The Experiences of Saudi Third Culture Kids Following Repatriation: A Phenomenological Approach

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THE EXPERIENCES OF SAUDI THIRD CULTURE KIDS

FOLLOWING REPATRIATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

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Abstract

This study investigated the collective experience of repatriation, as reported by preadolescent, Saudi Arabian boys between the ages of 10 and 12, who had lived for a minimum of one year in a country outside of the Arab world, and had subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia. Eleven Saudi Arabian boys were interviewed to gather their accounts of their lives before, during, and after their time abroad. They were also asked to discuss their experiences surrounding repatriation and their readjustment to living in Saudi Arabia. Students were also asked to provide advice relating to how schools can adjust their programs to facilitate the readjustment process. Findings concluded that students of this age group are relatively resilient. The consensus of the participants was that remedial Arabic-language classes and a buddy system would provide the greatest benefit to newly repatriated students.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, third culture kids, repatriation, cultural readjustment

Dedication

This is dedicated to my family, friends, and colleagues who have been so understanding all those times when I needed to be left alone to work on my research. I truly thank each of them for their support and encouragement along the way.

I would be remiss if I were to ignore the invaluable contribution of the boys who have participated in this study. Without their choice to sit with me for interviews, I never would have been able to conduct my research. My debt to each of you is immeasurable.

Acknowledgements

An unsung group who deserves acknowledgement are the mothers and fathers of the students who have participated in this study. Many of you have shown me amazing hospitality while meeting with your sons. You have also taken time out of your own busy schedules to discuss the study with me and to arrange for your sons to participate.

May Allah bless you and your family with health, happiness, and prosperity.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Mary E. Jones, Ph.D., who helped me to choose the topic of my research.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

Societies are dynamic. I invite the reader to think back to his or her childhood and consider what society was like back then as compared to how society is now. I believe that the reader will find that the norms, mores, and values have changed since then. Much like Rip Van Winkle, if one were to go to sleep for 20 years and then awake (Irving, 1917), there would most likely be some considerable differences. Perhaps the reader would find it challenging to fit into the changed society. Instead of falling asleep for years, one might move to a foreign country for an extended period, and then returned to his or her native land, only to find that that society feels "foreign." Perhaps settling in would be a challenge. One might not use the "right" vocabulary, or would you make a statement like the character, Carol Brady, in *A Very Brady Sequel* (Sanford, 1996), when she declares, "I wish I could be gay again," apparently not realizing that the meaning of the word "gay" had changed considerably between the 1970s and the 1990s during which the film was set. Maybe upon repatriation or return, the reader would not be in touch with the local pop culture, fashions, and would lack the awareness of what was considered "cool," much like Austin Powers when he is first unfrozen (Roach, 1997): out of touch with what was considered appropriate in contemporary society.

In this age of globalization, it is becoming increasingly common for families to spend time abroad for career and education (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). The literature contains many articles that report on research into the effects of expatriation and the associated culture shock that often affects families living abroad. "Reverse culture shock" often affects those who have previously lived abroad. Frequently, this reverse culture shock, because of repatriation, is more severe than the culture shock experienced when moving abroad (Austin &

Beyer, 1984; Barringer, 2000; Bikos et al, 2009; Davis et al, 2013; Gaw, 1995; Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

Upon deciding to focus my research on the of repatriation on Saudi Arabian children who had lived abroad, I commenced an extensive search of the extant literature to determine whether any previous studies had been conducted. After several months of searching through various databases, I discovered that although there are some articles that report findings related to repatriation, there is a paucity of research that focuses on children who have returned to their home countries after an extended residence in a foreign country. There are a few studies that have looked at the children of missionaries (*missionary kids* or *MKs*). None of my queries yielded any results that pertained directly to repatriated Saudi Arabian children. In fact, no studies were found that addressed the experiences of any children from the Arab world. The closest article was one which referred to repatriation and assimilation supports that have been implemented in Greek schools (Athanasiadis & Kourtis-Kazoulis, 2009). While Al-Mehawes (1984) discussed the challenges of repatriation for Saudi Arabian students, his research specifically addressed the phenomenon with regard to Saudi Arabian university students who had studied in the United States, and had subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia, known colloquially as "the Kingdom."

Rumberger (2015) noted that mobility of any type can have numerous consequences for students, depending upon their level of development. Through my own informal observations in both South Korea and Saudi Arabia, it appeared that the needs of repatriated children tended to differ from those of their peers who had always lived in the country of their citizenship. One of the most commonly observed problems that appears to affect this demographic is that of *reverse*

culture shock—a difficulty with adjusting from a foreign society to one's native country after living abroad for an extended period.

While adults are not immune to this phenomenon, there is comparatively more research addressing adults who have repatriated. Generally, this research addresses employment retention issues, as anywhere from 25% to 67% of employees leave their positions within a year of repatriating (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Cho, Hutchings, & Marchant, 2013; Furuya, Stevens, Bird, Oddou, & Mendenhall, 2009; Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007; MacDonald & Arthur, 2005).

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Saudi Arabia has a tradition of sending students abroad, with the first cohort of six students traveling to Cairo in 1927 to study at the university level (Ahmed, 2015). From that point in time until 1960, Saudi Arabia regularly sent students to other Arab countries, most commonly to Egypt and Lebanon. From 1960, the Saudi government started sending students, their spouses, and their children to the United States and Europe to earn their degrees (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the United States, n.d.). According to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, the participants within the King Abdullah Scholarship program receive the following:

- A monthly stipend for students, spouses, and children

- All tuition paid by the Saudi government

- Full medical and dental coverage while studying abroad

- Annual roundtrip flights to Saudi Arabia for the students and their accompanying family members

- Academic supervision

In addition, the Saudi government offers bonus stipends and other allowances based upon need or academic performance.

Saudi Arabian nationals who have moved to the United States for residence and/or employment stood at 89,000 in 2013. Among all Middle Eastern and North African immigrants, nine percent were under age 18 at the time of the survey (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Saudi-owned companies, such as Saudi Aramco and Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) have a worldwide presence. My 2015-2016 grade five class may provide some perspective on how often upper middle class and upper class Saudi families in this region of the Kingdom relocate to the West for educational and professional reasons. Out of 22 students in my classroom, 20 were Saudi nationals. Of the 20 Saudi boys, at least seven of them had lived for one or more years in a Western country, mostly the United States, with one 11-year-old boy having spent seven years of his life living in the northeastern part of the United States, while his father completed his education; another boy was born in the United Kingdom to Saudi parents and remained there through preschool. Additionally, another boy relocated to South Asia at the end of the year, as his father's job required this move.

Similarly, during the 2016-2017 school year, I taught 23 boys, 20 of whom were Saudi nationals. Approximately one quarter of these students have also lived for an extended period outside of Saudi Arabia. Ironically, two of the foreign nationals were born in Saudi Arabia and consider it to be home; one has never been to his passport country.

Among the repatriated Saudi students whom I have taught, I have heard frequent comments about not fully understanding Saudi culture, even though they are, according to all documentation, Saudi Arabian citizens. Some students in the past have expressed frustration at what they perceive to be overarching societal restrictions on what they can do and say. Some

have withdrawn, while others have become disciplinary problems; in the case of at least one repatriated student, his parents mentioned that he had never shown any behavior problems until returning to Saudi Arabia. That student was eventually asked to leave school because of his constant disciplinary issues.

It must be noted that this study should not be construed as an attack upon, an indictment of, nor a disapproval of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia nor its leadership, citizens, culture, religion, policies, or any other institutions associated with Saudi Arabia. I have had and continue to have a great respect for this country, its people, culture, religion, and institutions. The focus of this study will be to outline the challenges that Saudi Arabian children may have had after returning to their home country, following a long time abroad.

Statement of the Problem

The issue that needed investigation was what happened when *third culture kid* (TCK) returned to his or her passport country. The drastic lifestyle changes that typically accompany repatriation (or movement to another culture) tend to affect children in a manner that reflects that of the child's parents; if a child's parents show frustration about the process of repatriation, then the child is more likely to mirror this emotional response (Cockburn, 2002).

Since first arriving in Saudi Arabia, I have made independent observations of this population, and I have noticed that a high percentage of these students seem to find it difficult to make friends, particularly during the first year or two of their repatriation. Many of the TCKs seemed to keep to themselves and did not form strong bonds with their peers. Their styles and mannerisms tended to reflect the host culture where they had previously lived, and they tended to be unaware of the current pop culture, fads, and styles found in Saudi Arabia. Some of these students had also confided in me that they felt out of place in Saudi Arabia and missed their lives

in Western countries. Often these students were fluent in English, yet they did not do well in English classes, as they tended to "shut down" and failed to complete assignments. Exacerbating the feelings of isolation, these students frequently lacked a full understanding of their own culture. In some cases, they could not speak Arabic fluently. In other cases, while they may have been able to speak Saudi Arabian vernacular, they could not understand standard Arabic. These observations appeared to echo the findings in the existing literature in relation to TCKs from other countries who have repatriated.

Given the vast difference that exists between Western/Non-Muslim liberal, democratic societies and Saudi Arabia, which is governed according to a strict interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah, it is perhaps unsurprising that Saudi Arabian children, who had lived abroad and have subsequently resettled in their native country, may have found it challenging to adjust. Several parents of these students have mentioned to me that their children often complained that they wished to be back in the country in which they had previously lived, as they often have had difficulty understanding the expectations associated with living in a society that follows Sharia law.

Purpose of the Study

Using a phenomenological approach, I investigated the common experience that repatriated Saudi Arabian schoolchildren have had subsequent to their return to Saudi Arabia. This was an important subject to research, as there had been an apparent gap in the literature regarding Saudi Arabian schoolchildren who previously had lived in other countries. A better understanding of their experiences could assist in devising a more effective approach to providing services within schools that will take their unique experiences into consideration and assist them in successful reassimilation.

Because these students appeared to face some considerable challenges, I believed that it was important to conduct a phenomenological study that, in the right hands, could be used to help to determine how these students can be helped to adjust to life in their native country. The information gleaned from such a study could then be used to refer those who are struggling with repatriation at an early stage, rather than waiting until the problems have progressed to unmanageable levels. For this to happen, however, it would be important for teachers to be trained to recognize the signs of difficult culture adjustment. Some services that might be appropriate for these students include private counseling, support groups with other students who are also coping with repatriation adjustment, Arabic language lessons, and cultural education classes (Athanasiadis & Kourtis-Kazoulis, 2009; Barringer, 2000; Limberg & Lambie, 2011).

Research Question

Based upon anecdotal observations that have been made by me as well as by several of my colleagues, it has become apparent that these students, who have previously lived abroad, often face specific challenges that are less frequently seen in their monocultural counterparts. A better understanding of the mental and emotional effects of repatriation into Saudi Arabia on young learners would make it possible to serve this population better.

Thus, the research question that guided this study was:

How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

Research that has already been conducted, generally with Western children, has suggested that there are distinct differences in the experiences between children who have grown up outside of their home country and those who have always remained within the native country. It has

been noted in most of the literature related to these so-called third culture kids that repatriation is frequently a difficult event in their lives (Barringer, 2000; Bates, 2013; Bikos, et al., 2009; Cockburn, 2002; Davis, Suarez, Crawford, & Rehfuss, 2013). However, There appears to be no research that addresses the experiences, challenges, and needs of Saudi Arabian children.

Given the growing demographic of third culture kids in Saudi Arabia, it is important for these children's unique experiences to be recognized, validated, and addressed within the schools. In this way, students who are in the process of re-assimilating to life in Saudi Arabia may have an easier and more productive adjustment. Additionally, it has been pointed out in conversations with some Saudi Arabian educators that due to the nature of the policies at the Saudi Ministry of Education, publishing this study may serve as a catalyst for reform in how the Ministry addresses repatriated children. Currently, according to these educators, the Ministry looks only at a student's nationality and does not consider factors such as how much time was spent living abroad. This has serious implications, as these children, based upon anecdotal observation, have had difficulty using standard Arabic, a knowledge of which is needed in high school in order to take college entrance exams. Some students cannot use the Saudi vernacular either; these students, while Saudi Arabian citizens, are functional monoglot Anglophones. The school at which I work offered Arabic as a Second Language classes for students whose Arabic skills are insufficient for a conversational and/or academic setting; however, this program was discontinued due to a lack of manpower.

This study was significant, as it appeared that there were no comparable studies in the English-language literature addressing the challenges faced by these students. Additionally, there are relatively few studies that look at children of any nationality who have lived abroad and

then repatriated to their native countries except for a growing body of research surrounding the experiences of American missionary kids.

