Relationship between Cultural Homelessness of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and their Psychological Well-Being

Moderating Effect of Emotional Clarity

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Order of Presentation

• Part 1. Introduction
• Part 2. Research Questions
• Part 3. Methods
• Part 4. Results
• Part 5. Discussion
Globalization

Korea, Visibly more diverse, a multicultural society
Part 1. Introduction
Statement of Purpose

Globalization

Korean on the outside,

Very cross-cultural on the inside,

An addition to invisible diversity
Part 1. Introduction

Statement of Purpose

Third Culture Kids

- Individuals who have spent a significant amount of time living outside their passport culture during their formative years, usually due to their parents’ expatriate work (Gilbert, 2008; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; Useem & Cottrell, 1996) or study abroad.

‘home’ culture
(1st culture)

TCK’s own subculture
(3rd culture)

‘host’ culture
(2nd culture)

(Useem, 1963)
Returnee students who had gone abroad for study
- Children of missionaries, diplomats, multinational company employees

Understanding the unique challenges of these often-neglected cross-cultural individuals is becoming an important national agenda!
Part 1. Introduction
Statement of Purpose

Third Culture Kids

1. Actual cross-cultural living
2. High mobility

- Without a sense of full ownership of any known culture (Gilbert, 2008)
- Live through a “hidden immigrant” experience (Barringer, 2000)
- Struggle with prolonged adolescence
- Feelings of rootlessness
- Unresolved grief
- Inability to make commitments

...all possible barriers in attaining a sense of well-being in life
Several in Korea have investigated into the challenges of TCKs from the acculturative stress perspective (Oh et al., 2010; Yoon, 2009; Chae, 2009; Lee & Lee, 2009; Choi, 2009).

But acculturation model (Berry, 1990) had been originally developed from a condition where two different cultures (dominant vs. non-dominant groups) come into contact.

TCKs may have a more fundamental problem, namely, a lack of sense of belonging to a culture.
A framework proposed by Vivero and Jenkins (1999)

- Lack of a cultural group
- Emotional detachment from any cultural group
- A need for a cultural home

- Positive feelings about differences
- Being multilingual
- Self-reported cross-cultural competence

- Not belonging any group
- Feeling alone in one’s differences
- Feeling disoriented by the unlabeled experiences attendant on frequent code-switching
CH can be problematic because it is associated with:

- low self-esteem (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Navarrette & Jenkins, 2011)
- Sensing less perceived control over one’s life (Hogg & Abrams, 1999)
- Unmet needs for belonging and attachment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)

Clinical literatures and qualitative studies say CH leads to:

- Emotional and social confusion, which, if internalized may result in self-blame and shame (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999)
- Pervasive feelings of being different and “wrong”
- Living in a “perpetual liminal” (Gilbert, 2008) and “marginalized” state between two or more cultures (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999)
If TCKs are naturally exposed to the risk of CH due to the uniqueness that makes them who they are, what factors can help alleviate their hardship?
Two factors that can be dealt within counseling interventions:

1. Acceptance of one’s cross-cultural identity
2. Understanding one’s emotional experience

Reduce Cultural Homelessness

Increase Emotional Clarity
CH individuals with mental health issues tend to struggle with confused emotional experience (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999)
- Much difficulty articulating or correctly labeling feelings

TCKs in Korea report feeling that they need to hide their unique cross-cultural experiences to themselves in order to fit well in school
- Their emotional experiences are frequently invalidated (Lee & Lee, 2009)

**Emotional Clarity**

The extent to which people can identify, discriminate between, and understand their feelings (Boden & Berenbaum, 2011)

- Negatively correlated with depression (Cho, 2004; Salovey et al., 1993)
- Psychological maladjustments, and mental illness (Gohm, 2003)

The current study hypothesizes that emotional clarity may serve as an important moderating factor when CH affects TCK’s psychological well-being.
Part 2. Research Questions

Hypotheses

**Moderation Model**

**Hypotheses:**

**H1:** CH and psychological well-being will be negatively correlated while emotional clarity and psychological well-being will be positively correlated.

**H2:** Emotional clarity will moderate the negative effects of CH on psychological well-being.
Part 3. Methods
Participants

- **Korean TCK adolescents**

1. Both parents are Korean nationals
2. Have spent at least 2 years outside of Korea during their formative years, i.e. before reaching the age of 18, with or without their parents
3. Currently single (not married)
4. Currently reside in Korea

174 participants

- 116 (66.7%) female
  - 58 (33.3%) male
- Age: 10 to 24 years
  - \( M = 17.15, SD = 3.20 \)
- First cross-cultural move
  - \( M = 7.27, SD = 5.44 \)
- Time spent abroad
  - \( M = 6.94 \text{ yrs}, SD = 3.57 \)
- Languages spoken fluently
  - \( M = 2.05, SD = 0.50 \)
- Countries lived
  - \( M = 1.37, SD = 0.70 \)
- Citizenship(s)
  - \( M = 1.11, SD = 0.31 \)
- With family (73%), Alone (27%)
Part 3. Methods

