



UNIVERSITY OF PADUA

Department of General Psychology

Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialisation

Bachelor's Degree Course in Psychological Science

Final Thesis

**Psychological Aspect of Being a Third Culture Individual and the Outcome of
Multicultural Identity in Terms of Mental Health and Interpersonal Relationships**

Supervisor

Professor Paola Rigo

Candidate: Ekin Gumus

Student ID Number: 1221600

Academic Year 2021/2022

Psychological Aspect of Being a Third Culture Individual and the Outcome of Multicultural Identity in Terms of Mental Health and Interpersonal Relationships

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Bachelor's degree in Psychological Science.

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Bachelor's degree in Psychological Science.

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Ekin Gumus

Introduction

The present work aims at describing, Psychological Aspect of Being a Third Culture Individual and the Outcome of Multicultural Identity in Terms of Mental Health and Interpersonal Relationships. This thesis is interpreting between research bibliography on the mentioned fields and the data that I collected from my research. In the introduction to this paper, disciplines other than psychology such as cultural anthropology have been used to explain concepts such as migration, mobility and cultural identity.

Chapter 1

1.1 Definition of Third Culture Kid/Individual

The Third Culture Kids (TCK) also known as Third Culture Individuals are people who were raised in a culture other than their parents' or the culture of their country of nationality, and who spent a major portion of their child development years in a foreign setting. TCKs migrate between cultures before having the chance to completely develop their cultural and personal identity (Moore & Barker, 2012). The first culture of such individuals refers to the culture of the country from which the parents originated, the second culture refers to the culture in which the family currently resides, and the third culture refers to the distinct cultural ties shared by all individuals of the third culture who have no connection to the first two cultures.

1.2 Origin of The Term:

The term "third culture kid" was first coined by researchers John and Ruth Useem in the 1950s, who used it to describe the children of American citizens working and living abroad. Ruth Useem first used the term after her second year-long visit to India with her fellow sociologist/anthropologist husband and three children.

Useem et al. (1963) depicted individuals who have undergone such an experience as having distinct standards of interpersonal behavior, work-related norms, codes of lifestyle and perspectives, and communication. This creates a new cultural group that does not fall into their home or host culture, but rather shares a culture with all other TCKs. In 1993 she wrote: *"In summarizing that which we had observed in our cross-cultural encounters, we began to use the term "third culture" as a generic term to cover the styles of life created, shared, and learned by persons who are in the process of relating their societies, or sections thereof, to each other. The term "Third Culture Kids" or TCKs was coined to refer to the children who accompany their parents into another society."*

Kay Branaman Eakin, the former Education Counselor for the United States Department of State, worked with American families returning to the United States after having lived abroad. She described a TCK as *"someone who, as a child, has spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than his or her own, thus integrating elements of those cultures and their own birth culture, into a third culture."* (Eakin, 1998)

In 1984, author and researcher Norma McCaig used the term "global nomad", which is synonymous with TCK, but was used in order to take into account that the child's situation was as a result of a parent or parents' career or life choice(s).

1.3 How to Be A Society: From Yesterday to Today's Mobility

Humans tend to categorize their social world as a way to reduce chaos (Turner, 1982). Social classifications may be based on gender, age, group, race, nationality, and a variety of other individual traits. People are able to identify a label with which to characterize their experiences as well as a potential community to which they can belong through categorization and the identification that results with social-cultural groups. Social categorization, or the way we categorize other people and ourselves, can have an impact on our ideas, attitudes, sentiments, and actions. (Hogg, 1996; Turner, 1982).

The ecological systems model developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 can be used to explain the various social strata and groups that people may be a part of. On a small scale, common experiences, including those guided by family and friendships, can bring communities together. On a bigger scale, organizations might form at the institutional level, like becoming a part of a specific school, formal activity group, temple, or church. Being a member of an ethnic group, race, religion, or country can be connected to a broader context and influence one's perception of belonging to a culture.