Definition of Terms

Anglophone. A person who belongs "to an English-speaking population especially in a country where two or more languages are spoken (Merriam-Webster, 2016)

Missionary Kid. A child of missionaries who has lived in a foreign country, and is not viewed as a member of the host country's society (Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

Monocultural. Relating to being proficient in the home country's culture only (Bates, 2013).

Reassimilate. To assimilate again (LoveToKnow, Corp., 2016).

Reverse culture shock. "The process of readjusting, re-acculturating, and re-assimilating into one's home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time" (Gaw, 1995, p. 2).

Third culture kid (TCK). A person whose developmental years were spent in a culture other than his/her parents' native culture (TCK World, n.d.).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was intended to expose common experiences that bind students who have lived in foreign countries, and have since returned to Saudi Arabia. This study did not seek to solve any psychological problems, nor did it set out to prove any specific theories or hypotheses. It was limited to answering the previously stated research question: "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" Instead of seeking to prove a concept, the results of this study may be considered by mental health professionals, parents, teachers, school administrators, and counsellors with the aim of raising awareness of the

common experience that these children have had. Through further analysis, concepts uncovered within this study may provide some level of context that can later be utilized with the purpose of easing the transition process faced by this sociocultural group which exhibits a culture that is neither purely Saudi nor that of the country in which they have previously lived.

I have delimited the scope of this study using a specific set of criteria that all potential participants had to meet. Participants were required to be Saudi Arabian citizens. They must have lived outside of Saudi Arabia and the Arab World for a minimum of one year. They must have returned to Saudi Arabia. They had to be students between grades 4 and 8 (ages nine through 13). They were required to be male. They had to have had a firm recollection of most of their time abroad. I did allow participants who had no recollection of when they had expatriated however.

There was a limitation to this study because some of the participants lacked the ability to recall details that may have been useful in establishing the common experience. Additionally, because it was only feasible to conduct in-depth interviews with a small sample of 11 individuals, the shared experience may not be as accurate as it would be for a much larger sampling of students. Because the participants were children, a conservative approach to risk assessment regarding the nature of the questions was adopted to reduce the risks of psychological harm. Furthermore, although it was not anticipated, the potential for parental interference affecting the scope and quality of the study existed throughout the study. Indications of this sort of interference were not evident throughout the data collection phase. Most parents assumed no further involvement upon granting their consent for the children to participate in the study.

Chapter 1 Summary

Since the early days following the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, an increasing number of Saudi citizens have spent extended periods of time in other countries for employment or education reasons. Typically, the Saudi Arabian employee or student is accompanied by his or her spouse and children during this time abroad.

Because of the contrast between Western, liberal democracies and the orthodox, Islamic society of Saudi Arabia, there is a cohort of children within Saudi Arabia who can be classified as *third culture kids*. These are children who have spent an extended period in a society other than their native society. They have adopted certain aspects of the foreign culture as well as the native culture, thus adopting a third, personally tailored culture.

Based upon anecdotal evidence, it appears that some of these children have difficulty adjusting to Saudi society following their return. This study was organized to get representatives of this demographic to speak about their experiences before, during, and following their time abroad. It is my hope that some common experiences will be found that can be addressed in the future through further research of this demographic of children.

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and the associated concepts and terminology being studied. Chapter 2 provides an insight into the extant literature that is related to the problem, gives a conceptual framework, and reviews literature that pertains to the methodology that was used in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

Imagine teaching a class at an international primary school in Saudi Arabia. A little boy has returned to the Kingdom within the past month after having spent half of his life living in a medium-sized town in the United States. At one moment, he appears to be friendly and helpful. The next minute he is showing a negative attitude to everyone and everything around him. This is punctuated by his addressing his peers in a rude fashion. Upon questioning from the teacher, he mentions that he is nervous about coming to a new school and that while he is Saudi Arabian, he is homesick and misses his friends in the United States. Adding to his peers' bewilderment, he injects references to the Kardashians and other American pop culture figures into stories that he has written and presented to the class.

Being an American citizen, you may have a superficial understanding of his pop culture references; perhaps you start to feel his pain as he tries to gain acceptance, but misses the mark by trying to discuss uniquely American cultural references with peers who are only familiar with Saudi Arabian pop culture. You fear that unless you gain an understanding of the boy's challenges in a way that allows you to assist him, he may continue to falter and face difficulties while trying to figure out how he fits into a society that has rigid rules governing it. You also worry that unless something changes soon, he will face a situation in which he is alienated by his peers.

Children, such as the boy described above, who have spent much of their lives outside of their home country can be described as third culture kids; children who have spent a significant amount of time outside of their home country and have adopted a culture that is neither that of their home country, nor of their host country. Instead, these third culture kids, known as TCKs

for short, construct their own personalized hybridized cultures to make meaning of experiences in their lives (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). It has been shown within the literature that children and adolescents from other cultures face obstacles upon repatriation. Among these challenges is a phenomenon known as reverse culture shock—an adjustment issue related to returning to one's home country after an extended absence. A symptom of reverse culture shock is a feeling of being out of place within the native culture. Grief is often a major component of this reverse culture shock.

Because the above scenario is increasingly common at the school at which I teach, it has become apparent that it would be helpful to have a greater knowledge about the underlying concepts of repatriation and reverse culture shock within the specific context of Saudi Arabian children. One of the striking aspects is that these interactions between Saudi TCKs and their Saudi monocultural peers seem to unfold in a similar manner every time. Although the details may differ, there are certain themes that are recurring—a student has returned to Saudi Arabia, he reports feeling nervous, he comes across as being rude or arrogant towards his peers, he repeatedly makes cultural references that are outside the scope of the average Saudi student's worldview, and finally, the student starts to feel like an outsider. As a teacher, it is difficult to watch a newly repatriated student make repeated *faux pas*, which eventually risk the student's feeling alienated from his peers. While advice can be given, it would better serve this demographic of students if there were a more complete understanding of the issues that they face.

As of 2013, there were 89,000 expatriate Saudi citizens residing in the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Many of these Saudi citizens are pursuing advanced degrees or have been sent abroad for career purposes. Frequently these citizens are accompanied by their

spouses and children. Through informal observation, it has been noted that the Saudi students who have lived abroad tend to face challenges that may be unique to their demographic, most notably, reverse culture shock, or the experience of culture shock upon returning to one's native country.

The literature contains dozens of articles that report on research into the effects of expatriation and the associated culture shock that often affects families living abroad. Though they exist, there are comparatively fewer articles that discuss "reverse culture shock," or repatriation. The phenomenon of reverse culture shock often affects those who had previously lived abroad and have subsequently returned to their home country. Frequently, this reverse culture shock is more severe than the culture shock experienced when moving abroad (Austin & Beyer, 1984; Barringer, 2000; Bikos et al, 2009; Davis et al, 2013; Gaw, 1995; Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

Given the number of Saudi Arabian students who have repatriated and the paucity of research surrounding their repatriation, evidence of a problem emerged; a lack of understanding of their common experiences and what effects repatriation may have had on them. This problem led directly to the research question: How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation? Through the emergence of common themes throughout the research process, there is a greater possibility for future approaches that can be employed in school policies and programs that are specifically aimed at this demographic, with the goal of assisting these students with their transition back to Saudi Arabian society.

The organization of this literature review is as follows: I have presented a background to the concepts that I have investigated. Following this conceptual framework, I have cited and discussed the existing literature that is related to the concepts and the research methodology. I

14

have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies that have been employed within the existing literature, and I have provided a synthesis of previous research findings. After this synthesis, I have furnished a critique of the previous research. Lastly, I have provided a summary of the content included within the entire chapter.

Conceptual Framework

The world has become globalized over the past century. Along with this globalization, there is a greater incidence of people migrating across borders for educational and work purposes (Cockburn, 2002). In some cases, these employees or students bring their families overseas with them. The children of these expatriates spend at least part of their developmental years in a foreign country and culture that may be, depending upon location, drastically different from the culture of their native country.

Depending upon the length of time that is spent in the foreign culture, there is a change that occurs, not only in children, but within adults as well. They start to evolve culturally. Eventually, they may find themselves members of a "third culture," i.e. their personal culture possesses aspects of both the home culture and the host culture (TCK World, n.d.). Values, norms, mores, and customs start to show some resemblance to that of the host country. In the vernacular, this is sometimes referred to as "going native." This term is not accurate however, as it is more common to adopt a hybrid of the host and native cultures.

The cultural middle ground associated with third culture seems to serve expatriates well while they are overseas. It shows respect for the host country's customs and values, while also acknowledging the expatriates' home culture. Although long-term expatriates often feel a "membership" in more than one culture, they typically do not feel "ownership" in any of these cultures (Gillies, 1998).

While conducting research in India during the 1950s, John and Ruth Hill Useem first coined the term "third culture kid," which is frequently shortened to TCK. A third culture kid is a child who has lived outside of his or her native country during childhood and/or adolescence (TCK World, n.d.). These children adopt a hybridized culture that reflects aspects of both the native and host cultures.

Third culture kids tend to derive numerous benefits from their overseas experience. For example, they often have a much wider worldview as well as a firsthand knowledge of different places around the world (Barringer, 2000; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009), and they tend to be more adaptable to new situations and keep an open mind (Barringer, 2000; Gerner, 1994). Additionally, third culture kids tend to excel academically, and they are four times as likely to earn bachelor degrees when compared to their monocultural counterparts (Useem, 1993).

While they tend to remain open-minded of different cultures, they also tend to exhibit higher rates of depression and anxiety (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Gillies, 1998), notably upon repatriation. In order to establish this, Dewaele and van Oudenhoven surveyed 79 young teenagers who were residing in London. Forty-one of them were third culture kids, and the remainder were born and raised in the United Kingdom. The authors of the study administered a 91-item well-being questionnaire. Through this study, Dewaele and van Oudenhoven determined that that while the third culture kids tended to score better on indicators of open-mindedness and cultural empathy, they scored "significantly lower on emotional stability" (p. 453).

Depending upon at what age and for how long a third culture kid remains in a foreign country, he or she may also develop a specialized protocol for using different languages in different situations; one language may be favored over others when expressing happiness, for

example (Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015). There are some negative aspects of being a third culture kid. Many of these less desirable attributes occur following repatriation.

Perhaps most notable is the concept of reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock is a negative experience that many people feel upon returning to their native country after residing abroad. Some common aspects of reverse culture shock that repatriates frequently need to confront include unresolved grief, a prolonged adolescence, a feeling of not belonging anywhere, of being "culturally marginal," a seeming inability to commit to a large task or a deep, lasting relationship with other individuals, and a sense of alienation (Barringer, 2000).

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

In this section, in-depth descriptions of what third culture kids are, the positive and negative attributes and dysfunctions that are ascribed to them, as well as descriptions of culture shock and reverse culture shock have been presented. To finish out the section, I have conveyed what has been written in the current research literature about transition programs, the Saudi education system, and phenomenology.

Third culture kids. Third culture kids, a term devised by John and Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s while they were researching American foreign service workers and missionaries in India (TCK World, n.d.), are children who are native to one country and have spent an extended period in one or more other foreign countries. These children have typically developed a so-called third culture. This third culture is an amalgamation of their native culture and that of the host country within which they have lived (Davis et al, 2013; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Third culture kids tend to feel culturally different from their parents (Gillies, 1998). Their third culture is personalized (Limberg & Lambie, 2011) and is partially formed through experiences at

school, in the community and through interactions with local caregivers (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004).

In 2011 there were 5.08 million Americans living and working abroad. In 2010 the estimated total number of expatriates of any nationality stood at 214 million (Bates, 2013). Among these expatriates, a certain percentage was children and adolescents who have grown up outside of their home countries. Because there have been many American third culture kids, the U.S. Department of State (2013) has commissioned a booklet to assist with repatriation. Entitled *Bouncing Back: Transition and re-entry planning for the parents of Foreign Service youth*, the booklet discusses topics ranging from the concept of home to making preparations for the return. It was compiled from excerpts of a previously commissioned book by Eakin (1998), *According to my Passport, I'm Coming Home*. Both works offer tips on how to transition more easily into the native culture and provide information about what should be expected culturally by children and teens who have recently returned to the United States. Among the topics covered in these texts are substance abuse, fashion, teenage sexuality, and the typical social scene for teenagers in the United States. Additionally, there are candid accounts from teens who had previously returned to the United States and have been through the repatriation process. There are also some pieces of advice within the texts that are directed towards parents so that they may be more effective in facilitating the repatriation adjustment process that their teens will likely experience.