Measures

- E-mail and hard-copy surveys (65 questions) upon participants’ consent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th># of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics Questionnaire</td>
<td>Basics + years abroad, years since return, current school, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Homelessness Criteria (CH; Navarrete &amp; Jenkins, 2010)</td>
<td>Lack of cultural group membership and attachment, lack of a cultural home, need for a cultural home</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB; Ryff &amp; Keyes, 1995)</td>
<td>Autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Emotions (Salovey et al., 1995)</td>
<td>A subscale of Trait-Meta Mood Scale (TTMS)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3. Methods

Measures

- **Demographics Questionnaire**
  - Gender
  - Age
  - School & grade
  - Countries of birth and citizenship
  - Languages fluently spoken
  - TCK?
  - Countries they had resided in
  - Duration (YYYY-YYYY)
  - Alone or with family?
  - Plan to work and live in Korea in the future?
  - Option to leave their email addresses

Dear Student,

I am a graduate student in Educational Counseling at Seoul National University. I am conducting a study to examine the relationship between cross-cultural experience and psychological well-being. Your participation will involve 15 to 20 minutes of your time to fill out this survey. Thank you for participating!

Sincerely,
JeeEun Karin Nam
November 2012

Background Information

<table>
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<th>Name(optional):</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Name of your school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country of Birth:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country of Citizenship:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the age of 18, have you lived outside of Korea for more than two years? Yes Yes No No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many different places have you lived outside of Korea?</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>What other languages do you speak fluently?</td>
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<td>Do you plan to work and live in Korea in the future? Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May I contact you in the future in case of further questions about your experience? If yes, please leave me your email address for future reference:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3. Methods
Measures

- **Cultural Homelessness Criteria**
  - **Lack of Cultural Group Membership and Attachment**
    - “When I think which cultural group I mostly act or think like, I cannot find one.”
    - “No one cultural group label accurately describes me.”
  - **Lack of a Cultural Home**
    - “I struggle to determine where I belong culturally.”
    - “I don’t feel culturally ‘at home’ anywhere I go.”
  - **Need for a Cultural Home**
    - “Finding a cultural home is important to me.”
Part 3. Methods
Measures

- Clarity of Emotions
  (a subscale of Trait-Meta Mood Scale)

  "I am usually very clear about my feelings."

  "I almost always exactly know how I am feeling"
Part 3. Methods

Measures

- The Scale of Psychological Well-Being
  - Positive Relationship with Others (PR)
    - “Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.”
  - Autonomy (AU)
    - “I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.”
  - Environmental Mastery (EM)
    - “The demands of everyday life often get me down.”
  - Personal Growth (PG)
    - “I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.”
  - Purpose of Life (PL)
    - “Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.”
  - Self-Acceptance (SA)
    - “When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
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1. Preliminary Analyses
   ✓ Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to examine the relationships among predictors and outcome variables
   ✓ Internal consistency analysis for all measures
   ✓ Means and standard deviations for all variables

2. Moderation Analyses
   ✓ The General Linear Model (GLM) multivariate multiple regression was first used to investigate the possible interaction between CH and EC on SPWB.
   ✓ Additional hierarchical multiple regressions were run on the specific dimensions that were shown to be influenced by CH \( \times \) EC interaction
Part 3. Methods

Data Analysis

Results

1. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis

✓ 22 younger students below Grade 7 were excluded

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<td>3. SPWB (total)</td>
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<td>.50**</td>
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<td>.79**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
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<td>6. Autonomy</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
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<td>7. Environ Mastery</td>
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<td>.61**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
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<td>8. Purpose in Life</td>
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<td>.44**</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19*</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.30**</td>
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<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>32.62</th>
<th>37.75</th>
<th>94.67</th>
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</table>

Table 1. Correlations among measures of Cultural Homelessness, Emotional Clarity, and Psychological Well-Being

Note. N = 151.

* p < .05. ** p < .01.
2. Moderation Analyses

- Participants who scored low on the CH Criteria (total CH score ≤ 31) were excluded
  - According to the theory of cultural homelessness, emotional confusion is a potential risk of high CH, not low CH.
  - **Categorical regression** was run to see the threshold point where CH starts to have an effect on psychological well-being.
2. Moderation Analyses

- Total of 80 individuals with high CH (CH_total > 31)
- Data were checked for regression assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003, pp. 117-141)
- Correlations among six dimensions of psychological well-being were moderately correlated (.20~.56).
- The General Linear Model (GLM) procedures were performed.
  - GLM take into account not only the relationships of the predictor variables with responses on the dependent variables, but also the relationships among the multiple dependent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of PWB</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<td>1. Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2. Positive Relations with Others</td>
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<td>3. Autonomy</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Environmental Mastery</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
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<td>5. Purpose of Life</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Personal Growth</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Correlations among six dimensions of SPWB

Note. N = 151.

