards individuals belonging to different racial and ethnic groups than one's own. It consists of 31 items to which participants respond using a six point Likert-type scale with 1 indicating *strongly disagree that it describes me* and 6 indicating *strongly agree that it describes me*. The SEE consists of four different factors of ethnocultural empathy. The first factor is empathic feeling and expression, which measures a participant's concern about discrimination and prejudice attitudes and beliefs and their emotional responses to the emotions and experiences of individuals belonging to a different racial or ethnic group than their own. The second factor is empathic perspective taking, which addresses the extent to which an individual attempts to take the perspective of others and tries to understand the emotions and experiences of individuals who belong to a different racial or ethnic group than their own. The third factor, acceptance of cultural differences, measures the extent to which participants understand, accept, and value the cultural traditions and customs of groups other than their own. The last factor is empathic awareness, which assesses an individual's knowledge or awareness about individuals from differing racial or ethnic groups and their experiences (Wang et al., 2003).

In developing the scale, Wang et al. (2003) utilized an exploratory factor analysis and determined that the four factors detailed above explain 47% of the total variance. The coefficient alpha for the scale as a whole was .91 and the alpha values for each of the four factors individually ranged from .71 to .90 revealing high internal

consistency. A confirmatory factor analysis used in a follow up study by Wang et al. (2003), found that the four factors explained approximately 81% of the total variance. The test-retest reliability score was  $r = .76$  for the 31-item scale and ranged from .64 to .86 for the four factors.

A 30-item Turkish version of the SEE was tested with a sample of 347 university students in Turkey (Özdikmenli-Demir & Demir, 2014), and produced high internal consistency with a coefficient alpha score of .93 for the total scale and a high test-retest reliability ( $r = .89$ ). The SEE's use with additional populations outside of America provides additional support for its use with TCKs and culturally diverse populations.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Respondent Characteristics

Responses from 304 participants were used in data analysis. A total of 538 participants completed part of the survey. 112 individuals discontinued the survey before completing it in its entirety, likely due to the length of the survey. Of those who completed the survey in its entirety, an additional 122 responses were removed due to the respondents not meeting criteria for the study. 81 respondents completed the survey even though they were older than the specified age range (18-35 years old). 27 individuals did not meeting the minimum education requirement. 16 individuals were excluded as they had lived outside of their passport country for less than 2 years. Incomplete responses and responses from those not meeting the specified criteria for this study were removed from the data set leaving 304 complete responses.

#### 4.1.1. *Participant Demographics*

Of the 304 participants, 155 identified as individuals who had lived outside of their passport country for a minimum of two years prior to the age of 18, and 149 participants identified as Americans who had never lived outside of the United States. Table 4.1 shows the gender make up for both groups of participants. The majority of participants identified as female, more than 75% of each group. A chi-square test was done to detect and verify if any significant differences occurred between these two groups on the variable of gender. The chi-square test revealed a p-value of .198 indicating there is no statistically significant group difference on the variable of gender.

**Table 4.1 Gender**

Variable	TCKs		Non-TCKs	
	# of Respondents	Percentage	# of Respondents	Percentage
Female	128	82.58%	112	75.17%
Male	27	17.42%	36	24.16%
Non-binary	0	0%	1	0.67%

Table 4.2 shows the composition of each group by education level. The top two groups for both non-TCKs and TCKs were individuals who had completed some university and university graduates. The majority of TCKs identified as university graduates (45%) while the majority of non-TCKs identified as having completed some university (44%). This is likely due in part to the majority of non-TCKs being recruited through an email sent to a university listserv, which is made up predominately by current undergraduate students. A chi-square test was done to detect and verify if any significant differences occurred between these two groups on the variable of education. The chi-square test revealed a p-value of .016 indicating there is a statistically significant group difference on the variable of education. The effect size of this difference was considered to be small ( $\phi = .184$ ).

**Table 4.2 Education Level**

Variable	TCKs		Non-TCKs	
	# of Respondents	Percentage	# of Respondents	Percentage
Some university	46	29.68%	67	44.97%
University graduate	70	45.16%	59	39.60%
Master's degree or equivalent	35	22.58%	18	12.08%
Doctorate	4	2.58%	5	3.36%

Table 4.3 shows the participants' marital status. More than 75% of participants in the TCKs group and non-TCKs group identified as single. A chi-square test was done to detect and verify if any significant differences occurred between these two groups on the variable of marital status. The chi-square test revealed a p-value of .342 indicating there is no statistically significant group difference on the variable of marital status.

**Table 4.3 Marital Status**

Variable	TCKs		Non-TCKs	
	# of Respondents	Percentage	# of Respondents	Percentage
Single	119	76.77%	116	77.85%
Married	24	15.48%	17	11.41%
Living with partner	10	6.45%	16	10.74%
Separated	1	0.65%	0	0.00%
Did not disclose	1	0.65%	0	0.00%

The ethnicity represented within each group is listed in Table 4.4. The non-TCK group was composed of a higher percentage of White/Caucasian participants, with this ethnicity representing 57% of non-TCK participants compared to 43% of TCKs identifying at White/Caucasian. TCKs had a higher percentage of Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander participants, with this ethnicity making up 30% of TCKs compared to 16% of non-TCKs. A chi-square test was done to detect and verify if any significant differences occurred between these two groups on the variable of ethnicity by grouping the participants into white and non-white categories. The chi-square test revealed a p-value of .016 indicating there is a statistically significant group difference on the variable white or non-white ethnicity. The effect size of this difference was considered to be small ( $\phi = .138$ ).