Eakin (1998) suggested that most of the repatriation adjustments are completed within a year of returning to the home country. There are, however, several suggestions within the book. Some suggestions are that families should prepare to return home, just as they prepared to move abroad. Additionally, Eakin suggested that communication between parents and children is an important facet of proper repatriation preparations. Eakin also suggested some obvious ways of

helping to dampen the effects of reverse culture shock, such as staying in contact with old friends. Further, she recommended that teens develop "portable skills" that may assist them when it comes time to make new friends. By portable skills, Eakin was referring to sports, music, and other hobbies; the more activities, the better, as the chances of finding others with similar interests will increase with each additional activity pursued by the TCK. Through these activities, the TCK should have a chance to interact more with others in the new location, and will assist in transitioning the TCK from "outsider" status to "insider" status.

The positive attributes of being a third culture kid. There are distinct differences between the general population and third culture kids. Third culture kids tend to have an expanded worldview (Cockburn, 2002) and they are frequently problem solvers (Bates, 2013). Another positive attribute of third culture kids is that, in general, they tend to score higher on assessments of open-mindedness and cultural empathy. These children tend to quickly adapt to new situations (Limberg & Lambie, 2011). Additionally, they tend to be bilingual, or perhaps even multilingual (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). Third culture kids also tend to have higher IQs than their monocultural peers (Davis, Suarez, Crawford, & Rehfuss, 2013). According to Useem (1993), third culture kids are four times as likely as their monocultural peers to complete at least a bachelor's degree, with over 80% of third culture kids successfully graduating from university as opposed to only 21% of those students who have always lived in their home culture. This assertion is supported by the data that are illustrated in *Figure 1* (Gerner, 1994).

**SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE (IQ) OF STUDENTS IN U.S. SCHOOLS
COMPARED TO STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS**
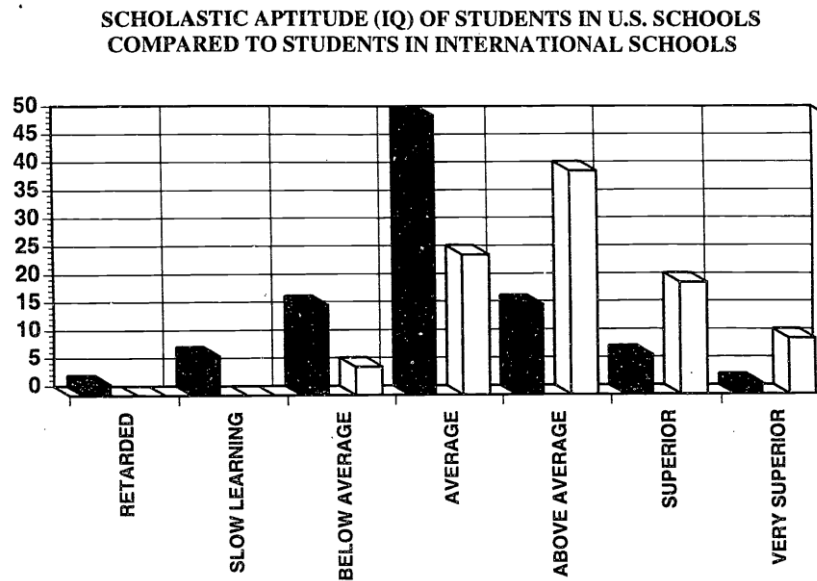
Aptitude Range	% IN U.S.	IQ Score	% IN INT'L
RETARDED	2	<70	0
SLOW LEARNING	7	70-79	0
BELOW	16	80-89	5
AVERAGE	50	90-109	25
ABOVE	16	110-119	40
SUPERIOR	7	120-129	20
VERY SUPERIOR	2	>130	10

Figure 1. IQs of TCKs versus Students in U.S. Schools (Gerner, 1994)

A study by Tannenbaum and Tseng (2015) made some revelations about third culture kids and their linguistic adaptability. In their study, it was found that multilingual third culture kids often used specific languages for specific situations. This language choice was often based upon the underlying emotions associated with the setting. The effect of multilingualism on third culture kids was also noted by Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) who found that there was a positive link between the number of languages spoken and the level of cultural empathy displayed by third culture kids.

The negative attributes of being a third culture kid. If one only considers the information above, one might surmise that third culture kids are model children, the leaders of tomorrow, and are fully adjusted. These children do, however, also face some unique challenges that are not normally found to affect monocultural children. A hallmark of third culture kids is a prolonged adolescence (Barringer, 2000). Because of the disruptions associated with repatriation at this age, delayed adolescence is frequently a by-product of reverse culture shock (Barringer, 2000; Bates, 2013). This delayed adolescence may manifest itself into adulthood, as the adult TCK may have failed to resolve personal identity issues (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). Eakin (1998) suggested that one cause of this delayed adolescence is that TCKs often have an "erratic" maturity level. Furthermore, TCKs often remain more attached to their parents than their monocultural peers (Eakin, 1998). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) had an interesting theory regarding the phenomenon of delayed adolescence. It is their belief that because TCKs were living overseas as teenagers that they were not exposed to peer models who were from their passport culture. As a result, they find themselves in a situation in which they must figure out what is considered to be appropriate adult behavior in their home culture. Additionally, Pollock and Van Reken posited that delayed adolescence is related to mobility and the associated changes in cultural rules. Preoccupation with being culturally-appropriate trumps the individual's personal explorations into their interests and abilities:

> Often at the very time TCKs should be testing and internalizing the customs and values
> of whatever culture they've grown up in, that whole world, its familiar culture, and their
> relationships to it can change overnight with one plane ride. While peers in their new
> (and old) community are internalizing the rules of the culture and beginning to move out
> with budding confidence, TCKs are still trying to figure out what the rules are. They

aren't free to explore their personal gifts and talents because they're still preoccupied with what is or isn't appropriate behavior. (p. 147)

Rumberger (2015) found that mobility of any type can have numerous consequences for students, depending upon their level of development. In the United States, a 2000 survey found that 35% of grade four students had switched schools at least once in two years. With each change, there is a break in continuity and a potential disruption to the student. The seriousness of this phenomenon has caught the attention of the United States Senate, which has directed the General Accountability Office to study student mobility and its consequences. Within the same report, Rumberger stated that mobility can have a detrimental effect on a child's or adolescent's social development, as the move may disrupt relationships between the subject and his or her friends, teachers, and others who have had an influence on the child.

Another challenge that seems to face third culture kids into adulthood is a feeling of rootlessness (Barringer, 2000; Bates, 2013; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) stated that the "lack of full ownership is what gives that sense of simultaneously belonging 'everywhere and nowhere'" (p. 22). In that passage, Pollock and Van Reken were referring to culture. This lack of ownership is echoed in several places throughout the literature. Barringer referred to it as being "culturally marginal" (p. 8), while referring to their not belonging within any specific culture. Gillies (1998) expressed this rootlessness as third culture kids' sharing "a sense of membership in multiple cultures, yet lack ownership of any one culture" (p. 36).

This rootlessness can be seen in the concept of "home." Where a third culture kid considers home to be located may be a confusing topic for some third culture kids (Bikos, et al., 2009). One participant noted, "Really I don't know what home is, but I have a huge home draw

towards Mexico. I breathe differently there or something" (p. 743). Another participant stated, "when I was younger, I usually associated returning to America as a holiday or vacation. I couldn't wait to go back to Kenya and see my friends" (p. 743).

Because of the frequent mobility experienced by some third culture kids, the concept of home refers not to a location, but to interpersonal relationships (Barringer, 2000; Bautista, 2012). It really appears that "home is where the heart is." Bikos et al. (2009) discovered that many MKs felt as though their passport culture was "alien" and that it did not feel like home. Huff (2001) reported that the difficulty with repatriation increased with each additional overseas move. Huff also found through her study of 110 participants that those TCKs who felt the most "at home" in the host country tended to have the most difficulty with repatriation. Bates (2013) pointed to a sort of estrangement from the third culture kid's home country. This sentiment is accentuated by this quote from Eakin (1998), "Physically, I am here. But everything that belongs to me, everything that defines me, is on the other side of the ocean where I left my friends" (p. 12).

In the documentary film *So Where's Home? A Film About Third Culture Kid Identity* (Bautista, 2012), the seemingly simple question of "Where's home?" was met with confused responses by the subjects who were interviewed. Upon further explanation, one interviewee noted that while he is American by citizenship, he considers Taipei, Taiwan, to be home. Because he is a European-American, people often do not accept this answer readily. The automatic assumption by many people who ask him the question is that he must be biracial. In an effort to avoid explaining his personal situation to those who ask him where he is from, he

stated that he often tells them that he is from California or Oregon, as he has family there, or he lies and says that he is half Taiwanese.

Another young man, who is blond-haired and blue-eyed, states that his home is Singapore. When he tells people this, he is often told that he doesn't look Singaporean. Another interviewee who also lived in Singapore as a third culture kid noted that once when he was asked where he was from, he was complimented on his command of the English language; he is an American citizen. Additionally, English is one of the official languages in Singapore (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015).

Dysfunctions associated with third culture kids. While third culture kids tend to fare better than the general population in some areas, such as better linguistic skills, an expanded worldview, and higher IQ scores (Davis, Suarez, Crawford, & Rehfuss, 2013; Gerner, 1994), they also appear to have a higher rate of depression, social alienation, stress, anxiety, shyness, anger, and hostility (Davis et al., 2013; Gaw, 1995; Harvey, 1989; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; La Brack, 1985). These problems and related issues seem to be a common theme throughout the literature that discusses third culture kids.

Bates (2013) noted that repatriated third culture kids tend to exhibit a variety of social and emotional problems. Bates ascribed much of this to a sense of disappointment about a lack of commonality between the third culture kid and his or her home-country peers. Bates also found that acclimation became more difficult with subsequent moves. Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) noted that while third culture kids tend to score well on measures of cultural empathy and open mindedness, they tend to score lower on measures of emotional stability. Gillies (1998) suggested that one of the issues facing repatriated third culture kids is a lack of comfort due to the lack of knowledge about pop culture in the home country.

The positive and negative attributes of third culture kids that have been pointed out thus far have not necessarily been related to any one stage of a third culture kid's life. They have been general observations only. Once repatriation occurs, however, there are some issues that manifest themselves in many third culture kids as they go through the process of repatriation and transition back to their home culture.

Culture shock. In order to continue this discussion, it is important to understand the concept of *reverse culture shock*. Before reverse culture shock can be discussed though, it is necessary to be versed in the traits of its relative, *culture shock*. Culture Shock is the process that expatriates may experience towards the beginning of their time abroad. While culture shock is not necessarily universal (Ghafoor & Khan, 2011), it does occur frequently.

Adler (1975) constructed a definitive description of culture shock:

Culture shock is primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences. It may encompass feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fears of being cheated, contaminated, injured, or disregarded. (p.13)

Culture shock can be reduced through pre-departure briefings and through doing research about the host country (Ghafoor & Khan, 2011). There is further evidence that there is a positive correlation between the ease of acculturation and the extent of the support network that is in place. Thus, those expatriates who have family, friends, and supportive colleagues in the host country will typically adjust with greater ease. Al-Mehawes (1984) noted that pre-departure orientations can be helpful in facilitating a less difficult transition, although his study was written in the specific context of repatriation only.

Heyward (2002) and Sappinen (1993) described the concept of the U-curve, which delineates the stages through which one progresses through culture shock. The U-curve model is a graph that plots the mood level versus time during the adjustment period of expatriation. In the first stage of expatriation, the expatriate's mood tends to be high, as he or she has just embarked upon a new adventure. This first phase, sometimes called the honeymoon phase, typically lasts anywhere from "several days to several weeks" (Nikolaeva, 2010, p. 12).