Childhood experiences have an importance on someone's consolidation of belonging to a group and identity with social, ethnic and cultural groups. (Vygotsky, 1986; Erikson, 1963; Phinney, 1990; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999) As a child, one learns to understand the world around him/her and learns important social rules and behaviors that are appropriate for survival in his/her environment. However, when a person has conflicting information about their environment, such as from cross-cultural experiences, a multicultural environment, or from being born into a multi-ethnic or multi-racial family, they may find it difficult to establish a strong sense of their cultural, ethnic, or racial identity (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). With the current and future possible popularity of internationality and globalization, it is more common for children to spend their developmental years in a multicultural environment especially outside of their passport country since international mobility is more frequent compared to before World War II (WWII). Before WWII most children living abroad were children of British families, mostly they were members of families who were governmental workers, such as military and diplomats, however with a world

globalization trend it's not only limited to the British nation anymore. According to the ISC Research Data, there were a total of 7,655 registered international schools worldwide. That number has since risen to 12,373 registered international schools in July 2021. The number of students attending international schools has also increased from 3.54 million to 5.68 million since 2011. Most of the students are children of expats and local elites who have a high possibility of coming from multi-racial/ethnic and multilingual families and high possibility to pursue their lives abroad in future. Increasing global mobility and interest for diversity makes Third Culture Kid (TCK) phenomenon even more visible and common day by day. Following pages concentrate on pros and cons of this phenomenon, what cultural homelessness brings to this group of people in their adult lives.

Third culture kids spend their development years in several different countries and there is no stability and permanence in any of these countries, because of the mobility that they are exposed to, they are more likely to identify with multiple cultures without having deep connection and sense of belonging to any of them. They are immigrants since the definition of immigrant is a *person living in a country other than that of his or her birth*, however not every immigrant is TCK. In most of the scenarios children of immigrants are fully adapted to their country of birth while they experience difficulties when they are visiting their parents' country of origin. There is no such mobility in their developmental years since the family settled down in one country. There are overlaps in their experiences, such as being 'minority' in the country of residence

1.4. Psychological Impact of The TCK Phenomena

Cross cultural understanding, TCKs are aware that there are multiple perspectives on the events they encounter or are exposed to. When TCKs return to a culture where belief systems are uniform, however, this can also provide difficulties because an enlarged worldview may be viewed as disrespectful and useless (Lyttle, Barker, Cornwell, 2011), which will end up as conflict between current society and the individual. Culturally homeless individuals live in a framework that may include experiences, feelings, and thoughts that do not belong to any specific cultural reference group (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Not belonging to and not being accepted by any group moves them consistently into out-groups, "*always a minority wherever they go*" (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999, p. 12). Because third culture individuals lack an ethnic enclave or a community with which to identify, they lack a cultural home. They may experience a strong yearning to "go home,"

but home is nowhere (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). TCKs show a strong desire to find a cultural home (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Creating a sense of commitment and identification to a culture is one of the difficulties faced by third culture individuals. These elements, which have a significant impact on one's identity and self-esteem, are particularly observable in TCKs. Compared to monocultural children, TCK have been found to have greater levels of general adjustment. Cultural flexibility is also advantageous, yet it may also be difficult when there is an imbalance of cultures. According to Tracy Tokuhama-Espinosa, language exposure is the main advantage.

1.5. Language and Third Culture Individuals

The majority of TCKs are expected to speak English, and some nations demand that the expatriate families they host are fluent in the language. This is primarily a result of English being the primary language of instruction in most foreign schools. Families frequently seek for schools that speak their shared primary languages and, preferably, one that follows their own educational system. Numerous nations have American, French, British, German, and "International Schools," which frequently adhere to one of the three International Baccalaureate curriculum. These will be populated by expatriates' children and some children of the local upper middle class. They do this in an effort to preserve language stability and to prevent linguistic difficulties from causing their children to fall behind. Families frequently choose to enroll their children in English-speaking schools when their native language is not an option. They do this because their children are more likely to have prior exposure to English than other foreign languages, and because they believe that immersing their children in English will benefit them linguistically and culturally when they are adults. Due to this, TCKs who do not speak English as a first language may have a very different experience than TCKs for whom English is a native language. According to research on TCKs from countries including Japan, Denmark, Italy, Germany, the United States, and Africa, they have more in common with other TCKs than with their own peer group from their own country. (Hylmö, 2002)

1.6. TCK and Current Understanding of Typical Psychology

Context is important in any mental health professional practice. Within the TCK community, moving every few years, not feeling at home in a passport country, and a multiplicity in identity are within a typical range (Pollock & Van Reken, 2017); for non-TCKs, this may be atypical. It's important that professionals understand this foundational

knowledge in order to not misdiagnose, incorrectly formulate, or judge/hinder TCK's mental health.