**Table 4.4 Ethnicity**

Variable	TCKs		Non-TCKs	
	# of Respondents	Percentage	# of Respondents	Percentage
White/Caucasian	67	43.23%	85	57.05%
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	47	30.32%	24	16.11%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	15	9.68%	11	7.38%
Black/African American	5	3.23%	4	2.68%
Middle Eastern/Arab American	3	1.94%	2	1.34%
Multiracial	15	9.68%	22	14.77%
Prefer not to disclose	3	1.94%	1	0.67%

Overall, there were statistically significant differences between the non-TCK group and the TCK group on the demographic factors of education level and ethnicity. For both of these groups the effect sizes were small, indicating that while there does appear to be an association between these variables and the non-TCK and TCK groups, the impact it has is small. Table 4.5 shows the correlations between each variable for both the TCK group and the non-TCK group.

**Table 4.5 Correlations Between Variables for TCKs and non-TCKs**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. BFI Extraversion	-	.12 (.13)	.18 (.02) *	-.35 (.00) **	.31 (.00) **	.50 (.00) **	.34 (.00) **	.36 (.00) **	.43 (.00) **	.30 (.00) **	.43 (.00) **	.10 (.20)	.03 (.69)	.05 (.51)	.04 (.61)
2. BFI Agreeableness	.25 (.00) **	-	.30 (.00) **	-.31 (.00) **	.08 (.34)	-.08 (.32)	.33 (.00) **	.33 (.00) **	.53 (.00) **	.30 (.00) **	.38 (.00) **	.26 (.00) **	-.03 (.70)	.20 (.02) *	.08 (.33)
3. BFI Conscientiousness	.14 (.09)	.26 (.00) **	-	-.35 (.00) **	.08 (.33)	.15 (.06)	.58 (.00) **	.24 (.00) **	.27 (.00) **	.53 (.00) **	.41 (.00) **	.09 (.25)	-.06 (.50)	.20 (.01) *	-.01 (.89)
4. BFI Neuroticism	-.24 (.00) **	-.50 (.00) **	-.14 (.09)	-	-.19 (.02) *	-.37 (.00) **	-.66 (.00) **	-.37 (.00) **	-.44 (.00) **	-.38 (.00) **	-.54 (.00) **	.03 (.69)	-.00 (.97)	-.12 (.12)	.08 (.33)
5. BFI Openness	.12 (.15)	.16 (.06)	-.05 (.56)	-.12 (.16)	-	.33 (.00) **	.23 (.01) **	.40 (.00) **	.23 (.00) **	.24 (.00) **	.27 (.00) **	.34 (.00) **	.19 (.02) *	.30 (.00) **	.25 (.00) **
6. Ryff-Autonomy	.20 (.01) *	.01 (.94)	.26 (.00) **	-.23 (.01) **	.19 (.02) *	-	.36 (.00) **	.45 (.00) **	.26 (.00) **	.33 (.00) **	.39 (.00) **	.17 (.03) *	.29 (.00) **	.27 (.00) **	.17 (.03) *
7. Ryff-Environmental Mastery	.40 (.00) **	.38 (.00) **	.63 (.00) **	-.52 (.00) **	.03 (.69)	.42 (.00) **	-	.46 (.00) **	.61 (.00) **	.70 (.00) **	.75 (.00) **	.07 (.40)	-.07 (.39)	.21 (.01) *	-.04 (.61)
8. Ryff Personal Growth	.35 (.00) **	.43 (.00) **	.27 (.00) **	-.40 (.00) **	.30 (.00) **	.41 (.00) **	.51 (.00) **	-	.45 (.00) **	.65 (.00) **	.60 (.00) **	.45 (.00) **	.27 (.00) **	.47 (.00) **	.34 (.00) **



**Table 4.5 Continued**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9. Ryff Positive Relations	.50 (.00) **	.53 (.00) **	.41 (.00) **	-.35 (.00) **	.13 (.12)	.32 (.00) **	.64 (.00) **	.50 (.00) **	-	.56 (.00) **	.63 (.00) **	.23 (.00) **	.06 (.48)	.28 (.00) **	.09 (.28)
10. Ryff Purpose in Life	.31 (.00) **	.31 (.00) **	.52 (.00) **	-.19 (.02) *	.08 (.33)	.28 (.00) **	.66 (.00) **	.58 (.00) **	.56 (.00) **	-	.64 (.00) **	.17 (.04) *	.09 (.29)	.26 (.00) **	.01 (.92)
11. Ryff Self-Acceptance	.40 (.00) **	.47 (.00) **	.50 (.00) **	-.48 (.00) **	.13 (.12)	.40 (.00) **	.79 (.00) **	.57 (.00) **	.68 (.00) **	.64 (.00) **	-	.20 (.01) *	-.05 (.54)	.27 (.00) **	.11 (.17)
12. SEE Empathic Feeling and Expression	.18 (.03) *	.09 (.27)	.20 (.01) *	.12 (.13)	.20 (.01) *	.26 (.00) **	.10 (.21)	.28 (.00) **	.32 (.00) **	.16 (.05) *	.16 (.05) *	-	.45 (.00) **	.52 (.00) **	.72 (.00) **
13. SEE Empathic Perspective Taking	.06 (.46)	-.11 (.18)	.06 (.46)	.03 (.71)	.12 (.15)	.24 (.00) **	.11 (.19)	.10 (.23)	.05 (.51)	.14 (.09)	-.02 (.80)	.44 (.00) **	-	.28 (.00) **	.47 (.00) **
14. SEE Acceptance of Cultural Differences	-.08 (.34)	.14 (.09)	.09 (.25)	.02 (.83)	.20 (.02) *	.19 (.02) *	.09 (.27)	.27 (.00) **	.21 (.01) *	.16 (.06)	.10 (.23)	.52 (.00) **	.26 (.00) **	-	.51 (.00) **
15. SEE Empathic Awareness	.01 (.96)	-.06 (.49)	.06 (.47)	.24 (.00) **	.08 (.34)	.07 (.39)	-.04 (.61)	.12 (.15)	.13 (.11)	.04 (.65)	.06 (.47)	.69 (.00) **	.17 (.04) *	.47 (.00) **	-

Note. Lower diagonal contains correlations between factors for non-TCKs; upper diagonal contains correlations between factors for TCKs

\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$

## 4.2. Data Analysis

All negatively worded items from the Big Five Inventory (BFI), Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff), and the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) were reverse coded and subscales were calculated for each of the three measures. This resulted in scores for BFI-Extraversion, BFI-Agreeableness, BFI-Conscientiousness, BFI-Neuroticism, BFI-Openness, Ryff-Autonomy, Ryff-Environmental Mastery, Ryff-Personal Growth, Ryff-Purpose in Life, Ryff-Self-Acceptance, SEE-Empathic Feeling and Expression, SEE-Empathic Perspective Taking, SEE-Acceptance of Cultural Differences, and SEE-Empathic Awareness for each participant.