As time passes and the experience abroad becomes more mundane, the level of mood drops, and the sense of excitement is replaced with frustration, as homesickness hits a new level and, in the case of a host country that is vastly different from the native country, there may be problems associated with clashes of culture and language barriers that are no longer as well tolerated as they had during the excitement phase. After working through the frustration and homesickness, the mood rises again as the expatriate finds resolution to the issues that have been affecting him or her. Sappinen (1993) conducted a case study in which he extensively interviewed a Finnish expatriate to Estonia. He discovered that different aspects of the participant's life seemed to adjust at different rates to the new culture. Professionally, the participant adjusted well to Estonia, and he was able to establish a Finnish-Estonian joint venture company. The participant also reported that over a period of time, as he learned how to function within the parameters of the "system," he "kind of fell in love with the country" (p. 6).
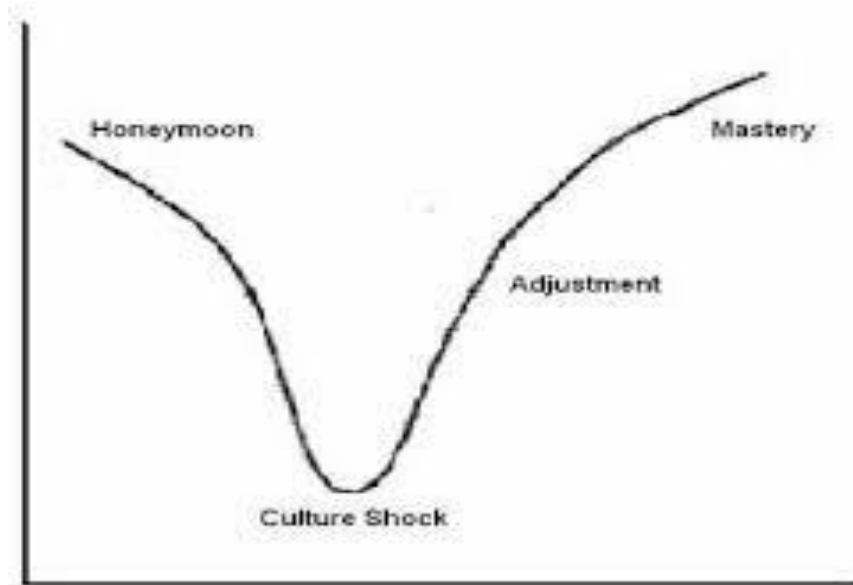
Figure 2. U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment (Mendenhall, Punnett, & Ricks, 1995)

Reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock is closely related to culture shock. The

most obvious distinction is that it occurs subsequent to repatriation. Pai (1997) noted that,

"much less attention has been paid to cultural reentry—the process of readjusting to one's home

culture after an extended sojourn abroad" (p. 181). Indeed, this same lament is expressed in

several places within the literature (Austin & Beyer, 1984;Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black,

Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Cho, Hutchings, & Marchant, 2013; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997;

Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998). Reverse culture shock is often more difficult to overcome,

because people generally do not expect to be affected by culture shock when going home.

Instead, people normally lose sight of the fact that life goes on at home, even in their absence.

This oversight sets these people up for a difficult transition when they finally return and realize

that things are not the same anymore (Gaw, 1995).

Similar to how the stages of culture shock can be graphed as a U-curve, reverse culture

shock can also be graphed. In the case of reverse culture shock, the graph typically appears as a

W-curve (Al-Mehawes, 1984; Gaw, 1995; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Heyward, 2002;

Sappinen, 1993).   In the W-curve model, the stages of the U-curve, honeymoon, culture shock, and mastery, are extended with the additional stages of transition and acceptance. These last two stages are critical to any discussion of repatriation, as it is within these stages that reverse culture shock occurs. Repatriates are typically caught off guard by the stresses of repatriation, and thus, reverse culture shock is often viewed to be more difficult to overcome than the initial culture shock of expatriation.
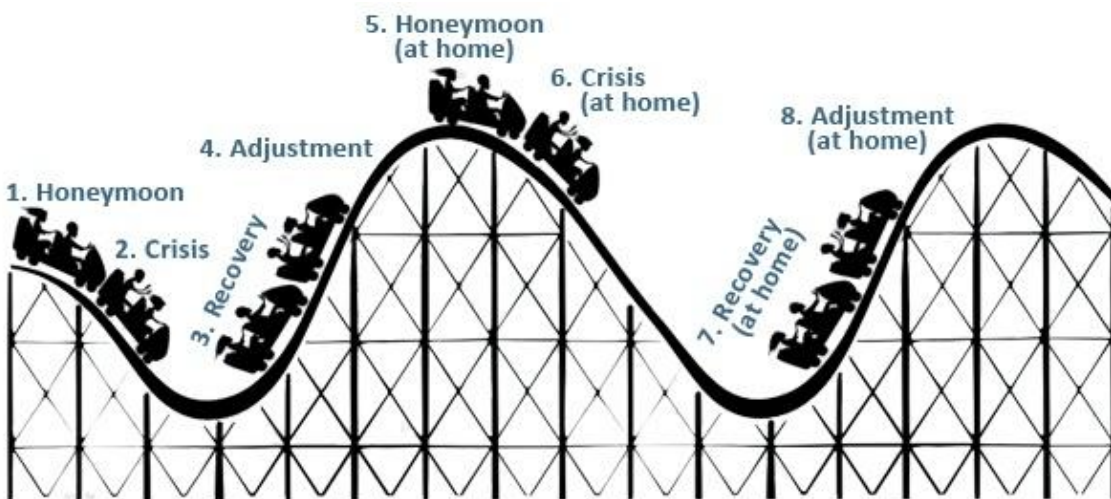
Figure 3. Gullahorn & Gullahorn's Reverse Culture Shock W-curve (U.S. Department of State, n.d.)

Gaw (1995) found that children and adolescents tend to react more negatively to reverse culture shock when compared to adults. (Bennett, 2016) and Bikos (2009) found that adolescents who repatriated after the age of 15 suffered from the worst reverse culture shock, as compared to all age groups. Conversely, Bikos et al. (2009) found that younger children tend to adjust more easily than their elder siblings. There are several reasons why this may be the case. Bikos et al. suggested that the older children tended to have greater difficulty because their social networks would likely be better established when compared to their younger brothers' and sisters' relationships. Adolescence is a key time for individuals to transition into their adult

personae. Additionally, because of the importance of social acceptance during the teen years, repatriation can be especially challenging (Eakin, 1998).

Huff (2001) studied a total of 110 undergraduate students at two different institutions. Forty-five of the students were missionary kids (MKs), a subgroup of TCKs, whilst the remainder consisted of non-MKs. Using several questionnaires, Huff discovered that TCKs had the greatest difficulty repatriating after age 15. This was measured in terms of interpersonal distance and levels of grief. Adding to the negativity spawned by reverse culture shock is a tendency of non-repatriating individuals to "blame the victim" for having a bad attitude, rather than taking time to find out the root cause of the behavior (La Brack, 1985).

Sussman (2001) assessed 44 Americans who had recently repatriated, following the completion of overseas work assignments. There were three objectives in the study: to determine whether the level of psychological preparedness had an effect on repatriation distress, whether there was a correlation between identifying with the home culture and repatriation distress, and lastly whether the causes of repatriation distress were inappropriately attributed to external factors.

Sussman used a four-page questionnaire to conduct this study, which consisted of sections that used seven-point Likert scales. The content of the questionnaire was specifically designed to assess the levels of psychological preparedness versus repatriation distress, cultural identity, and causes of repatriation distress. Sussman found that the level of psychological preparedness had a negative correlation with the severity of repatriation distress. Those who were mentally prepared for repatriation tended to adjust easier than those who had not prepared adequately. Additionally, there was a negative correlation between identifying with the home culture and the level of repatriation distress. In other words, those who felt the least connection

to American culture tended to have greater difficulty with their repatriation adjustment. Lastly, Sussman discovered that repatriates who had had a difficult transition would be more likely to "incorrectly attribute the cause of their repatriation distress situationally, under external as compared to personal control and more unstable" (p.119).

Adding to the difficulties faced internally, there are also external factors that cause repatriation to become more difficult, thus subjecting the individual to reverse culture shock. One external factor is the expectation by others that the new repatriate should know how things operate in his or her own native country. Well-meaning friends and family may express exasperation when the new repatriate is ignorant of the current slang or of words, such as "gas" being used instead of "petrol" (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken noted that small incidents that may be less obvious to the casual observer wear down the new repatriate. These incidents often center around ideas such as how much food is wasted in the home country, or the manner of discourse that is acceptable within the home culture may be unfamiliar and perhaps even offensive to the repatriate (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 228).

Reverse culture shock is exacerbated by a lack of pop culture knowledge and local fashion sense. These are the areas that appear to be especially daunting for older children and adolescents. Whereas these same third culture kids felt at home in the world and were culturally adaptable, the return home presents them with a situation in which they feel anxiety due to a lack of knowledge about the local culture (Gaw, 1995). Limberg and Lambie (2011) noted that moving back to the home culture presented third culture kids with a sense of their identity being challenged. This, in turn, can contribute to anxiety and depression that are associated with reverse culture shock. The changes in lifestyle, a strain in how one perceives himself or herself to fit into the surrounding society and internal conflicts of identity and values, are all by-products

of reverse culture shock (Pai, 1997). Along with a challenge to the third culture kid's sense of self, there are challenges to his or her sense of cultural belongingness and emotional expressiveness (Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015).

Effects of reverse culture shock on third culture kids. Reverse culture shock, which often affects people upon repatriation, can have a lasting effect on third culture kids. Even in adulthood, third culture kids often face dysfunctions, such as substance abuse, eating disorders, and depression (Barringer, 2000; Gaw, 1995; Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Pai, 1997). Pai noted that among Taiwanese university students who have repatriated from the United States, the rate of depression stands at approximately 40% of the students surveyed.

Within repatriated third culture kids, unresolved grief and a sense of loss are frequently cited symptoms of the repatriation process and the attendant reverse culture shock (Bates, 2013; Cockburn, 2002; Davis et al., 2013; Gillies, 1998; Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Pai, 1997). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) found that much of the grief stems from mobility. Friends are constantly coming into and leaving third culture kids' lives. At some point, the third culture kid is the one to leave and go home. If the third culture kid is not afforded the chance to say good-bye, or if he or she is in denial about the departure, this grief can become unresolved. Additionally, some of the grief is related to moving away from familiar surroundings and a familiar lifestyle (Barringer, 2000). This unresolved grief can be exacerbated when a third culture kid is saying his or her good-byes and a friend does not "show a reciprocal need to stay in touch" (Eakin, 1998, p. 79).

The other common reaction to repatriation is a sense of loss. This loss refers to, "repeated separations from family and friends, loss of cherished possessions and relationships, and sometimes even a loss of safety in situations of terrorism or natural disaster" (Davis et al., 2013, p. 129). According to Gillies (1998), a "lack of steady relationships may promote feelings

of loss and depression" (p. 37). The age at repatriation seems to influence the degree of grief and loss. Bikos et al. (2009) discovered that teenagers over age 15 tended to have the most serious difficulty with reverse culture shock and the grief and loss that are associated with it. In a related study, Klemens and Bikos (2009) compared 63 MKs with 63 non-MKs. All participants were enrolled in a Christian university. The results found that there were two main challenges that faced the repatriated MKs: leaving the life that they were familiar with in the host country and adapting to the new way of life in the United States as well as establishing new relationships and adjusting to American culture.

Another factor that promotes reverse culture shock and hinders transition is a perceived lack of support by family and friends who are in the home country, and a lack of understanding by the population-at-large. Fail et al. (2004) pointed to research that third culture kids are often not understood by members of the general population within their native culture. There is an automatic expectation that these repatriated third culture kids should know what to do in their home country (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They look like their peers. They generally sound like their peers. They do not necessarily look or act like their peers though. It is common for others to assume that they will understand their native culture upon arrival (Limberg & Lambie, 2011). They look like they belong, but they do not know anything about which TV shows are popular. Pollock and Van Reken referred to third culture kids as "hidden immigrants." Hidden immigrants are people who look just like the local people, but they think differently. Gillies (1998) noted that teenaged third culture kids often feel uncomfortable in their home country because they do not quite know how to fit in. The natural response is to avoid drawing attention to himself or herself. Bikos et al. (2009) found a similar discomfort among young adult, repatriated MKs, as "among the barriers was the ability to speak knowledgeably about topics

such as movie stars, sports, and understanding inside jokes" (p. 739). Additionally, some MKs found it difficult to live in a society in which they no longer looked different from the majority population, i.e., being white in a white-majority country. The suggested reason for this negative response was that looking different can become a key part of one's self-identity.

Furthermore, third culture kids often find that their experiences are not valued by others in their home countries. As a defense mechanism, these students often attempt to set this aspect of their lives aside when interacting with those peers who have not had extensive experience overseas (Lerstrom, 1995). The undervaluing of the experiences of repatriated individuals has been noted elsewhere in the literature. In discussing adult, Irish repatriates, Begley, Collings, and Scullion (2008) noted that "international experience attained during international assignments is often undervalued in the context of traditional repatriation" (p. 268). A similar situation exists with Korean corporations, which tend not to provide much in the way of career advancement for repatriated employees (Cho, Hutchings, & Marchant, 2013). Within American corporations, Hammer et al. (1998) found that there is a sort of xenophobia within corporate offices, which is expressed towards repatriated personnel. The message passed to these repatriated individuals is that they need to "unlearn" what they had learned while overseas, and start doing things "properly." American repatriated professionals have been reported to face a "lack of respect for acquired skills, loss of status, and reverse culture shock (Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari, 2007, p. 4).