Chapter 2

2.1 Aims and Objectives

Fear benefits from cognitive and perceptual priority which stems from its evolutionary role in survival functions. Throughout the history of the world, mankind feared the different from himself, along with ignorance this fear turned into prejudice, and over time prejudice turned into brutality. Mankind imprisoned, enslaved, and murdered those who were different from themselves. After The Second World War (WW2) this tendency moved in the opposite direction due to the needs and wants of society, with worldwide waves of immigration people started to interact with those who were different from themselves and after a certain time they became integrated. Europe or Northern America of today is the best living example to observe this integration. These changes in history led me to an inquiry into people's cultural identity, values and how others perceive that identity.

Thanks to the countries I have lived and traveled to, I had a chance to meet with many different cultures and ways of living and I observed how these culture-based values shape people's perceptions on concepts such as good/bad, legal/illegal or kind/rude. While I was attending schools abroad during my childhood and later on as a teenager, an exception caught my eye, and this is how I came across and started to identify with the term Third Culture Kid (TCK). There were some observable differences between people who got exposed to international mobility during the development years (0-19) and those who were raised in monocultural settings. Being able to easily understand different lifestyles, to resolve complex culture-based conflicts without even having a strong connection with the geography, religion or language where the conflict occurs, those were some common features of TCKs that caught my attention. Our enjoyment and interest in the diversity of all kinds, the multiple languages that we can speak, and the different geographies we live in have made us true citizens of the world or in the idiom of the new media, *the prototype citizens of the future*, but all these people I met had a hard time answering the same questions just like me; 'Where are you from?' Or even more difficult one 'Where is home?'

'How did we come from completely different parts of the world, different nationalities, races, and religions, but have very similar political opinions, mental states, and ways of communicating with others?', 'After many years of not being accepted by any groups and marginalized during our early experiences; as an adult do we stop looking for

a home and create highly individualistic ways of living? If that's the case how do we overcome the lack of this basic yet complex psychological need?'

According to my observations and the literature review, TCKs lack of sense of belongingness in a particular country and culture, however, on the other hand, having a strong understanding of individual differences, cultural awareness and the ability to analyze and adapt to different cultures, all this made me question the capacity of third culture individuals to establish a good relationship.

2.2 Methods

A quantitative, emic approach research design was selected for this study to discover this psychological phenomenon with numerical comparisons and statistical analysis. In addition to this, the qualitative research approach was used in the first phase of the study to observe and contain the demographic and personal data of the participants.

2.2.1 Participants

The data of the participants who did not complete the survey, although initially the number of participants was higher, was eliminated. As a final, participants were 38 (27 female, 8 male and 3 other) TCK/Individuals who volunteered to participate in this study. Individual's ages ranged from 18 to 30 with a mean of 21.53 (SD= 3.06).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Collection of Demographic Data

As the first part of the data collection, an online structured interview was published where participants first agreed to share their personal data with a consent form which took place on the first page, and later on, participants provided information about their background. All respondents indicated their sex, age, passport country, birth country, country of current residence, the countries where they spent their development years (ages of 0-19), a brief summary of their reasons for mobility, number of siblings, and their age, their current status of the relationship, participants also rate their sense of belonging to each country that they lived.

During the second part of the study, The ESS Human Value Scale and Young Adult Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire were used to answer the questions contained in the hypothesis of the thesis, which is mentioned in 2.1 with more details.

2.3.2 The Human Value Scale (ESS)

The scale was designed by Shalom H. Schwartz (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) to classify respondents according to their basic value orientations. The ESS questionnaire is a research instrument which recognizes ten universal values, which can be organized in four higher-order groups. Each of the ten universal values has a central goal that is the underlying motivator. (Schwartz, Shalom H. ,2012). The ESS is a likert scale style 21-item questionnaire with 1 to 6 point response formats. Ranging from very much like me (1) to not like me at all (6).