Levene's test for equality of variances was used to test whether or not the variances of the TCK group and the non-TCK group were approximately equal on each scale. *p* values were greater than .05 on all of the scales, indicating the Levene's Test for Equality of variance is not significant, and equal variances can be assumed. The results are summarized in table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6 Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**

Scale	F	<i>p</i>
BFI Extraversion	1.27	.26
BFI Agreeableness	0.11	.75
BFI Conscientiousness	2.31	.13
BFI Neuroticism	1.79	.18
BFI Openness	0.32	.57
Ryff – Autonomy	0.08	.78
Ryff – Environmental Mastery	0.24	.62
Ryff – Personal Growth	1.07	.30

**Table 4.6 Continued**

Scale	F	<i>P</i>
Ryff – Positive Relationships	0.02	.89
Ryff – Purpose in Life	0.66	.42
Ryff – Self Acceptance	0.06	.80
SEE – Empathic Feeling and Expression	0.23	.64
SEE – Empathic Perspective Taking	0.38	.54
SEE – Acceptance of Cultural Differences	0.74	.39
SEE – Empathic Awareness	3.63	.06

To assess for the internal consistency of the BFI, Ryff Scales, and SEE, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each scale. These were calculated separately for the TCK group and the non-TCK group. For the TCK group, the BFI ( $\alpha = .72$ ), Ryff scales ( $\alpha = .95$ ), and SEE ( $\alpha = .92$ ) all demonstrated acceptable internal consistency. For the non-TCK group, the BFI ( $\alpha = .74$ ), Ryff scales ( $\alpha = .95$ ), and SEE ( $\alpha = .91$ ) also all demonstrated acceptable internal consistency.

#### **4.2.1. Big Five Inventory**

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there would be one or more mean differences between TCKs and non-TCKs on the big five scales of personality when examined as a single construct. The results were not found to be statistically significant (Pillai's Trace = .03,  $p = .12$ ) and can be found in table 4.7 below. A series of one-way ANOVAs were used to determine if significant differences in group means existed for each of the five BFI scales

independently. When looking at group differences, an alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance. The results of these analysis are in table 4.8.

**Table 4.7 One-way MANOVA with Big Five Inventory Scales by TCK status**

Variable	Pillai's Trace	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
TCK status	.03	1.77	.12	.03

**Table 4.8 One-way ANOVAs with BFI scales as Dependent Variables and TCK-status as Independent Variable**

Variable	Mean TCKs	SD TCKs	Mean Non-TCKs	SD Non-TCKs	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
Extraversion	3.21	.85	3.01	.92	4.09	.04	.01
Agreeableness	3.81	.65	3.85	.62	.37	.54	.00
Conscientiousness	3.77	.63	3.70	.68	.82	.37	.00
Neuroticism	3.02	.81	3.07	.75	.30	.58	.00
Openness	3.71	.60	3.58	.55	4.15	.04	.01

On the Big Five scales, a series of ANOVA tests revealed significant between-group differences were present on the extraversion scale and the openness scale. TCKs scored significantly higher on the extraversion scale, indicating they endorsed traits including sociability, activity level, assertiveness, and positive emotionality at a higher rate than the comparison group (John et al., 2008). Individuals scoring high on extraversion tend to be more forceful, energetic, adventurous, enthusiastic, and outgoing (John & Srivastava, 1999). Additionally, the TCK group scored significantly higher on the BFI openness scale, indicating they reported higher levels of openness, originality,

and open-mindedness (John et al., 2008). High scores on openness indicate an individual is likely to be curious, excitable, imaginative, artistic, have a wide range of interests, and be unconventional (John & Srivastava, 1999). On the scales of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, there were no statistically significant differences between groups (John et al., 2008). TCKs and non-TCKs appeared to endorse similar levels of these personality traits.

#### ***4.2.2. Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being***

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis that there would be one or more mean differences between TCKs and non-TCKs on the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being when examined as a single construct. The results, found in table 4.9, were not found to be statistically significant (Pillai's Trace = .04,  $p = .06$ ). A series of one-way ANOVAs were used to determine if significant differences in group means existed for each of the six Ryff scales independently. When looking at group differences, an alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance. The results of these analysis are in table 4.10.

**Table 4.9 One-way MANOVA with Ryff Scales by TCK status**

Variable	Pillai's Trace	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
TCK status	.04	2.09	.06	.04

**Table 4.10 One-way ANOVAs with Ryff Scales as Dependent Variables and TCK-status as Independent Variable**

Variable	Mean TCKs	SD TCKs	Mean Non- TCKs	SD Non- TCKs	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
Autonomy	4.22	.80	4.06	.81	2.97	.09	.01
Environmental Mastery	4.23	.82	4.12	.85	1.42	.23	.01
Personal Growth	4.92	.69	4.80	.65	2.58	.11	.01
Positive Relations	4.31	.87	4.37	.86	.30	.59	.00
Purpose in Life	4.62	.75	4.63	.82	.00	.97	.00
Self-Acceptance	4.43	.91	4.25	.92	2.98	.09	.01

On the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, a series of ANOVA tests revealed there were no statistically significant differences between group means on any of the six scales. TCKs and non-TCKs endorsed similar levels of well-being across all scales.