Sheard (2007) found that third culture kids and gifted children have a number attributes in common. Both groups tend to feel like outsiders at school. Their intellectual, social, and emotional selves tend to differ from those of the average, monocultural student. "Both TCKs and gifted children experience their unique conditions throughout their lives (Sheard, 2007, p.

32). The children who belong to either group are at risk of being accused of bragging, just for speaking about their experiences. In the case of third culture children, they are accused of showing off about where they have been. In the case of gifted children, they are accused of showing off their superior intellect. On occasion, teachers may also exhibit jealousy and hostility towards these two groups of children.

   Transition programs. Given the numerous positive and negative attributes that have been attached to third culture kids and their experiences, it seems that there is a need to assist these children in overcoming reverse culture shock. Also, there seems to be a tendency to point out the negative aspects of the third culture experience. This is evident by the amount of literature dedicated to negative attributes versus the literature that considers the more positive role that this experience can play in many people's lives. In order to overcome the more negative aspects, however, several researchers have either described or called for transition programs to assist third culture kids' efforts to reintegrate and use their experiences abroad to their benefit.

   Bates (2013) found that while transitional programs designed to assist third culture kids during their repatriation process appear to be useful, these programs have not been widely implemented within the international school community. Barringer (2000) suggested that the counseling and psychological communities should be involved in assisting third culture kids and adult third culture kids. Barringer argued that the goal should be to guide adult third culture kids "to understand themselves more completely so that they can make use of their talents and be who they really are, people who have lived in multiple cultures" (p. 15). According to Bikos et al. (2009), mental health professionals are not the only ones calling for programs to facilitate the repatriation process; indeed, third culture kids in their study expressed their wishes for such

programs (p. 740). Cockburn (2002) also made clear the need for international schools to employ carefully planned entry and exit programs that would serve to assist third culture kids during their transitions. At the time of his study, Al-Mehawes (1984) lamented the lack of reentry orientation programs in Saudi Arabia, which he stated would "aid in [this] transition, allowing returnees to contribute the most to their society" (p. 10).

Not all views are the same regarding repatriation programs. This is especially true when professionals, rather than children, are involved. Black and Gregersen (1991) stated that at the time of their study, most repatriation programs were too vague, and thus had little measurable effect on repatriation adjustment. Harvey (1989) felt that companies had a financial interest in establishing repatriation programs not only for their employees, but also for the employees' spouses and children. By the time Hurn (1999) published his report, there had been "an increase in the willingness of international companies to devote time and resources to providing their returning staff, and in most cases their families, with some form of assistance in re-establishing themselves back home through a repatriation program" (p.1). The opposite was found in Spain, with little to no support given to repatriated employees or their families (Sánchez Vidal, Sanz Valle, & Barba Aragón, 2007). Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) devised a theoretical model of repatriation adjustment, which has reduced the adjustment phase to "uncertainty through predictive and behavioral control" (p. 755). Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall have suggested that repatriation adjustment is a multifaceted issue: "adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with home nationals, and adjustment to the general environment and culture" (p. 742).

The basic process of repatriation adjustment, as described by Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992), suggests that when people are subjected to a change of environment, it is

necessary to regain control over the situation. Two forms of control: predictive and behavioral control, are the prevalent manners in which people regain control over their destinies:

> Predictive control is the ability to make sense of, or predict, one's environment in terms of (1) the ability to predict how one is expected to behave and (2) the ability to understand and predict rewards and punishments associated with specific behaviors. Behavioral control is the ability to control one's behaviors that have an important impact on the current environment. (p. 742)

Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) proposed that repatriation adjustment is a series of routines that are broken, thus causing a feeling of a loss of control. Thus, predictive and behavioral controls are employed to reestablish a sense of control over the situation. Throughout this process, new routines supplant those that were broken. Thus, Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall have posited that programs that reduce uncertainty and a sense of a loss of control will best facilitate a smooth repatriation adjustment.

Crocitto, Sullivan, and Carraher (2005) proposed a system of mentoring. In Korea, research found that many repatriated professionals were unaware of the existence of repatriation programs. Some even needed to have the concept of a repatriation program explained to them (Cho, Hutchings, & Marchant, 2013). Lazarova and Cerdin (2007) pointed out though that there is more to employee retention than the offering of a repatriation program upon return from an international assignment. While the impetus may vary, it appears through the literature that there is broad support for repatriation programs both for third culture kids and for employees of international companies.

Athanasiadis and Kourtis-Kazoulis (2009) stated that integration for immigrants and repatriates has improved in Greek schools since the implementation of special programming.

However, they did not cite any specific evidence that these extra initiatives have had an effect regarding the facilitation of a smooth transition. Bikos et al. (2009) found that amongst missionary kids, there was a desire for repatriation transition programs. Within the same study, one participant said, "the MK seminar was a good experience. I thought it would be about the basics, but it was more about emotional things. I think it would be very helpful to anyone" (p. 744). Black and Gregersen (1991) found that there was a suggestion within the data that predeparture and repatriation training programs not only facilitate adjustment, but also that they may be cost effective for companies, as there is a high turnover rate for repatriated employees. According to Black and Gregersen, some expatriates have impugned the corporate system by stating that American companies "pay lip service to internationalization and to the importance of international experience but that they don't really value either" (p. 692). Hurn (1999) discovered that debriefing newly repatriated employees and assigning a mentor to assist in readjustment to the home office were approaches that human resources departments could implement to great effect.

Davis et al. (2013) found through a pretest/posttest study of 186 MKs, ranging from 17 to 21 years old, that the rates of depression, anxiety, and stress were reduced following attendance at a repatriation seminar. It was unclear "which variable—depression, anxiety, or stress—the reentry program most impacted, since significant reductions were noted on all three variables" (p. 135). Davis et al. continued by suggesting that the three variables were, perhaps, just symptoms of unresolved grief, which their study did not measure.

Unresolved grief and how to deal with it. Third culture kids often contend with unresolved grief upon returning to their home country (Barringer, 2000; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Much of this grief stems from a sense of losing their self-identity, their lifestyle,

friendships, and even possessions. Third culture kids often "deal" with these losses through displaying anger, depression, rebellious attitudes, a sense of denial that anything is wrong, and delayed as well as vicarious grief (Barringer, 2000, p. 13).

Given these unfortunate side effects of living abroad, it is important for there to be some sort of programming that will help third culture kids to redjust to "home." Pollock and Van Reken (2009) devoted an entire section of their book to "Maximizing the Benefits" of the time spent abroad. Much of the material contained within this section is concerned with how to help third culture kids prepare for their move *before* it occurs, and also how to assist in the transition after the move has been completed. It is Pollock and Van Reken's supposition that one of the major factors contributing to the feelings of grief are that many third culture kids (and adult repatriates) tend to stifle their feelings of grief, and bury them under a veneer of being well-adjusted.

One suggestion was for third culture kids to be afforded the opportunity to mourn the losses that they have experienced by moving (Barringer, 2000; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken stressed that there is a difference between grief and mourning: the former is an unconscious, almost automatic response, whilst the latter occurs through making a "conscious acknowledgement of loss" (p. 187). It is important to note, however, mourning should be combined with a reaffirmation of the positive experiences that one had while living abroad. In addition, third culture kids should be encouraged to consider the future and how the past and present experiences have helped the third culture kid to be better prepared for what will come later. Indeed, within the literature there is evidence that in spite of these negative aspects of being a third culture kid, there is generally a feeling of thankfulness for having had the opportunity to live abroad (Bikos, et al., 2009).

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) referred to the process as "RAFT," meaning: reconciliation, affirmation, farewells, and think destination (p. 181). These steps assist the third culture kid in his or her transition from one culture to another. In the reconciliation phase, it is important for conflicts to be brought to closure. Although there is the temptation to face conflicts with apathy (*I'll never see him again, what do I care?*), it is healthier to leave with all emotional and interpersonal issues dealt with. Not taking care of them can lead to emotional baggage that will follow the third culture kid (or, in fact, adult as well) to the next destination.

In the affirmation phase, children should be encouraged to state who was a particularly positive influence while at the location—was there a special teacher, for example? Also, it was suggested by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) for children to utilize art in a proactive manner to affirm the special adult or adults at that location, as well as make or buy small gifts for special friends who were made while at the location. Good-bye letters are another suggested means of affirming the relationships and that they will, inevitably, change through the move.

The next phase, farewells, is especially important for children (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Parents should assist children in trying to see as many people as possible with whom they had a relationship, so that the children have a chance to say good-bye. In addition to saying good-bye to people, children should be given the chance to say good-bye to places, pets, and possessions. To add to this, rites of passage are also vital to the transition process. These rites of passage are things such as graduations and retirements. If a family is leaving a locale as soon as an older child had graduated, it is important that the younger children not be forgotten. They also need some sort of recognition as a means of feeling like one chapter of their lives has closed and another will open. Otherwise, it may feel to the younger children that only the eldest sibling

received recognition and as a result of his or her completion of school, the entire family must now relocate.

In the last phase, think destination, all family members should be encouraged to start making a practical list of things related to the next destination. The list should include pros and cons of the new destination, as well as more mundane things, such as what voltage comes out of the electrical outlet (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken also suggested that if possible, families who are already at the destination should be contacted so that the children will have someone there upon arrival.

Thus far, I have explained third culture kids, their attributes, and the repatriation process, as well as some of the potential challenges that may face people who repatriate. In order to properly set the context however, it is important to have a basic understanding of the Saudi Arabian education system. Indeed, there are marked differences between Western-style education and that of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabian education system. Since the establishment of its first university, King Saud University in Riyadh in 1957, Saudi Arabia has been investing in education and attempting to improve its international standing, particularly in the information technology sector (Profanter, 2014). Profanter has given some valuable insight about the Saudi education system and how it is intertwined with Islam; until 2002, education was overseen by the Department of Religious Guidance. This arm of the government controlled education in order to ensure that women received an appropriate education—one that would prepare them to be better assume domestic duties.

Prior to this modern era of education, students learned through what were referred to as *kuttab*, which were religious schools that were built near mosques, with lessons taught by the

preacher or *imam* (Rugh, 2002). King Abdulaziz al-Saud established the first government

schools in 1925, consisting of six years of elementary school and five years of secondary school.

Schools at that time were for boys only. It was not until 1960 that King Faisal ibn Abdulaziz

made education available and mandatory for girls.

Nowadays, the education system continues to reform through changes to curriculum,

which now include a greater emphasis on science and technology in addition to its strong

emphasis on Islam (Mathis, 2010). This new emphasis is evident with the establishment of

several universities throughout the Kingdom that specialize in science and technology: King

Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST), Prince Naïf Center for Health

Science Research (Profanter, 2014). According to Mathis, one of the catalysts for the reforms of

the past decade, including the construction of new universities, was the September 11, 2001,

attacks in New York, Washington, DC, and rural Pennsylvania; 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi

citizens, and their actions seemed to strike a nerve with the Saudi people, many of whom

considered the educational system to be outdated within the Kingdom.

If one wishes to investigate how members of a specific group have experienced a

phenomenon collectively, then it is important to select the correct research approach. In the case

of ascertaining the common experience of members of a demographic group, the best method is

phenomenology also referred to as a phenomenological design.

Phenomenology. Phenomenological design is an approach to qualitative research that is

used to report on the shared experience of people who belong to a specific demographic or group

that is being investigated (Creswell, 2013; Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Norlyk &

Harder, 2010; Wolcott, 2009). Husserl referred to the desired outcome of phenomenology as the

essence. This refers to the idea that the statements of the various participants are "distilled" into

the shared experience (Gullick & West, 2012). The reason for working towards the essence of

the shared experience is to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated

(Waldek, Tyndall, & Chmiel, 2015).

In order to conduct a study using a phenomenological design, there are specific protocols

that should be followed (Caelli, 2001; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Hycner,

1985). De Felice and Janesick (2015) have provided practical lessons on how to conduct

phenomenological research, right down to giving suggestions on how to go about using sound

editing software. Knowing how to use software to edit sound is beneficial when preparing to

analyze interviews, as it is important to maintain a high standard of accuracy during the

transcription process; one missed word can change the whole meaning of an interview (Easton,

McComish, & Rivka, 2000). Easton et al. suggested that interviewers should have more than

one means of recording at the ready; if there is only one way to record and that fails, then the

interview could falter or fail altogether, as most people find it difficult to take notes of what is

said while observing vocal inflections and body language at the same time.