This is how Shalom H. Schwartz explains the summary of the Human Value Scale (ESS) model on (Schwartz, Shalom H., 2012) *'This article presents an overview of the Schwartz theory of basic human values. It discusses the nature of values and spells out the features that are common to all values and what distinguishes one value from another. The theory identifies ten basic personal values that are recognized across cultures and explains where they come from. At the heart of the theory is the idea that values form a circular structure that reflects the motivations each value expresses. This circular structure that captures the conflicts and compatibility among the ten values is apparently culturally universal. The article elucidates the psychological principles that give rise to it. Next, it presents the two major methods developed to measure the basic values, the Schwartz Value Survey and the Portrait Values Questionnaire. Findings from 82 countries, based on these and other methods, provide evidence for the validity of the theory across cultures. The findings reveal substantial differences in the value priorities of individuals. Surprisingly, however, the average value priorities of most societal groups exhibit a similar hierarchical order whose existence the article explains.'*

Definition of Value: The value serves as a benchmark or reference. Values guide the choice or assessment of actions, policies, people, and events. People judge what is good or bad, legitimate or illegal, and worth doing or avoiding, based on the possible consequences of values. However, the impact of values on everyday decision making is rarely realized. Values become conscious when a person's actions and judgments have conflicting effects on different values of one value. Schwartz defines each of the ten values in terms of the broad goal it expresses, notes its grounding in universal requirements, and refers to related value concepts. To make the meaning of each value more concrete and explicit, he listed in parentheses the set of value items included in the

first survey instrument to measure each value. Some important value items (e.g., self-respect) have multiple meanings; they express the motivational goals of more than one value. These items are listed in brackets.

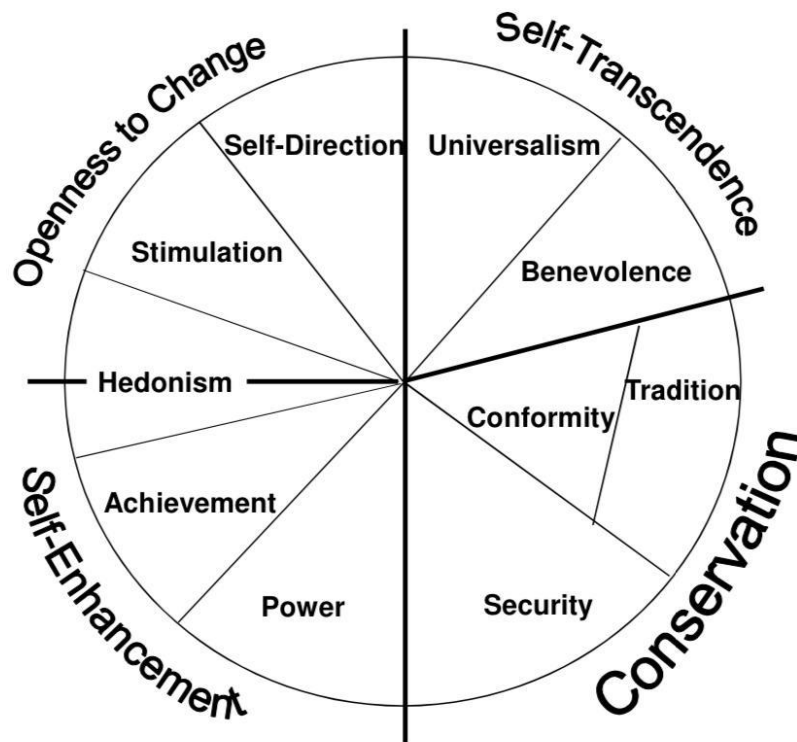


Figure 1. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value

Description of the ten broad personal values and their defining goals:

Self-Direction: Defining goal: independent thought and action--choosing, creating, exploring. Self-direction derives from organismic needs for control and mastery (e.g., Bandura, 1977; Deci, 1975) and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence (e.g., Kluckhohn, 1951; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). (creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, curious, independent) [self-respect, intelligent, privacy]

Stimulation: Defining goal: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.

Stimulation values derive from the organismic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation (e.g., Berlyne, 1960). This need probably relates to the needs underlying self-direction values (cf. Deci, 1975). (a varied life, an exciting life, daring)

Hedonism: Defining goal: pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself.

Hedonism values derive from organismic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them. Theorists from many disciplines (e.g., Freud, 1933; Williams, 1968) mention hedonism. (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgent)¹

Achievement: Defining goal: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Competent performance that generates resources is necessary for individuals to survive and for groups and institutions to reach their objectives. As defined here, achievement values emphasize demonstrating competence in terms of prevailing cultural standards, thereby obtaining social approval. (ambitious, successful, capable, influential) [intelligent, self-respect, social recognition]²

Power: Defining goal: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources. The functioning of social institutions apparently requires some degree of status differentiation (Parsons, 1951). A dominance/submission dimension emerges in most empirical analyses of interpersonal relations both within and across cultures (Lonner, 1980). To justify this fact of social life and to motivate group members to accept it, groups must treat power as a value. Power values may also be transformations of individual needs for dominance and control. Value analysts have mentioned power values as well (e.g., Allport, 1961). (authority, wealth, social power) [preserving my public image, social recognition] Both power and achievement values focus on social esteem. However, achievement values (e.g., ambitious) emphasize the active demonstration of successful performance in concrete interaction, whereas power values (e.g., authority, wealth) emphasize the attainment or preservation of a dominant position within the more general social system.