#### **4.2.3. Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy**

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis that there would be one or more mean differences between TCKs and non-TCKs on the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy when examining the four subscales as a single construct. A statistically significant MANOVA effect was obtained (Pillai's Trace = .11,  $p = .00$ ). The results of this test can be found in table 4.11. The multivariate effect size was estimated at .11, implying that approximately 11% of the variance in the combined SEE variable can be accounted for by TCK status. A series of one-way ANOVAs were used to determine if significant differences in group means existed for each of the four SEE

scales independently. When looking at group differences, an alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance. The results of these analysis are in table 4.12.

**Table 4.11 One-way MANOVA with SEE Scales by TCK status**

Variable	Pillai's Trace	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
TCK status	.11	9.16	.00	.11

**Table 4.12 One-way ANOVAs with SEE scales as Dependent Variables and TCK-status as Independent Variable**

Variable	Mean TCKs	SD TCKs	Mean Non-TCKs	SD Non-TCKs	F	<i>p</i>	Partial Eta Squared
Empathic Feeling and Expression	4.83	.72	4.59	.75	7.52	.01	.02
Empathic Perspective Taking	4.52	.83	3.94	.87	35.34	.00	.11
Acceptance of Cultural Differences	5.41	.72	5.36	.66	.38	.54	.00
Empathic Awareness	5.08	.82	4.87	1.02	3.92	.05	.01

On the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy, a series of ANOVA tests revealed significant between-group differences were present on empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, and empathic awareness. TCKs scored significantly higher on empathic feeling and expression, which focused on participants' concern about discrimination and prejudice attitudes and beliefs, and participants' emotional responses

to the emotions and experiences of individuals belonging to a different racial or ethnic group than their own (Wang et al., 2003). TCKs also scored significantly higher as a group on empathic perspective taking which addresses the extent to which an individual attempts to take the perspective of others and tries to understand the emotions and experiences of individuals who belong to a different racial or ethnic group than their own (Wang et al., 2003). Lastly, the TCK group scored significantly higher on empathic awareness, which assesses an individual's knowledge or awareness about individuals from differing racial or ethnic groups. There was no statistically significant group difference between TCKs and non-TCKs on the acceptance of cultural differences scale.

#### ***4.2.4. Gender***

To test for a potential interaction effect, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted on each scale examining the independent variables of gender and TCK status. The results of these analyses can be found in table 4.13. Statistically significant differences were found for the interaction of the independent variables gender and TCK status on agreeableness ( $p = .04$ ) and acceptance of cultural differences ( $p = .04$ ). In the TCK group females scored substantially higher on agreeableness ( $M = 3.86$ ) than males ( $M = 3.55$ ). However, in the non-TCK group females scored lower on agreeableness ( $M = 3.84$ ) than males ( $M = 3.90$ ). On the variable of acceptance of cultural differences, in the TCK group females scored substantially higher ( $M = 5.51$ ) than males ( $M = 5.00$ ), while in the non-TCK group the results for females ( $M = 5.39$ ) and males ( $M = 5.25$ ) were relatively similar. Profile plots of the interactions of both of these variables are available in Appendix D.



**Table 4.13 ANOVA Examining Interaction Effect of Gender and TCK Status**

Variable	Gender F	Gender <i>p</i>	TCK F	TCK <i>p</i>	Gender * TCK F	Gender * TCK <i>p</i>
	Extraversion	2.82	.06	5.26	.02	1.90
Agreeableness	1.17	.31	3.32	.07	4.30	.04
Conscientiousness	8.24	.000	0.33	.57	0.08	.78
Neuroticism	5.33	.01	0.01	.95	0.87	.35
Openness	0.11	.90	2.11	.15	0.13	.72
Autonomy	0.08	.92	1.72	.19	0.00	.95
Environmental Mastery	2.21	.11	0.59	.45	0.00	.98
Personal Growth	4.49	.01	0.16	.69	1.34	.25
Positive Relations	3.45	.03	1.28	.26	0.73	.40
Purpose in Life	3.37	.04	0.35	.55	0.38	.54
Self-Acceptance	3.48	.03	0.47	.50	0.83	.36
Empathic Feeling and Expression	15.35	.00	5.18	.02	0.31	.58
Empathic Perspective Taking	0.29	.75	20.00	.00	0.16	.69
Acceptance of Cultural Differences	6.49	.00	0.89	.35	4.40	.04
Empathic Awareness	12.33	.00	3.89	.05	1.03	.31

### 4.3. Summary

These results provide support for our research hypothesis, which suggested statistically significant differences between TCKs and Americans who have never moved out of the United States would be present on a minimum of one psychological measure. Specifically, group differences were present on two of the five traits on the Big Five Inventory and three of the four scales on the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being showed no statistically significant group

differences. This provides support for differences in personality and ethnocultural empathy, while no statistically significant differences were evidenced in psychological well-being using the Ryff scales.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1. Explanation of Findings

Among individuals aged 18-35 who had completed a minimum of some college, a series of one-way ANOVAs revealed statistically significant differences between TCKs and non-TCKs on both the extraversion and openness scales on the BFI. Cohen's effect size values for extraversion ( $d = 0.23$ ) and openness ( $d = 0.23$ ) suggested low practical significance. There were also statistically significant differences between TCKs and non-TCKs on the empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, and empathic awareness scales of the SEE. Cohen's effect size value for empathic feeling and expression ( $d = 0.31$ ) and empathic awareness ( $d = 0.23$ ) suggested low practical significance. Low practical significance means the magnitude of the difference between the groups is small and may not be meaningful in a real-world context in terms of observing clear differences between these populations and how they interact with the world (Cohen, 1988). However, it is important to note that within the field of psychology effect sizes tend to be relatively small and can still provide clinical significance (Pek & Flora, 2018). Additional research is needed to determine if these differences have clinical significance.