When children are the subjects of the research, there are special protocols due to their

lack of maturity and their vulnerability (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Gill et al.

advised that in order to conduct a successful study with children, the investigator should keep the

interview semi-structured. That is to say that "several key questions are asked that help to define

the areas to be explored but also allow for divergence and/or follow up questioning" (p. 372).

The interviewer should also remain cognizant of the child's tone and general disposition.

Sometimes children may wish to suspend an interview, but are afraid to make such a request or

are unaware that they have the right to do so. Thus, it is important to make it clear from the

beginning that the child is allowed to stop the interview without fear of retribution.

The Research Centre of the National Children's Bureau in the United Kingdom published a monograph that provides guidelines for conducting research with children. Within this short volume, there is a complete set of protocols that can be used to guide research with children from selection, all the way through the end of the project and the member checking stage (Shaw, Brady, & Davey, 2011). Although the National Children's Bureau advocates for children, they do not believe that it is beneficial to cede full control of a study to a child. In fact, they question the legality and ethics of such a practice.

Review of Methodological Issues

Within the literature that I have reviewed, a variety of approaches have been used to conduct research, analyze the data, and interpret the results. At the most basic level, there are two major categories of research methodology: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research has been created in an attempt by researchers to take phenomena and describe them in a quantifiable manner; on other words, in quantitative research, the results are expressed in terms of measurable data, which can then be analyzed using a variety of statistical tools. Quantitative research approaches typically are used to attempt to prove or disprove a hypothesis. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012), when quantitative research methods are used, it is with the underlying assumption "that we inhabit a relatively stable, uniform, and coherent world that we can measure, understand, and generalize about" (p. 7).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is utilized to provide a deeper look into phenomena through methods of analysis and interpretation. There are no numerical data in a qualitative study—the qualities of phenomena are described, instead of the data being described in terms of quantities (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Given the predominance of qualitative approaches that were used within the reviewed studies, it is important that I focus more deeply

on defining these approaches before reviewing the methodologies that were employed by the various researchers.

There are five approaches to qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2013). Each of these methods is designed specifically to address phenomena from a distinct perspective. For the purposes of this study however, I will limit the discussion to a definition of phenomenology, as this is the approach that I employed.

Phenomenology. First developed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), phenomenology seeks to uncover a shared lived experience among members of a group, i.e., a specific demographic (Creswell, 2013; Groenewald, 2004; Sandmeyer, 2015). Typically, between five and 25 individuals are interviewed for phenomenological research (Polkinghorne, 1989). Through these interviews, the researcher builds transcriptions of each participant's statements. After these transcripts have been completed, they are analyzed. Common themes are identified across all of the participants' interview materials. Next, the themes are organized in a way that allows for the essence of the experience to be reported. The essence is the "distilled" common experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

The methodology of studies of third culture kids. In Tannenbaum and Tseng (2015) a mixed methods approach was utilized to gather data. In order to conduct this study, the authors started off by offering a survey using a five-point Likert scale that assessed and quantified data in five domains: parental input, cultural interaction, emotions and personality, possessing multiple languages, and language dominance. Next, these data were used to determine whether individual participants were qualified to continue in the study. Amongst those who did qualify to continue,

44

semi-structured interviews were utilized in order to assemble a collection of narratives, from which qualitative data could be gathered, analyzed, and reported. Given the nature of this study, a mixed methods approach seemed to be an appropriate choice, as the researchers sought not only to determine numerical data such as the number of languages spoken, but also because the intent was to correlate these quantifiable pieces of data with phenomena, such as using specific languages according to mood. Also, in line with Yin (2014), this mixed methods approach helps to set the stage for future research in both the quantitative and qualitative traditions.

Within the literature that is related to third culture kids, the predominant form that was collected was of a quantitative nature; the studies had predetermined data points that were correlated with numerical values. Many of the studies included a five-point Likert scale that allowed participants to answer predetermined questions on a scale. For example, from "mostly disagree" to "mostly agree" or rating feelings on a scale of one to five. Quantitative approaches are most appropriate when numerical data are being sought by the researchers. Through a quantitative research design, the data are objective, provided the survey questions have not introduced any bias.

Davis et al. (2013) used two surveys in their study of the effects of a reentry program on repatriated "missionary kids." These surveys quantified their psychological well-being both before and after attending a series of reentry seminars. Similarly, Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) used quantitative measures to determine how personality can be affected by multilingualism and multiculturalism. The responses were distilled into numerical data that, while providing information, lacked the "human touch" that is seen with a qualitative approach. In the case of Dewaele and van Oudenhoven's research, I believe that the study could have benefited from either a qualitative or a mixed methods approach, as it would have been

interesting to see how the participants' personalities were affected, and not just to what extent they had been affected.

In the case of Gaw (1995), a wide-ranging quantitative study was conducted. It attempted to quantify the amount of reverse culture shock of students returning from abroad. While this study was able to provide the reader with data related to demographics and an objective, quantified view of the experiences of repatriated students, like Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009), it may have benefited from the addition of a qualitative component in order to make the data more "true to life" in the sense that human experience is not easily quantified, as the human condition is dynamic and variable, and does not fit easily to mathematical formulae.

Klemens and Bikos (2009), as well as Pai (1997) and Rumberger (2015), also chose to conduct their studies using a quantitative design. Similar to Davis et al. (2013), the aim was to quantify psychological well-being, whilst removing the subjective aspects of the experience that would have been introduced through a qualitative study. It is my supposition that it is appropriate to use a quantitative approach for this type of study in the beginning, when the goal of the study is to determine whether a phenomenon exists. This is in line with the description of quantitative research as provided by Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012), although once the existence of a given phenomenon has been demonstrated, it appears that it would be more appropriate to conduct a study that allows for a qualitative approach. In this way, the literature will not only have data supporting whether a phenomenon exists, but also evidence that supports the concept of how the phenomenon affects human subjects; two aspects of the research over which the researcher does not have much, if any, influence (Yin, 2014).

Amongst the collected literature that pertained to third culture kids, there were numerous studies that employed a qualitative design. Rather than seeking to determine whether a phenomenon exists, qualitative research seeks to determine how a participant may be affected by a given phenomenon. Qualitative research depends upon rich descriptions that are provided by the participants throughout the interview process (Creswell, 2013). Depending upon the nature of the study, qualitative research may focus on the shared experience of a demographic, such as in the instance of phenomenological design, or it may be organized as a narrative or a case study—two approaches that are typically used when there is a single participant (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007).

Limberg and Lambie (2011) used a qualitative design method when they conducted their study about third culture kids and the utility of school counseling. Through a series of interviews, they were able to determine that there are particular stages in the repatriation transition process that is faced by third culture kids. They also found that at certain points in the transition, the participants typically experienced similar emotional responses, such as grief. It was their determination that schools had a responsibility to assist members of the studied demographic.

Likewise, Sheard (2008) conducted a series of interviews in order to report on third culture kids, gifted children, and the similarities in the experiences of the two demographics. Sheard's reporting provided several direct quotes from participants that helped to provide a clear view of the challenges that are faced by either group. These qualitative data, while by no means objective, in the sense that one may consider numerical data to be objective, served to give a humanistic understanding of the children who were included in the study. As a result, the data seem more "real," as the participants' statements are printed clearly for the reader to observe.

Fail, Thompson, and Walker (2004) highlighted the underlying reason that a qualitative approach was valuable in their research. They stated, "It is clear that a sense of belonging is a subjective, emotional response to a place or a community of people" (p. 326). The human condition was illustrated in this study without the use of numerical data. Upon reading the study, one comes away from it with an understanding of the identity issues that are faced by many third culture kids. For the purposes of the study, how many third culture kids face the same challenge is irrelevant; the study seeks only to make the reader aware of the phenomenon. Cockburn (2002) also emphasized the qualities of the experiences of third culture kids in her study. Rather than relying upon numbers, she relied on interview data to give the reader the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the issues faced by third culture kids.

Bikos et al. (2009) used consensual qualitative research (CQR) to ascertain the experiences of third culture kids. According to them, CQR advocates the use of several sources of data, i.e., spoken interviews and written journal entries, with the goal being to allow for "a deeper and richer description of a phenomenon" (p. 736). Because the authors of the study used this approach, they were able to make several determinations about third culture kids' repatriation experiences. They were also able to report on similarities and differences of culture and comparisons between home and the host countries that may not have been reportable if a quantitative design had been used instead of CQR.

The methodology of studies of repatriation and related phenomena. The literature regarding repatriation seemed to follow the same pattern as the literature related to third culture kids. There were several studies that seemed to be seeking to establish the existence of various phenomena, and utilized quantitative designs in order to do so (Al-Mehawes, 1984; Beck, 2012; Begley, Collings, & Scullion, 2008; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Furuya et al., 2009; Gregersen &

Black, 1990; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Hammer, Hart, & Rogan, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007). In each of the aforementioned studies, the researchers sought to provide standards by which repatriation and related phenomena could be measured using numerical scales. Although this approach appears to be appropriate in the case of establishing whether a given phenomenon exists, it seems to lack the extra richness of qualitative research designs.

For example, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) conducted a study of Finnish repatriates. Within the study, one of the hypotheses was that repatriation became easier as a function of age. Regarding this one hypothesis, there was no definitive correlation between age and ease of repatriation. Given that of three hypotheses in the study, only one was definitively backed by the data, it appears that there was a missed opportunity for this study to provide some insight into the experiences of Finnish repatriates. If the study had been designed as a mixed methods study for example, then instead of having more questions after reading the study, the audience could possibly have at least some insight into the mindset of the typical repatriate who had been a participant.

Most of the studies that were found in the literature, however, were conducted and reported through a qualitative approach. In reporting a phenomenon as "messy" and disordered as repatriation, it seems intuitive that qualitative approaches such as case study, narrative, and phenomenological design would be put to use for the purpose of returning rich, detailed descriptions of the experiences related to the transition, the reverse culture shock, and the anticipatory resolution of the difficulties associated with moving back to one's home country. The process of repatriation is a very human condition, and it requires a very human manner in researching and reporting about it.

Cho, Hutchings, and Marchant (2013) conducted in-depth interviews with 15 Korean expatriates in Australia. This approach "may assist with more nuanced understanding of fundamental constructs in international business, such as culture" (p. 1058). It is this sort of information that would be lost, had a quantitative study been employed.

Gresham (2012) reported on the importance of building relationships and trust between the researcher and the participants when there is cross-cultural engagement. This study looked specifically at Saudi Arabian women who were graduate students in Australia.

> "A social constructivism framework was chosen on the basis that the study relied on the participants' understanding of their experiences, took into consideration their specific cultural and historic contexts, and recognised [*sic*] how the personal, cultural, and professional experiences of the researcher shaped and influenced the direction of the study" (p. 493).

Again, because this study was designed with the intent of showing real-life experiences, this approach was appropriate in the context of what was being researched.

The remaining literature that I have found about repatriation, Heyward (2002); Hurn (1999); La Brack (1985); MacDonald and Arthur (2005); Sappinen (1993); Sussman (2001); Sánchez Vidal, Sanz Valle, and Barba Aragón (2007); and Yan, Zhu and Hall (2002), all reported studies that had been designed using qualitative designs. None of the research designs were constructed with a goal of proving or disproving hypotheses. Instead, they were designed to provide the reader with a deeper insight into the respective phenomena that were being investigated.

When reporting on human conditions, such as the process of repatriation, reverse culture shock, and cultural transition, it appears that the design methods of choice tend to be based on

qualitative methods. While several studies were designed with quantitative approaches, the recurring theme that I observed was that some important opportunities were missed to report on specific aspects of the phenomena associated with repatriation. It could be argued that the authors of the quantitative studies sought to prove or disprove hypotheses, but I believe that given a subject that is closely intertwined with the human psyche, one cannot ignore the fact that it is impossible to quantify the experiences related to repatriation in an orderly manner. Instead, it is more logical to present and interpret the experiences that the participants have reported, thus leaving the reader with something to which he or she may be more likely to relate.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Throughout the extant literature that concerns third culture kids, repatriation, and reverse culture shock, there are certain concepts that seem to repeat themselves. One of these is the idea that third culture kids often must face learning and adjustment issues that are related to reverse culture shock and a sense of unresolved grief and loss (Barringer, 2000; Bates, 2013; Davis, Suarez, Crawford, & Rehfuss, 2013). The loss that is cited refers both to emotional loss of friends and a familiar lifestyle, and also to material loss in many cases, as physical possessions are often abandoned or given away upon departure (Cockburn, 2002). In some especially poignant cases, there are accounts of third culture kids having to abandon pets (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Frequently this grief and loss is difficult for these children to define, as it is ambiguous and non-specific. Additionally, there is a component to the sense of loss related to their feeling as though their sense of identity has vanished (Gilbert, 2008). Often these children's feelings of grief are not taken seriously by parents or other adults who are in their lives, as "their feelings of grief are not related to a specific death experience" (Limberg &

Lambie, 2011, p. 48). To a child's mind though, the changes, which they typically have no control over, can be as devastating as having a loved one die (Barringer, 2000; La Brack, 1985).