Security: Defining goal: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. Security values derive from basic individual and group requirements (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951; Maslow, 1965). Some security values serve primarily individual interests (e.g., clean), others wider group interests (e.g., national security). Even the latter, however, express, to a significant degree, the goal of security for self or those with whom one identifies. (social order, family security, national security, clean, reciprocation of favors) [healthy, moderate, sense of belonging]

Conformity: Defining goal: restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. Conformity values derive from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. As I define them, conformity values

emphasize self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with close others. (obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honoring parents and elders) [loyal, responsible]

Tradition: Defining goal: respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides. Groups everywhere develop practices, symbols, ideas, and beliefs that represent their shared experience and fate. These become sanctioned as valued group customs and traditions. They symbolize the group's solidarity, express its unique worth, and contribute to its survival (Durkheim, 1912/1954; Parsons, 1951). They often take the form of religious rites, beliefs, and norms of behavior. (respect for tradition, humble, devout, accepting my portion in life) [moderate, spiritual life]

Tradition and conformity values are especially close motivationally; they share the goal of subordinating the self to socially imposed expectations. They differ primarily in the objects to which one subordinates the self. Conformity entails subordination to persons with whom one frequently interacts—parents, teachers, and bosses. Tradition entails subordination to more abstract objects—religious and cultural customs and ideas. As a corollary, conformity values exhort responsiveness to current, possibly changing expectations. Tradition values demand responsiveness to immutable expectations from the past.

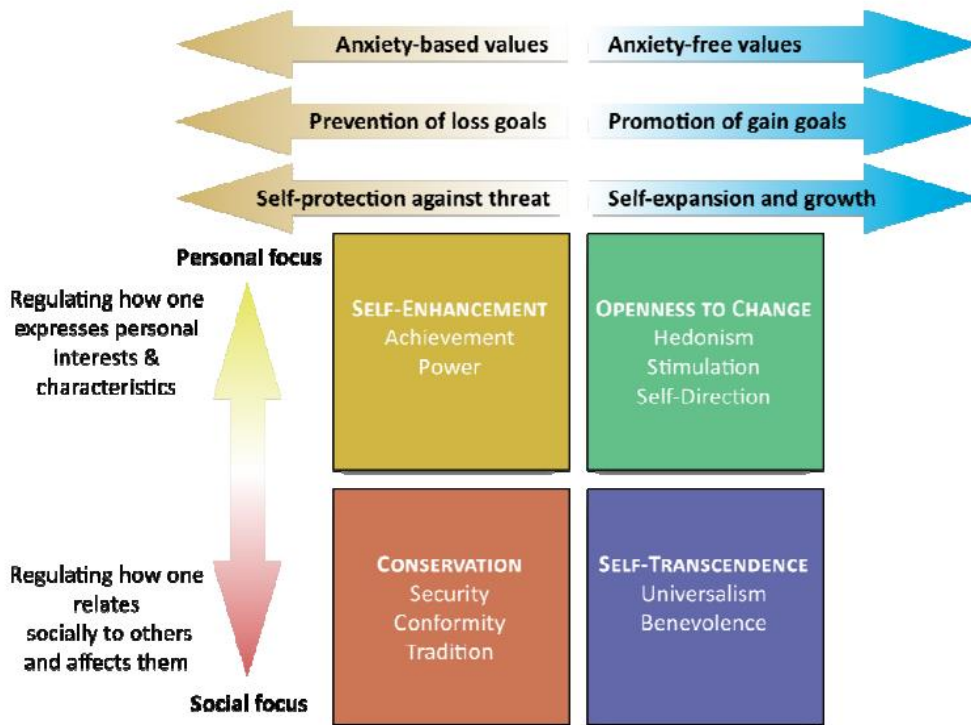
Benevolence: Defining goal: preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group'). Benevolence values derive from the basic requirement for smooth group functioning (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951) and from the organismic need for affiliation (cf. Maslow, 1965). Most critical are relations within the family and other primary groups. Benevolence values emphasize voluntary concern for others' welfare. (helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love) [sense of belonging, meaning in life, a spiritual life]. Benevolence and conformity values both promote cooperative and supportive social relations. However, benevolence values provide an internalized motivational base for such behavior. In contrast, conformity values promote cooperation in order to avoid negative outcomes for self. Both values may motivate the same helpful act, separately or together.