Cohen's effect size value for empathic perspective taking ( $d = .68$ ) suggested a moderate to high practical significance. This suggests that there is some practical significance to this between group difference (Cohen, 1988). The difference in how the individuals in these populations interact with others and their ability to take on the

perspective of individuals who belong to a different cultural group than their own is likely apparent and noticeable to others .

Although the effect sizes for most of the results were small, this study focused on whether or not there would be statistically significant group differences, which were found. This supports the idea that the groups do have measurable differences on personality characteristics and cultural empathy. The results of this study provide support for some of the existing literature surrounding TCKs, while challenging other generalizations that have frequently been made about this population. It also provides a new foundation of data from which to build additional research.

## **5.2. Support for Existing Literature**

One of the most notable results was the finding that TCKs scored significantly higher on three of the four scales on the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy. This supports previous findings that stated increased socialization with individuals belonging to ethnic groups other than your own is linked to higher levels of ethnocultural empathy and acceptance of cultural differences (Özdikmenli-Demir & Demir, 2014). This also provides support for Mortimer's (2010) study of common themes and relational struggles of TCKs in which TCKs identified having a broader worldview to be one of the most widely endorsed benefits of growing up abroad.

The finding that TCKs endorsed significantly higher levels of openness, originality, and open-mindedness also supports Mortimer's (2010) study that identified a benefit of the TCKs lifestyle as helping individuals to be more open-minded.

This study's results provide additional support for Abe's (2018) study on TCKs, which is one of the few studies on TCKs to use well-validated psychological measures. Abe utilized measures including the BFI and the 18-item version of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being and obtained results that supported normative changes in well-being and personality for Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs).

### **5.3. Contradictions of Existing Literature**

The results of this study appear to contradict the idea portrayed in most literature and qualitative studies that suggests that TCKs have lower levels of well-being than non-TCKs due to factors like cultural homelessness, lacking a sense of belonging, and identity challenges (Fail et al., 2004; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). As no significant group differences were found on any of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, TCKs appear to experience roughly similar levels of psychological well-being on all six Ryff scales compared to Americans who have never moved outside of the United States. It is possible that TCKs are more vocal and open about their challenges compared to other Americans, which could contribute to a misconception that because they speak about distress more frequently, they experience higher levels of psychological difficulties compared to non-TCKs. Because previous studies examining well-being in TCKs (Fail et al., 2004; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011) have not included non-TCKs, direct comparisons have not been tested prior to this study.

Mortimer's (2010) study of common themes identified the greatest challenges of growing up abroad to include difficulties in relationships. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being includes the positive relations with others scale, which

measures how well participants are able to connect with and maintain positive, trustworthy, and satisfying relationships with others. On this measure the TCK group did not perform significantly different from the non-TCK group, indicating that they experience a similar level of success and difficulty within relationships compared to Americans who have never moved outside of the United States. This is a surprising finding given how much of the literature suggests that TCKs have difficulty connecting with others in a meaningful way (Eakin, 1998; Little, 2015). This leaves us to question the possibility that individuals may be over-pathologizing relational difficulties in TCKs that are actually typical of most people. Alternatively, there could be another component to relationships that is not accounted for in the Ryff scales that is unique to TCKs experience. Further research is needed to expand our understanding of this area.

#### **5.4. Implications for Future Research**

This study provides support for the belief that statistically significant personality and ethnocultural empathy differences exist between TCKs and Americans who have never lived outside of the United States. This opens up a wide array of possibilities for future research. Future research can build off of the findings in this study and utilize additional measures while maintaining a comparative design to further assess the challenges and benefits thought to be experienced by TCKs including issues of identity confusion, loss and grief, and self-esteem (Fail et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2008; Werkman et al., 1981). These are all concerns reported by TCKs in previous research that have not yet been studied using a comparative design. This study provides a potential model for future studies to utilize when assessing these additional areas.

Future studies that utilize alternative measures of psychological well-being would provide increased understanding into the impact a TCK's lifestyle has on well-being. Much research to date has focused on the adverse consequences of growing up as a TCK, implying that this lifestyle causes harm to one's psychological well-being (Fail et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2008). While the current study did not utilize a cause and effect design, the lack of statistically significant difference between the two groups on any of the six Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being raises questions about whether or not moving abroad as a child has an impact on well-being. Utilizing additional measures of well-being will be necessary to help researchers draw more conclusions about the impact of this lifestyle on TCKs. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1985) is a brief 5 item scale that assesses cognitive judgements of individual's life satisfaction and could provide insight into the cognitive aspect of well-being for participants. The Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn & Noll, 1969) is a 10 item measure of well-being that focuses on positive and negative feelings and may be useful at gathering data related to the affect component of well-being.

It is important to note that although the current TCK literature stresses the difficulties TCKs experience with relationships, they also note that TCKs are often able to make connections quickly because of the increased mobility of their lifestyles (Eakin, 1998). The Ryff scale of positive relations with others used in this study measures how well participants are able to connect with and maintain positive, trustworthy, and satisfying relationships with others. It is possible that TCKs are able to form quick and meaningful relationships with others, but still feel a sense of disconnection and

loneliness within these relationships that is not captured in the scale of positive relations with others. Useem and Cottrell (1996) describe TCKs as “loners without being particularly lonely” (pg. 27) based off of their study of over 600 ATCKs and suggest that ATCKs feel different from those around them, but do not necessarily feel isolated. A more focused measure on relationship satisfaction may provide additional insight into this area and clarify if there are significant differences between TCKs and non-TCKs in how they feel and interact within relationships that were not assessed in this study. The Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B) is a personality instrument that assesses one-to-one relationships, teamwork, career development, organizational culture, and leadership development (Hammer & Schnell, 2000) that could provide additional information about TCKs’ experiences within relationships.