* p < .05. ** p < .01.
2. **Moderation Analyses**

- **GLM multivariate multiple regression**
- To reduce the problem of multicollinearity, the predictor (CH) and moderator (EC) variables were standardized before the interaction term was computed (Frazier et al., 2004).
- **All of the six SPWB dimensions** were entered in as dependent variables
- **CH and EC, as well as the CH x EC moderator** variable were entered as independent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Wilks’ Lambda</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial $\eta^2$</th>
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<td>71.00</td>
<td>.009**</td>
<td>.208</td>
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<td>EC</td>
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<td>6.389</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH x EC</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>2.305</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>.043*</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4. Multivariate Tests**  
*Note. N = 80.*  
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.*

CH and EC were both significantly related to the six dimensions of SPWB. (at levels of $p < .01$ and $p < .001$ respectively).

**The predicted interaction effect of CH x EC was significant.**

(Wilks’ Lambda = .837, $F(6,71) = 2.305$, $p = 0.043$, $\eta^2 = .163$).
2. Moderation Analyses

- Unfortunately, a shortcoming of GLM multivariate regression analysis is that the regression coefficient values are not available.
- Thus, in order to plot the results to visualize the nature of the interaction effect, additional principal component analysis was conducted to extract one principal component score for PWB (47%).
- Univariate multiple regression was run, with the principal factor score of PWB as the outcome variable.
- Exact beta values are not reported.

![Figure 2. Roughly estimated interaction effect plotted](image)
2. Moderation Analyses

✓ The univariate tests of between-subjects effects revealed that the significant interaction effect existed specifically in two of the six dimensions: Positive Relations with Others (Wilks’ Lambda = 7.026, F(1,76) = 9.192, p = .003, \( \eta^2_p = .108 \)) and Personal Growth (Wilks’ Lambda = 6.769, F(1,76) = 7.113, p = .009, \( \eta^2_p = .086 \)).

✓ To further explore the significant interactions, two parallel hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted, one with PR as the outcome variable and the other with PG as the outcome variable.

- Within each regression, in Step 1, CH and EC were entered as the independent variables. In the second step, the interaction term was entered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Positive Relations with Others</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Personal Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
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<td>.704***</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CH x EC</td>
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<td>-.407**</td>
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Table 5. Summary of Hierarchical Regression analyses for the variables predicting PR and PG

**p < .01. ***p < .001.
2. Moderation Analyses

- For **personal growth**, the main effects of CH and EC were not significant.
- However, interaction effect accounted for 8.1% of variance in personal growth, $\Delta F(1,76) = 7.113, p < .01$.

![Figure 4](image)

**Figure 4.** The interaction effects of cultural homelessness and emotional clarity on personal growth, with emotional clarity as a moderator. n.s. = nonsignificant. **$p < .01$.**

Simple slope analysis revealed that the slope was significant at the lower levels of EC ($p < .01$), but not at the higher levels of EC ($p = .464$). These findings suggest that individuals who had low levels of emotional clarity and high cultural homelessness reported higher desire for personal growth.
Clinical Implications

- As clients, CH individuals seek counseling for identity confusion, social isolation, sadness, a vague sense of loss, shame, self-blame, and a treatment-resistant depression (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999).

- Potential counseling clients: Low EC + High CH (who tend to have fewer positive relationships with others and have reduced sense of control over daily life situations and responsibilities).
  - These “low EC & High CH” TCK adolescents should be helped to enhance their emotional clarity first, prior to dealing with CH issues, since reduced CH alone does not predict satisfying social relationships.
  - These “low EC & High CH” TCK adolescents may give an impression of a highly-motivated, highly-achieving person, ready to take on challenges. They will not make explicit connections between their present emotional difficulties to their unique cross-cultural life experiences.

- Culturally competent practitioners!
  - As counselors, we need to pay careful attention during the intake process to gather, explore, and make sense of the information on the clients’ various cultural transitions.
  - In doing so, clinicians will be able to avoid misdiagnosing cultural homelessness as a mood or personality disorder (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999), while enhancing the therapeutic alliance by exercising cultural sensitivity and awareness.
Discussion

Limitations

1. Limited sample size due to low accessibility of the population
   ✓ Resort to online surveys
   ✓ Provide more incentives

2. Use of both Korean and English surveys
   ✓ Validation of the Korean CH Criteria

Future Directions

1. Examine systematic differences between CH and non-CH individuals
   ✓ Although the study was significant in that it suggests emotional clarity as an important co-predictor of psychological well-being of culturally homeless adolescents, the question of what makes some CH and some not remains unresolved.

2. Exploring the process, mechanisms, and contextual factors through qualitative research


Rigamer, E. (1994). The international child is a special breed. The International Educator, p. 27.


THANK YOU for LISTENING!