Universalism: Defining goal: understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. This contrasts with the in-group focus of benevolence values. Universalism values derive from survival needs of individuals and groups. But people do not recognize these needs until they encounter others beyond the extended primary group and until they become aware of the scarcity of natural resources. People may then realize that failure to accept others who are different and treat them

justly will lead to life-threatening strife. They may also realize that failure to protect the natural environment will lead to the destruction of the resources on which life depends. Universalism combines two subtypes of concern—for the welfare of those in the larger society and world and for nature (broadminded, social justice, equality, world at peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, protecting the environment) [inner harmony, a spiritual life] An early version of the value theory (Schwartz, 1992) raised the possibility that spirituality might constitute another near-universal value. The defining goal of spiritual values is meaning, coherence, and inner harmony through transcending everyday reality. If finding ultimate meaning is a basic human need, then spirituality might be a distinct value found in all societies. The value survey therefore included possible markers for spirituality, gleaned from widely varied sources (a spiritual life, meaning in life, inner harmony, detachment, unity with nature, accepting my portion in life, devout). However, spirituality did not demonstrate a consistent meaning across cultures. In the absence of a consistent cross-cultural meaning, spirituality was dropped from the theory despite its potential importance in many societies.

¹Although happiness is an important value, it is not included because people achieve it through attaining whatever outcomes they value (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

²Achievement values differ from McClelland's (1961) achievement motivation. Achievement motivation concerns meeting internal standards of excellence. It is expressed in self-direction values.



Adapted from: Schwartz, S. H. (2006). Les valeurs de base de la personne: Théorie, mesures et applications [Basic human values: Theory, measurement, and applications]. *Revue française de sociologie*, 42, 249-288.

Figure 2. Dynamic underpinnings of the universal value structure

2.3.3 Young Adult Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire

ICQ (Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire) is a 40-item likert scale questionnaire with 1 to 5 response formats. Ranging from poor (1) to extremely good (5) designed to assess five domains of interpersonal competence: (a) initiating relationships, (b) disclosing personal information, (c) asserting displeasure with others, (d) providing emotional support and advice, and (e) managing interpersonal conflict. **Interpersonal Competence:** People's ability to engage, interact, and work together with others is aided by your interpersonal competencies. Empathy, effective listening, and emotional intelligence are typical representations of interpersonal competencies.

Chapter 3

3.1 Qualitative Analysis and Results of Structured Interview

3.1.1 Country of Origin/Birth/Residence

The survey has participants from different parts of the world, they are; Latvia, Iran, Turkey, Chile, Italy, Pakistan, Sweden, Lebanon, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Guatemala, Jordan, Egypt, South Africa, The Netherlands, Venezuela, Eritrea, Cape Verde, Portugal, France, United States, India, Germany, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Argentina, Costa Rica, Cameroun, Kuwait, Morocco, Ukraine, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Israel, Australia, Canada and Hungary.

Some participants have dual or more citizenship. While some of the participants have settled in a country, for now, some of them continue their lives by residing in a few countries throughout the year.

With the exception of the UAE and Qatar, we can observe that almost every participant migrated from nations with high collectivist cultures to those with strong individual cultures. Taking a different perspective, we could say that the mobility took place from the eastern to the western globe.

3.1.2 Reason of Mobility

Unsurprisingly, many respondents to the online survey moved due to their families jobs. Within this generic description, diplomatic professions, military (especially for US participants) higher management and engineering being the most common. Some of the participants mentioned that the reason for their families to move was to escape from security, economy and cultural conflict problems in their home/passport country. However, this is not the only reason for the mobility, some participants said that their families (particularly participants of European origin) left their passport country to satisfy their desires, such as the desire to explore. A small part of the participants were exposed to mobility during their childhood due to their refugee status because their lives were in danger in their home country.