The differences between the statistically significant correlations between variables for the TCK group and the non-TCK group also provides a foundation to guide further research. Additionally, gender appeared to have a different impact on TCKs than non TCKs, with statistically significant differences based on gender on a wider range of personality and well-being aspects for TCKs than non-TCKs. Additional analyses of this data with a predictive model may provide insight as to potential mediating variables that differ between TCKs and non-TCKs.

In addition to the implications this research has on the TCK field, there are other areas of psychology that this could inform. Residential mobility is a growing area in psychology that focuses on how relocation plays a role in well-being, social relationships, and understanding yourself (Oishi, 2010). Studies have found that



residential mobility is linked to lower levels of psychological well-being (Oishi, 2010). There is also existing research which focuses on specific subsets of TCKs including Missionary Kids and Military Brats. For example, Little (2015) found that childhood mobility was related to adult attachment style in children of missionaries. Integration of these overlapping areas of psychology could provide useful insights for each of the fields and offer additional models researchers could consider when conducting future research.

### **5.5. Clinical Implications**

These results have important implications for mental health professionals who work with this group to help them adjust to their home country when they return. TCKs' scores on the SEE suggest that this group of individuals do not approach cultural differences in the same way that many Americans who have never moved outside of the country do. It is important for clinicians to explore TCKs' cultural beliefs and values and not assume they are congruent with the majority culture. Clinicians should spend adequate time learning about the client's personal culture in depth, something that can be overlooked when clients visually appear as if they belong to the majority culture.

The TCK group also scored significantly higher on extraversion and openness. Knowledge about personality traits common in this group could allow clinicians to utilize interventions that are more effective with those personality characteristics. For example, in a study of personality fit and positive psychology interventions, Schueller (2012) found that individuals who scored higher on extraversion on the Brief Big Five Inventory benefitted more from a gratitude visit intervention and a savoring exercise, while individuals lower on extraversion benefitted more from an active-constructive

responding exercise, signature strength intervention, and a three good things exercise. While the researchers were not able to distinguish common elements within each of these interventions that contributed to them being better suited to extraverts versus introverts, the study provided support for the idea that some interventions may be more impactful for extraverts while other interventions benefit introverts to a greater extent.

## **5.6. Study Limitations**

This study utilized a convenience sample which comes with substantial limitations. Selection bias limits the data from being generalizable to the TCK population as a whole. It is important to note that the study was only completed by individuals who had access to computers. The participants were individuals known to the researcher, university students, individuals involved in online TCK networks, or individuals who were referred to the study by participants who had completed the survey themselves. Because of this, the study is not generalizable to TCKs who have not remained in contact with peers from their time abroad or are not actively engaged in an online TCK community. The study also utilized a restricted age range and education status in an attempt to make the two groups more similar in demographic make-up. Because of this, the results are only generalizable to TCKs between the ages of 18-35 who have completed a minimum of some university. It is also important to note that participants were given the option of submitting their email address for a chance to win one of four \$50 gift cards as compensation for completing the survey. The monetary incentive likely impacted the sample, influencing individuals to complete the survey when they otherwise would not have.

Additionally, while TCKs are a group of individuals that can be from any nationality, this study only compared TCKs against Americans. While this provides support for significant differences in personality and ethnocultural empathy between TCKs and Americans who have never moved outside of the United States, these claims cannot be generalizable to other nationalities.

Another limitation of this study was that there were statistically significant differences between the non-TCK group and the TCK group on the demographic factors of education level and ethnicity. Although the effect sizes were small for both of these differences, it is important to keep in mind the potential for these differences to impact the study's results as a whole. Additional analyses to examine potential ways demographic factors might have an impact on the outcomes of the measures used in this study could provide further insight and inform future studies.

Also important to note, a post-hoc analysis was conducted to calculate the power for each of the variables for which significant between-group differences were found. This revealed that the study was under powered which is an additional limitation. Although an initial power analysis indicated that a sample size of 128 was necessary assuming a medium effect size, given the effect sizes found, a sample size of a minimum of 596 would be necessary to achieve a power of .80 on the variables of extraversion, openness, and empathic awareness. These variables all obtained a power of .48 given the sample size of 304 participants in this study. Future studies should consider this when recruiting participants and will likely need to obtain a larger sample size than was used in this study.

Another limitation to this study was that all of the assessments were self-report measures. It is possible for individuals to portray themselves in an overly negative or overly positive light depending on how they approach the survey. Additionally, many researchers report concerns that self-report measures, particularly measures assessing global well-being, can be impacted by a variety of factors including individual's current mood, the comparisons they make to others when judging their own well-being (Schwarz & Strack, 1999).

## **5.7. Conclusion**

While many researchers have been operating off of the idea that TCKs function as a unique cultural group, there has not been sufficient research supporting this idea. This study revealed that TCKs do score significantly higher as a group on the personality traits of extraversion and openness, and on empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, and empathic awareness. Now that group differences have been more clearly established, additional research efforts may be put forth to study this population. TCKs are a group of individuals worth continued attention, and one in which participants have been eager to share details about their experiences. Over the course of the data collection of this study, several individuals reached out to the researcher and voiced how interested they were in being informed of the results at the conclusion of the study. Other individuals who did not meet criteria for this particular study due to the age restrictions or not having spent a full two years abroad before the age of 18 contacted the researcher to state that they would be interested in participating in future studies if the criteria was expanded. Some TCKs appear invested in learning more about the trends

within their group and seem excited that research was being done specifically about them. It is the hope of this researcher that this study will become a foundation from which many other researchers will build and continue to grow the field.