In contrast to the higher rate of depression and grief, evidence contained within the literature suggests that third culture kids tend to be more skilled with interpersonal relationships, linguistically and academically, when compared to their home-country peers (Bates, 2013; Davis, et al., 2013). Additionally, third culture kids earn bachelor degrees four times more frequently than their monocultural peers (Useem, 1993). Sheard (2008) pointed out that third culture kids tend to have a much higher level of global awareness, a higher level of tolerance for cultural differences and the ability to adjust their behavior according to the other person's culture.

What should be done if the move has already occurred and RAFT was not followed? Athanasiadis and Kourtis-Kazoulis (2009) discussed repatriation to an extent in the context of Greece and Greek third culture kids. Their study looked at the transition more from a linguistic angle rather than the psychological dynamic that is also important. Bates (2013) acknowledged that it is important for international schools to offer special transition programs for third culture kids, but that comparatively few seem to have a formal transition program. Additionally, Bates noted that some of the schools that lacked transition programs were unaware of the need for the programs.

The necessity of having transition programs and counseling available to help third culture kids get past their reverse culture shock and the other difficulties of repatriation was noted by several authors. Barringer (2000) felt that counseling was the best means of bringing out the full potential of adult third culture kids. Bikos et al. (2009) noted that many missionary kids had expressed their desire for programs that would assist with the repatriation process, although the authors did caution that programs can be patronizing, if they are not properly organized. One

interviewee talked about how a program had told the participants what a telephone and a fork were.

While there are challenges associated with repatriation, most notably reverse culture shock, the condition should be temporary according to Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) and Gaw (1995). This is illustrated by Gullahorn and Gullahorn's W-curve, which illustrates the level of mood of the repatriating individual as a function of time. In the final stage, the individual should eventually learn to accept his or her home culture and embrace it. The purpose of counselling and other repatriation programs is to shorten the length of time that this process takes. The ultimate goal however, should be to help the third culture kid to embrace his or her experience and use the specialized knowledge that he or she has acquired (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004).

Critique of Previous Research

Perhaps the most obvious critique of the previous research is that most of it has addressed one of two groups: 1.) Western businesspeople or 2.) American children of Christian missionaries (Austin & Beyer, 1984). In general, it has been difficult to find even a passing mention of Saudi Arabian students in the literature. Gresham (2012) considered the adjustment of Saudi Arabian women who were attending university in Australia, but the study was more concerned with the importance of forming a strong, trusting relationship between the researcher and his or her participants, rather than reporting on these women's collective or individual experiences. One study that did discuss the repatriation of Saudi Arabian students was limited by the author to university-aged students who had studied in the United States (Al-Mehawes, 1984).

Jackson (2012) conducted a phenomenological study of Western expatriates who have moved to Saudi Arabia. In this study, he found that Western compounds, restricted-access

residential communities, while often thought to help facilitate living in the Kingdom, ultimately serve as a hindrance to adjusting to life in Saudi Arabia. The logic that Jackson has presented is that these walled communities keep the expatriates separate from the local population, and thus, prevent any bonding between the two groups of people. His findings echo the sentiments of a personal conversation that I had in 2013 with a local man who has since become a friend. This man, whom I shall refer to as Nabil, was exasperated that Westerners come to the Kingdom to work and make money, and at the end of the day go back to their gated communities and have nothing to do with Saudi locals. Ironically, the very day that this man vented his frustrations to me, I was feeling saddened that, at that time, I had been in the Kingdom for four or five months and had yet to make any local friends. Based upon personal experience, the lessening of the gap between the local population and myself has facilitated a more satisfying experience here in Saudi Arabia. Friendships with local people have allowed for a greater support network, and I know that there is always someone who can help me to understand cultural differences or help me navigate the bureaucracy in Saudi Arabia, which is organized in a manner that is unfamiliar and confusing to Western expatriates. Further, in contrast to most Western expatriates, I do not live in a Western residential compound. Instead, I live in an apartment building within the general community; ironically, most of the tenants in this building are expatriates from other Arab countries including Egypt and Syria.

The majority of the literature that discussed the repatriation process and/or reverse culture shock showed evidence that the severity of the reverse culture shock was inversely proportional to the age of the participant, in the case of adults, whereas the length of time expatriated was positively correlated with repatriation difficulties (Barringer, 2000; Cockburn, 2002; Gaw, 1995). Likewise, younger children tend to go through repatriation with greater ease than adolescents

(Bikos et al., 2009; Gaw, 1995; Klemens & Bikos, 2009). Regarding the repatriation of adults, there was an outlier with a study by Gregersen and Stroh (1997). This study of Finnish repatriates found no evidence that age was related to the ease or difficulty of repatriation. One of their hypotheses was that clarity of the repatriation process could facilitate the transition and lessen reverse culture shock. However, their study did not support this hypothesis. Gregersen and Stroh conceded that the non-supporting results may have been a result of "a restriction of range problem that possibly affected the predictive power of this variable" (p. 650).

These results seem to be in direct opposition to other studies (Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Morales, 2015; Pai. 1997). One possible explanation for the unusual results in the Gregersen and Stroh study is that there is something related to Finnish culture and its level of homogeneity that causes a higher level of repatriation difficulty. The problem with this hypothesis though, is that in a study of expatriate South Koreans, it was found that many of the research participants were unaware of the existence of reverse culture shock; South Korea, like Finland, is a homogenous society (Cho, Hutchings, & Marchant, 2013).

Given that third culture kids, repatriation, and reverse culture shock are related to humanities, I found it bewildering that certain studies adopted quantitative approaches to research these concepts. While Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) stated that quantitative research can be used to test a hypothesis, most of the quantitative studies seemed to use this design merely to allow the usage of a survey in which responses can simply be marked on a questionnaire containing a Likert scale. In general, I did not see that there were hypotheses offered for consideration within these studies. Some of the quantitative studies missed out on potential opportunities to tell a more profound story had a qualitative approach been used.

The studies that used qualitative methods seemed to be more appropriate for the purposes of the research that I have been conducting. Because I have been investigating experiences related to repatriation, logic dictates that I needed to find qualitative studies that furnished me with rich, detailed descriptions of the experiences that previous research subjects have had. An example of a study that seemed to get this right is Sheard (2008). Within this study, Sheard gave deep descriptions based upon interviews of third culture kids and gifted children. She then took these experiences and discovered the similarities between them. From there, Sheard was able to provide further research recommendations that may benefit these two populations in the future.

For the purposes of the subject matter being investigated, it appears that qualitative research designs are the more appropriate choice. There are no hypotheses that are being proven, and so this precludes any requirement for a quantitative study. Repatriation and reverse culture shock are two closely related concepts that should benefit from detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences associated with these and associated phenomena. In the cases where researchers attempted to explain these phenomena using Likert scales, the data seemed to lack any human dynamics that would have made them more profound for the reader. Further, the perceived missed opportunity of reporting rich, detailed descriptions prevents me from putting full faith into these quantitative studies. As much as some researchers might attempt to do so, the human experience cannot, and probably should not, be quantified.

Chapter Two Summary

While no literature discussing Saudi Arabian third culture kids was found, there is an emerging field of study that looks at the experiences of third culture kids from other countries. This is especially apparent regarding research that addresses American third culture kids' experiences. Given the increasing mobility of Saudi Arabian families, who relocate globally for

the purposes of education and careers, this is an emerging field of study. Because Saudi Arabia is a conservative, Islamic society, there are marked differences between secular societies, such as the United States, and Saudi Arabia.

Third culture kids tend to benefit from their experiences by being more open-minded and accepting of people who look or act different from themselves. The trade-off however, is that there is a higher rate of depression and anxiety among third culture kids; grief is the most commonly cited emotion in studies involving children who have repatriated, as there is frequently a sense of loss following their return to their native land.

There are methods, such as RAFT (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), that can assist in minimizing the negative effects of transitions, such as repatriation or moving to a different location. This approach seems like it would be a logical progression that would help with closure. The opportunity to mourn the losses, both tangible and intangible, is also a way to ameliorate the negative effect that repatriation may have on a child.

To increase the positive effects of the third culture kid's experiences while minimizing the negative aspects associated with reverse culture shock, it is recommended to institute transition programs in schools that have repatriated children (Bates, 2013; Gillies, 1998). Klemens and Bikos (2009) found that there was a similar need for more supports even at the university level.

Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature that is related to the concepts of repatriation, readjustment, third culture kids, and of the methodology used in this study. There was a critique of the extant literature and the methodologies used in those studies. Chapter 3 outlines the design and methodology used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to Chapter 3

The aim of this study was to provide insight into the shared personal experiences of Saudi Arabian boys, aged nine through 13, who have repatriated following a period of living in a non-Arab country. Through analyzing the shared personal experiences, I have helped to set the stage for future research that can investigate methods of assisting this demographic, which had not been researched previously. At the very least, the opportunity for these students to tell their stories has assisted me in understanding what challenges they have faced, and in some cases, may still be trying to overcome. In turn, I am now able to report these accounts to others who also work with Saudi Arabian children, with the goal of providing compassion, tolerance, and understanding of their situation. Only boys were interviewed in this research study, as it is culturally and legally unacceptable in Saudi Arabia for an adult male to be in an unsupervised situation with an unrelated female.

Given the type of information that is sought, it was most logical to gather data through qualitative design. Throughout this chapter, I will show the impetus for selecting a phenomenological design, as well as provide details of the research to be conducted, including a definition of who the participants were, where the research was conducted, and how the data were gathered.

For this study, 11 male Saudi Arabian students between the ages of 10 and 12, who had lived abroad and subsequently repatriated, were interviewed. In order to carry out this research, I utilized heuristic research with an emphasis on Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Moustakas (1994) described heuristic research as "a wide-open investigation in which typically the research participant widely and deeply explores the phenomenon. Rarely is only one example or situation

used to depict the research participants' experience" (p. 18). Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) and Hill et al. (2005) prescribed a small group of participants ranging from about eight to 15 individuals. Given this range, and the wider range of five to 25 participants that was suggested by Creswell et al (2007) and Polkinghorne (1989), I settled upon interviewing 11 participants. While each of the participants has processed his experiences in unique ways according to his own view of reality, heuristic research allowed for a deep view into shared phenomena.

Research Question

As a means of guiding my investigation, I sought to answer the research question: "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?"

Purpose and Design of the Study

Because Saudi Arabia is a unique society, it was anticipated that there were several dimensions to Saudi Arabian repatriate children's experiences that are not found in the literature that concerns their American counterparts or of adults from North America or Europe. The societal role that religion plays in Saudi Arabia, for example, is vastly different from any Western country. As the country containing the two holiest sites in Islam, Makkah and Medina, Saudi Arabia is governed as an Islamic theocracy. Sharia law, the set of laws used in Saudi Arabia and several other Muslim countries, are based directly on the Quran, which is believed to be the word of God, and the Sunnah, which are the teachings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia follows an orthodox Islamic school of thought referred to locally as Hanbali, but commonly referred to as Wahhabism in the West. The Hanbali school of thought is literal in its interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah (Johnson & Sergie, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to identify and report on the common experiences of "third culture kids" (TCKs) from Saudi Arabia, who upon spending at least one year in a non-Middle Eastern country, have returned to their native country. It was also a way of allowing these students to be given a voice regarding the challenges that they have faced since returning to Saudi Arabia. Through this study, educators, school administrators, mental health professionals, and counsellors may have a better understanding of these students' perspectives and how their experiences may have affected their personae in various manners. Additionally, the students in the study may have benefited by being able to convey their personal stories.

I have attempted to determine which common factors play a role in the students' assimilation process. In order to ensure that the students and their parents cooperate, I have endeavored to establish a trusting relationship with participants. While I expected that I would have to investigate cultural aspects that govern communication and appropriate discourse in order to avoid distortions of accounts that are given and to facilitate rich, in-depth commentary (Gresham, 2012), I found that such precautions were not necessary, as the participants were generally eager to discuss their experiences in full detail, with all participants except for one expressing that he enjoyed discussing his experiences. The one remaining participant stated that he did not enjoy it, because it reminded him of his time abroad. This participant's testimony was confusing in a few instances, as he stated that he disliked the country that he had lived in, yet in his journal, he had stated that he enjoyed living in that country.