3.2 Descriptives of Questionnaires

What stands out in this table 1 is that participants scored quite high on questions about the value of 'power' compared to other values. Taking into account the fact that the social-economic class of the participants is typically higher compared to the general population (since organizations that send their employees abroad will want to spend their investment on highly qualified employees, and considering that moving between countries in every few years will cost more than having stability in a particular country) the participants' desire to maintain the privileges from their families is understandable. Definition of 'Power' can be found in 2.3.2 *The Human Value Scale (ESS)*.

	M	S.D
<i>Young Adult Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ)</i>		
<i>Initiation</i>	3,266447368	0,870718027
<i>Negative Assertion</i>	3,947368421	0,581245057
<i>Disclosure</i>	3,398026316	0,744561082
<i>Emotional Support</i>	2,960526316	0,78910107
<i>Conflict Management</i>	3,559210526	0,614812382
<i>The Human Value Scale (ESS)</i>		
<i>Self-Direction</i>	2,171052632	1,027748662
<i>Power</i>	4,131578947	0,731654672
<i>Universalism</i>	1,903508772	0,692093589
<i>Achievement</i>	1,631578947	0,70830278
<i>Security</i>	2,789473684	1,098034002
<i>Stimulation</i>	2,539473684	1,363922261
<i>Conformity</i>	3,578947368	1,407341259
<i>Tradition</i>	3,618421053	1,108781993
<i>Hedonism</i>	2,486842105	1,18369872
<i>Benevolence</i>	1,828947368	0,845081091

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the questionnaires that have been used in the research

3.3 Results and Discussions

In Table 2, 'Conformity' is highlighted. Conformity values emphasize self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with closely-bonded individuals. Intercultural sensitivity that TCKs gain during certain ages of development can be an eligible explanation for this value. While each TCK is different, research indicates that TCKs tend to have delayed identity development (Schaetti, 2000). The development of identity is considered to be an attempt at consolidating our sense of who we are (Fail et al., 2004), as this might be a coping strategy in order to function in everyday life. Considering that the P value is lower than 0.05 in country 3, this indicates the hypothesis cannot be rejected. We could say that participants have greater conformity in the current country that they are a resident of and lower conformity in the country of birth and/or previous countries.

Other interesting points in this table are the low traditionality of each country and an even lower score of traditionality in the birth country

Correlation Matrix														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Country_1	—													
2 Country_2	-0.079	—												
3 Country_3	0.046	-0.049	—											
4 Country_4	-0.237	0.192	0.203	—										
5 HVS_Self-Direction	0.316	0.138	-0.229	0.312	—									
6 HVS_Power	0.285	-0.3	0.098	-0.289	-0.04	—								
7 HVS_Universalism	0.022	0.048	0.123	0.111	0.245	-0.233	—							
8 HVS_Achievement	-0.149	-0.171	-0.216	-0.416	0.04	0.408 *	-0.373 *	—						
9 HVS_Security	0.14	-0.018	0.059	0.055	-0.066	0.288	0.078	0.13	—					
10 HVS_Stimulation	-0.046	-0.086	-0.147	-0.029	0.294	-0.054	0.232	-0.028	-0.309	—				
11 HVS_Conformity	-0.019	-0.217	0.468 *	-0.256	-0.423 **	0.283	0.117	-0.002	0.506 **	-0.489 **	—			
12 HVS_Tradition	-0.111	-0.192	0.032	0.491	-0.081	-0.017	0.339 *	-0.19	0.326 *	-0.11	0.391 *	—		
13 HVS_Hedonism	0.27	-0.236	-0.085	0.086	0.417 **	0.344 *	-0.017	0.311	0.088	0.528 ***	-0.249	-0.072	—	
14 HVS_Benevolence	0.049	-0.223	0.25	0.396	-0.013	-0.001	0.366 *	-0.204	0.443 **	-0.029	0.328 *	0.565 ***	0.145	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 2. Correlation between The ESS Human Value Scale and sense of belonging to countries that participants lived

What stands out in Table 3 is “disclosure.” The term “disclosure” refers to making previously not known/private information available. According to the research presented, TCKs have high disclosure with others. For example, ‘revealing something intimate about yourself while talking with someone you're just getting to know,’ ‘confiding in a new friend/date and letting him or her see your softer, more sensitive side,’ or ‘telling a close companion things about yourself that you're ashamed of.’ This can be explained in different ways, for example, if we consider the fact that most third culture individuals were not able to speak their mother tongue while growing up in foreign settings, where they were unfamiliar with the local way of communication, it is understandable that these

individuals learned and follow a communication style in a way that reflects their thoughts as directly as possible to see and meet their needs from others as a kid, such as teachers in school.