## REFERENCES

- Abe, J. A. A. (2018). Personality, well-being, and cognitive-affective styles: A cross-sectional study of adult third culture kids. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 49*(5), 811–830. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022118761116>
- Bradburn, N. M., & Noll, C. E. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*, by Norman M. Bradburn, with the assistance of C. Edward Noll. Aldine Pub. Co.
- Brown, B. (2015) *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Avery.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. (2nd ed.). L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Costanzo, J., & Von Koppenfels, A. K. (2013, May 17). Counting the uncountable: Overseas Americans. *The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/counting-uncountable-overseas-americans>
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*(1), 71-75. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13)
- Eakin, K. B. (1998). *According to my passport, I'm coming home*. Dept. of State, Family Liaison Office.
- Fail, H., Thompson, J., Walker, G., (2004). Belonging, identity and third culture kids: Life histories of former international school students. *Journal of Research in*

*International Education*, 3(3), 319-338.

<http://dx.doi.org.srv-proxy1.library.tamu.edu/10.1177/1475240904047358>

Faleiro, J. (2015, February 11). Well then, where is your home? *India Currents*.

<https://indiacurrents.com/well-then-where-is-your-home/>

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G\*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(2), 175-191.

<https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193146>

Gilbert, K. R., (2008). Loss and grief between and among cultures: The experience of third culture kids. *Illness, Crisis & Loss*, 16(2), 93-109.

<https://doi.org/10.2190/IL.16.2.a>

Hammer, A. L., & Schnell, E. R. (2000). *FIRO-B Technical Guide*. CPP Inc.

Hoer sting, R. C., & Jenkins, S. R. (2011). No place to call home: Cultural homelessness, self-esteem and cross-cultural identities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(1), 17-30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.11.005>

Hsu, H.-Y., Hsu, T.-L., Lee, K., & Wolff, L. (2017). Evaluating the construct validity of Ryff's scales of psychological well-being using exploratory structural equation modeling. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 35(6), 633-638.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282916652756>

John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The Big Five Inventory*. University of California.

- John, O. P., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative big five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 114-158). Guilford Press.
- John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The big five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 102–138). Guilford Press.
- Little, K. M. (2015). *The influence of childhood mobility on adult attachment style in white missionary kids of North American and European nationalities*. (Publication No. 3703848) [Doctoral dissertation, Biola University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- McLachlan, D. A. (2007). Global nomads in an international school: Families in transition. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 6(2), 233-249.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240907078615>
- Mortimer, M. (2010). *Adult third culture kids: Common themes, relational struggles and therapeutic experiences*. (Publication No. 3428760) [Doctoral dissertation, Alliant International University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Oishi, S. (2010). The psychology of residential mobility: Implications for the self, social relationships, and well-being. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(1), 5–21.  
<https://doi-org.srv-proxy1.library.tamu.edu/10.1177/1745691609356781>



Özdikmenli-Demir, G., & Demir, S. (2014). Testing the psychometric properties of the scale of ethnocultural empathy in Turkey. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 47(1), 27–42.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0748175613513805>

Pek, J., & Flora, D. B. (2018). Reporting Effect Sizes in Original Psychological Research: A Discussion and Tutorial. *Psychological Methods*, 2, 208.

Pollock, D. C. & Van Reken R. E. (2001). *Third culture kids: The experience of growing up among worlds*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Ryff, C. D. (2014). Psychological well-being revisited: Advances in the science and practice of eudaimonia. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83(1), 10-28.

<https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263>

Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(4), 719- 727.

<https://doi-org.srv-proxy1.library.tamu.edu/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719>

Schueller, S. (2012). Personality fit and positive interventions: Extraverted and introverted individuals benefit from different happiness increasing strategies. *Psychology*, 3(12A), 1166-1173.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2012.312A172>

Schwarz, N., & Strack, F. (1999). Reports of subjective well-being: Judgmental processes and their methodological implications. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 61–84). Russell Sage Foundation.

- Seifert, T. A., (2005, Spring). *The Ryff scales of psychological well-being*. Center of Inquiry. <https://centerofinquiry.org/uncatgofrized/ryff-scales-of-psychological-well-being/>
- Thompson, M. (2009) Passage of a global nomad: Norma M. McCaig, 1945-2008. *Foreign Service Journal*, 86(2), 36-37.
- Useem, R. H. (1993, January). Third culture kids: Focus of major study. *NewsLinks*. <http://www.tckworld.com/useem/art1.html>
- Useem, R. H., & Cottrell, A. B. (1996). Adult third culture kids. In Smith, C. D. (Ed.) *Strangers at home* (pp. 22–35). Aletheia.
- van Dierendonck, D., Díaz, D., Rodríguez-Carvajal, R., Blanco, A., & Moreno-Jiménez, B. (2008). Ryff's six-factor model of psychological well-being, a Spanish exploration. *Social Indicators Research*, 87(3), 473–479. <https://doi-org.srv-proxy2.library.tamu.edu/10.1007/s11205-007-9174-7>
- Wang, Y.-W., Davidson, M. M., Yakushko, O. F., Savoy, H. B., Tan, J. A., & Bleier, J. K. (2003). The scale of ethnocultural empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 221-234. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.50.2.221>
- Werkman, S., Farley, G. K., Butler, C., & Quayhagen, M. (1981). The psychological effects of moving and living overseas. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 20(3), 645-657. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0002-7138\(09\)61651-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0002-7138(09)61651-4)
- Žižek, S. Š., Treven, S., & Čančer, V. (2015). Employees in Slovenia and their psychological well-being based on Ryff's model of psychological well-

being. *Social Indicators Research*, 121(2), 483–502. <https://doi-org.srv-proxy2.library.tamu.edu/10.1007/s11205-014-0645-3>

## APPENDIX A

### DISSEMINATION OF SURVEY THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS

#### **Emails sent to the following groups:**

tamutck@gmail.com, [info@tckid.com](mailto:info@tckid.com), [tck@lclark.edu](mailto:tck@lclark.edu), TAMU bulk email,

[thirdculturekids@groups.exeterguild.com](mailto:thirdculturekids@groups.exeterguild.com)

#### **Social media post:**

Personal Facebook page

Facebook group ASH Alumni group

Facebook group Third Culture Kids – TCKs Worldwide

Facebook group Third Culture Kid: Jay the TCK

REQUEST REJECTED- Facebook Group Third Culture Kids Everywhere

Facebook group FIGT Research Network

Facebook group Cross Cultural Kids Everywhere

REQUEST REJECTED- Facebook group Tckid: Third Culture Kids

Facebook group Global Nomads and Expatriates Network

Facebook group Military Brats & Third Culture Kids – Our Virtual “Hometown”

Facebook group Survey sharing 2019

Facebook group Thesis/Survey Questionnaire Filling Group

APPENDIX B  
INFORMATION SHEET

***Title of Research Study: Personality and Well-Being of Third Culture Kids***

***Investigator: Dan Brossart***

***Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?***

You are invited to participate in this study because we are trying to learn more about the impact that growing up in a country other than your passport country has on long term psychological well-being and personality traits.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you either lived in a country other than your passport country for a minimum of two years under the age of 18 or you have never lived outside of the United States. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

***Why is this research being done?***

The survey is designed to compare adult third culture kids (ATCKs) with adults who have never lived outside the United States.

***How long will the research last?***

It will take about 15-20 minutes.

***What happens if I say “Yes, I want to be in this research”?***

If you decide to participate, please do the following: complete the following questions in the survey.

***What happens if I do not want to be in this research?***

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can decide not to participate in this research and it will not be held against you. You can leave the study at any time.

***Is there any way being in this study could harm me?***

There are no sensitive questions in this survey that should cause discomfort. However, you can skip any question you do not wish to answer or exit the survey at any point.

***What happens to the information collected for the research?***

You may view the survey host’s confidentiality policy at <https://www.qualtrics.com/security-statement/>

The results of the research study may be published but no one will be able to identify you.

If you choose to submit your email at the conclusion of the survey for a chance to win one of four \$50 gift cards, it will be recorded on a separate submission form and will not be associated with your answers on the survey items. There will be no way to link participant email addresses with an individual's survey responses.

***Who can I talk to?***

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact the primary investigator (Dan Brossart) at [brossart@tamu.edu](mailto:brossart@tamu.edu) or the study coordinator (Alexandra McCammon) at [abulovas@tamu.edu](mailto:abulovas@tamu.edu) if you have questions or concerns.

You may also contact the Human Research Protection Program at Texas A&M University (which is a group of people who review the research to protect your rights) by phone at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636, or by email at [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu) for:

- additional help with any questions about the research
- voicing concerns or complaints about the research
- obtaining answers to questions about your rights as a research participant
- concerns in the event the research staff could not be reached
- the desire to talk to someone other than the research staff

If you want a copy of this consent for your records, you can print it from the screen.

- If you wish to participate, please click the “**I Agree**” button and you will be taken to the survey.
  
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, please select “**I Disagree**” or select **X** in the corner of your browser.

## APPENDIX C

### DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

***Directions: Please provide the following information***

Age

Gender

Current Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Living with partner
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- High school/equivalent or less
- Some university
- University graduate
- Masters degree or equivalent
- Doctorate

How long did you live outside of your passport country?

- 2+ years
- Less than 2 years
- Never

In what countries do you hold citizenship?

How many language(s) did you speak fluently before age 18?

In what country were you born?

In what country (or state if you are in the US) do you currently reside?

How old were you when you first moved to another country (if applicable)?

Please list all countries you lived in prior to age 18.

Please specify your ethnicity. Select all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Black/African American
- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern/Arab American
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other

Your father's ethnicity. Select all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Black/African American

- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern/Arab American
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other

Your mother's ethnicity. Select all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Black/African American
- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern/Arab American
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other



APPENDIX D

PROFILE PLOTS FOR INTERACTION EFFECT OF GENDER AND TCK-STATUS

Figure 1

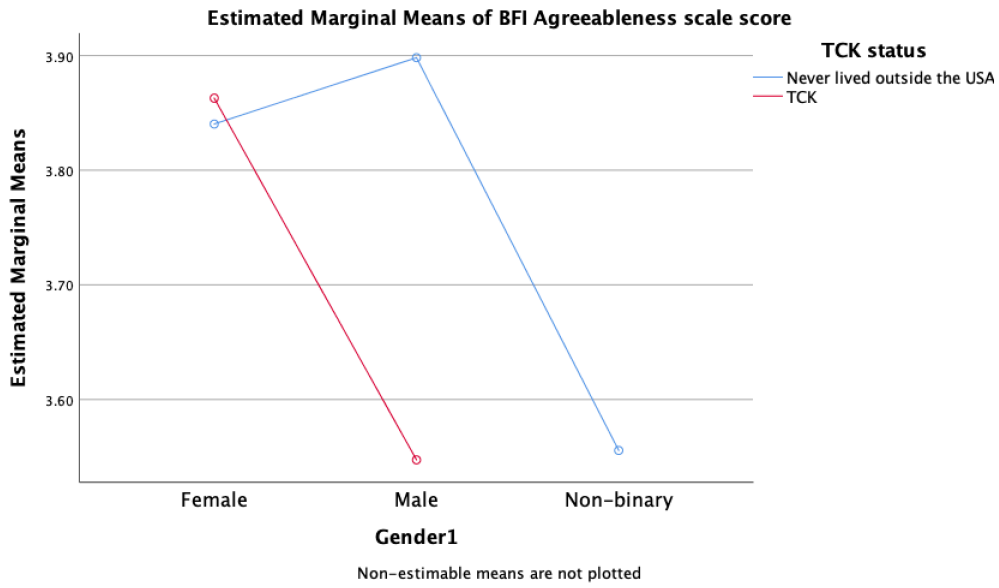


Figure 2