Overall it seems like TCKs have a strong capacity to share and build meaningful connections.

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Country_1	—								
2 Country_2	-0.079	—							
3 Country_3	0.046	-0.049	—						
4 Country_4	-0.237	0.192	0.203	—					
5 YAICQ_Initiation	-0.182	0.012	0.399	0.02	—				
6 YAICQ_Negative_Assertion	-0.04	0.07	-0.135	-0.185	0.181	—			
7 YAICQ_Disclosure	-0.198	0.126	0.298	-0.581 *	0.344 *	0.098	—		
8 YAICQ_Emoional_Support	-0.006	-0.028	0.395	0.187	0.349 *	0.07	0.102	—	
9 YAICQ_Conflict_Management	-0.158	0.202	-0.082	-0.308	0.171	0.658 ***	0.214	0.156	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 3. Correlation between Young Adult Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire and sense of belonging to countries that participants lived. Country 1= Country of birth; Country 2= Previous country that participants have lived; Country 3/4= Country of current residence

3.3 Conclusions

I think that this study also contributes to the uniqueness of the TCK phenomenon. TCKs often have a different understanding of the world. They come from a multicultural perspective that is not consistent with our current understanding of culture; TCKs do not belong to a single geographical location, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, or religion. This experience leads to TCKs making their own meaning of common concepts like 'belonging' (Moore&Barker, 2012,).

The strength of the TCK may have an impact on the future of psychological science. TCKs have a lot of strengths to offer that can be utilized in therapy. While TCKs have their individual differences, generally speaking, TCKs are adaptable, understanding of various perspectives/open-minded, resilient, and have cultural fluency (Abe, 2018). These skills can be leaned into to promote healthy psychological well-being.

Key words: Third culture kids, Multicultural identity, Attachment, Human value, Immigration, Mobility, Development years, TCK, Social cognition, Emotion

Bibliography

Al-Shawaf, Laith & Conroy-Beam, Daniel & Asao, Kelly & Buss, David. (2015). Human Emotions: An Evolutionary Psychological Perspective. *Emotion Review*.

Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 51, 269–290.

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

Bilsky, W., Janik, M., & Schwartz, S. H. (2011). The structural organization of human values – Evidence from three rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42, 759-776.

ISC Research. Retrieved 2022-01-23 (Retrieved on <https://iscresearch.com/data/>)

Eakin, K. B. (1998). According to my passport, I'm coming home. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Family Liaison Office.

Fail, Helen. (2004). Belonging, identity and Third Culture Kids: Life histories of former international school students. *Journal of Research in International Education*. 3. 319-338.

Fernandez, Alberto & Abe, Jennifer. (2018). Bias in cross-cultural neuropsychological testing: problems and possible solutions. *Culture & Brain*

Hylmö, Annika (2002). Other Expatriate Adolescents: A Postmodern Approach to Understanding Expatriate Adolescents Among Non-U.S. Children, in 'Military Brats and Other Global Nomads', M. Ender, ed

Lyttle, A.D.; Barker, G.G.; Cornwell, T.L. (2011). "Adept through adaptation: Third culture individuals' interpersonal sensitivity". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 35 (5): 686–694.

McCaig, N. (1994, September). Growing up with a world view. *Foreign Service Journal*, 32–41.

Melles, Beth & Schwartz, Jonathan. (2013). Does the third culture kid experience predict levels of prejudice?. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 37. 260–267.

Moore, A.M.; Barker, G.G. (2012). "Confused or multicultural: Third culture individuals' cultural identity". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 36 (4): 553–562.

Reken, R.E., Pollock, D.C., Pollock, M.V. (2017). Third Culture Kids 3rd Edition: Growing up among worlds. *Mobius*

Schaetti, B. F. (2000). *Global nomad identity: Hypothesizing a developmental model*. The Union Institute.

Schwartz, Shalom. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture.

Schwartz, Shalom H. (1992). "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology Volume 25*, Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, vol. 25, Elsevier, pp. 1–65.

Useem, J.; Useem, R. (1967). "The interfaces of a binational third culture: A study of the American community in India". *Journal of Social Issues*. **23** (1): 130–143