Using Bandura as guide, I looked at the effects of repatriation as they relate to the participants' self-reinforcement and self-concept; in addition to interviews, I encouraged the participants to express themselves through symbolic means, (i.e., the participants were asked to produce artwork that depicts their lives abroad versus their lives in Saudi Arabia). Because the

participants were children between nine and 13 years of age, the use of art was thought to assist the participants in expressing themselves better. Additionally, according to Kamali and Javdan (2012), the production of artwork helps people to relax more and helps to enhance memory. Because the research was based on individuals' memories, art production appears to be an appropriate means of gathering some data.

In order to establish trustworthiness, I employed the approaches that are prescribed by Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994). Creswell's first step to ensuring the validity of data is to build a trusting relationship with each participant. This concept is echoed by Gresham (2012), who conducted research with female, Saudi Arabian university students who were studying in Australia. Additional steps to ensure research validity and trustworthiness will be remaining cognizant of cultural differences that may occur during the course of the informants' participation and verifying or clarifying information as needed.

Moustakas (1994) gave an in-depth account on phenomenology. Based upon his writing, I decided to follow a heuristic approach to phenomenology. Heuristic research allows for the use of multiple facets of the problem to be investigated and interpreted in a way that can produce the essence of the participants' shared experiences. This approach to research also allows for questioning and exploration to be multi-layered, in an effort to elicit deep meaning and understanding from the stories provided by the participants.

Along with the heuristic approach, I approached the research through the lenses of Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism. Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that experiences and observations of others' experiences can affect one's patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1971). Social constructivism suggests that knowledge and learning are linked to the external forces of social experience. As an extension, cultural

development is affected by social interaction (Vygotsky, 1929). Vygotsky viewed social interaction as being inseparable from cognitive development (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015). Additionally, Vygotsky theorized that knowledge and learning are influenced by social experiences (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015; Vygotsky, 1929).

Further, Vygotsky viewed knowledge acquisition as a collaborative process. This contrasts with Piaget's cognitive constructivism which considers knowledge and social interaction as being discrete entities. Within cognitive constructivism, learners build upon knowledge that has already been acquired. Because of the nature of the research to be conducted, it seems logical that an approach in line with Vygotsky and Bandura would make more sense, given the effects that repatriation has apparently had on TCKs' social and cognitive functioning.

During the research process, I recruited male Saudi Arabian students between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. While the study was opened to students between the ages of nine and 13, the actual sample consisted of boys who were between the ages of 10 and 12. I approached 10 students, and nine of these students ultimately participated in the study, with the remaining student's father having had reservations about the time commitment. Additionally, I gained a further two participants through the so-called snowball effect. One participant referred another student who met the criteria. I also recruited the brother of a participant at the very end of the data collection phase. reservations regarding the time commitment.

After I had interviewed eight students, I started to recognize signs of saturation, but I chose to continue until I had reached 11 participants as a means of confirming that the data had indeed reached saturation. The criteria that governed eligibility were as follows: the students were required to be Saudi Arabian boys within the aforementioned age range. They had to have

expatriated to a non-Arab country and subsequently repatriated to Saudi Arabia, and the period of expatriation needed to be a minimum of one year.

Upon briefing both the students and their parents, I obtained consent. As the participants are minors, I requested that they sign consent forms to demonstrate that they understand what will be entailed in the research, but I also obtained the actual consent from their parents. Although only the parent's signature is legally binding, the child participant was allowed to withdraw his consent at any time for any reason that he sees fit. In the hypothetical case of consent being revoked, I would have either sought a new participant or, if there were sufficient data, I would have attempted to use the data that had already been obtained. In the end, this contingency was not needed, as all of the participants continued through the entire research process without issue.

The primary means of data gathering consisted of a series of interviews during which I asked questions that related to particular themes. The themes were centered around background information, the period of time while expatriated, repatriation and readjustment, and a final wrap-up. See Appendices A, B, and C for protocols and questions that were asked.

These interviews occurred at location agreed to by the participants, their parents, and me. I suggested that the interviews be conducted in a locale that is familiar and comfortable for the participant: his home, for example. In some cases, interviews were conducted at students' homes. In other cases, it was decided that it would be better to conduct the interviews at school either during the school day or outside of school hours. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, except for two participants whose fathers sat in on at least one session. The presence of other family members was explicitly allowed by me in the consent forms for those participants who wished to have a parent or other family member present for moral support. Most interview

sessions lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, with a target of 45 minutes. Although

designed for four interview sessions, there was variability in the actual number of interviews;

two participants completed the interviews in two sessions each, while others required five or six

sessions, due to time constraints during each interview.

Interviews were recorded with an iPhone 6 Plus, allowing for accurate transcriptions. For

security purposes, this device is password-protected and will not unlock without either the

password or my thumbprint being placed on a special reader. Upon returning home, all recorded

conversations were promptly transferred to an encrypted flash drive. Without a password, the

data on this drive are unreadable.

The voice recordings were transcribed into written form by an online transcription

company that is based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Prior to transcribing recordings, I obtained a

signed nondisclosure agreement from the CEO of the company. In the event of any problems

with audibility, I used Adobe Audition, a professional-grade audio editing program. Although

these recordings were generally clean sounding, there were some issues surrounding the

accuracy of the transcriptions that were provided by the transcription company. Thus, the

transcriptions had to be sent back several times for quality control purposes.

Aside from interviews, the participants were also directed to complete six activities in a

private journal. Each activity was designed to help the participant to reflect upon his experience

with repatriation and the associated readjustment process.

Students were also given the opportunity to produce some art that touches upon their

expatriation or repatriation. Two purposes of this exercise were to provide a calming effect and

to enhance memory (Kamali & Javdan, 2012). The artwork was used as an interpretive tool that

gives further insight into the participants' experiences; most participants were not confident in

their art skills though, and chose to write, rather than draw. I found that the option to draw a comic was not a popular choice among the participants. Instead, most participants chose to write about experiences.

Upon completion of the interview phase, I met with each participant for a member checking session. During this session, the participant was given the opportunity to review the data that I have received from him. He was given the choice of accepting, denying, or amending any data related to his experience. In order to complete member checking, I utilized word clouds. I decided that it would be more productive to use an aesthetically interesting approach to listing some points that I felt summarized the interviews, rather than expecting preadolescent children to read through transcriptions, some of which were nearly 200 pages long. In most cases, the students brought these word clouds home to review them. Further, each participant was given the option to correct any misinterpretations that I may have made regarding his personal experience.

Triangulation was utilized as an approach to keep the data valid and trustworthy. Triangulation is, according to Creswell (2013), the use of multiple sources or methods to gather data. In order to validate background information, such as the circumstances surrounding expatriation and/or repatriation, I asked the students to produce artwork, journal entries, and make personal observations. I also discussed the circumstances surrounding expatriation and repatriation with the students' parents when there were questions about certain details of the students' recollections that seemed incredible: one student claimed that school started at 5 AM, for example.

After all interviews, member checking sessions, and triangulation processes were completed, I compiled the data using Atlas.ti software. These data were organized with the help

of the software to allow for themes to emerge. I was able to code the data more easily using the software. Atlas.ti facilitated the process of coding and determining themes as large amounts of data had to be interpreted. According to the website, this software allows the user to "organize, classify, relate, and analyze" data that are collected (Scientific Software Development GmbH, 2016).

Once all data were processed through Atlas.ti, I was able to determine the common themes that were reported by the research participants. Using these data, I was ready to report on their common life experience, based upon their responses and my interpretations of their responses.   Upon the completion of this step, the results were added to Chapter 4 of this dissertation, with a discussion of the data in Chapter 5.

Printed materials were digitized and the digital files are stored on the same encrypted drive as the audio recordings. Non-digitized materials such as journals will be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of three years following completion of the study. After that point, the materials will be destroyed. Likewise, all digital files will be destroyed at the same time, using the DoD 5220.22-M standard for data sanitation. This standard stipulates that in order to securely delete data, a minimum of three passes must occur: first all data are covered with a binary zero. On the second pass, all data are covered with a binary one. In the third pass, a random character is entered (About, Inc., 2016).

Target Population, Sampling Method, and Related Procedures

For this study, a sample of male students between the ages of 10 and 12 was selected from the student body at the school at which I work. These students were chosen from the population aged from nine to 13 years. The students included in the study were Saudi nationals who have spent at least one year living in a country outside of the Persian Gulf or North Africa.

Because cultural sensitivities must be respected, only boys were included in this research; Saudi Arabia has strict rules regarding gender segregation.

Because I had to rely upon vivid descriptions, the participants needed to have a strong recollection of their lives abroad. Additionally, they had to have been old enough while in the foreign country to understand the cultural and societal differences between the host country and Saudi Arabia.

Prior to selecting participants, I spoke with colleagues at school who were able to introduce me to some of the participants whom I had not known prior to their participation. Upon meeting these students and explaining what I was doing, I arranged to meet with parents either in person or over the telephone; several students' fathers currently work in other regions of Saudi Arabia, and so it was not feasible to meet them in person. During these discussions, I provided the opportunity for parents and students to ask questions regarding the research, the commitment that is involved, and any other matters that they wished to discuss. At the end of the session, I confirmed that the students met the criteria that I had set for the selection of participants, and gained consent in all cases except for one student's father, who felt that his son was too busy to participate.

In order to establish the common experience that these students have had, and to make meaning of the phenomenon, I selected 11 students, a quantity that is within the prescribed five to 25 participants as noted by Creswell et al (2007) and Polkinghorne (1989). These students participated in detailed interviews and were asked to produce artwork, journal entries, and other writings about their experiences, in accordance with accepted methods (Rowan & Huston, 1997).

Instrumentation

The students who were selected to participate were interviewed individually. Each participant sat for between two and six interviews, with each session generally lasting between 30 minutes and one hour. This is within the time frame that is recommended for interviews involving children (Shaw, Brady, & Davey, 2011). In a few cases during the earlier interviews however, I allowed the participants to talk as much as they wanted. The first participant spent more than two hours talking during one session. I then learned how to keep the participant on track, and the average length of time for each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes for subsequent participants. In line with the recommendations of Shaw et al. (2011), the interviews were not simply question and answer sessions, without discussion, as this type of approach could introduce a level of tedium, which would prevent the collection of quality data. Instead, the interviews were semi-structured, with participants being offered the opportunity to involve other activities, such as board or ball games, while discussing the questions.

All recording equipment and a discussion of the format of the interviews was explained prior to commencement of the interview sessions. This was done to reduce any ambiguity and the attendant anxiety that may be formed due to the fear of the unknown (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Additionally, in accordance with the recommendations of Gill et al. (2008), I encouraged the participants to ask any questions that they may have, as a means of reducing anxiety about the process. As it turned out, all participants appeared to be comfortable with the entire process, and often forgot about the recorder, as evidenced by several cases on the transcriptions where I had to remind them not to answer with nonverbal responses.

The length of time spent per interview was be adjusted according to each individual student's capacity to remain engaged. This potential factor was considered to be a cause for

concern, but ultimately, there was only one participant who seemed "fidgety" during his interviews. These interviews were typically conducted over a period of one to three weeks, at a time and in a place that had been negotiated between the students, their parents, and me. When possible, I attempted to conduct interviews in the participants' houses, in order to allow them the comfort of familiar surroundings. Through the questions that were asked during the interviews, themes and statements were obtained from the participants (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The questions that will be used are contained in Appendix B.

Data Collection

A set of open-ended questions had been formulated, with the intent being that the participants would talk in as much detail as possible. Because the participants were children, I maintained a contingency plan to use indirect approaches to interviewing, such as engaging in another activity, playing games for example, while discussing the participants' experiences. Additionally, spending play time together may assist in building a rapport with the participants. In fact, one participant bonded with me to the extent that he wanted to maximize the amount of time I could stay at his house. He proceeded to teach me how to play a traditional Turkish tile-based game called "Okey." He also requested that I remain after interview sessions just to have informal conversations about things that matter to him, but are not relevant to my research. Rapport and trust are vital to successful qualitative research (Gresham, 2012). The rapport building that was done with the cited participant enhanced the quality of that his interview data.

Once trust had been fully established, I discussed the procedure with the participants. I made it clear that privacy would be respected to the extent that identities would be fully masked in the final document. I also explained that regardless of the participants' relationship to me, their honest responses are of utmost importance. An explanation was given to the participants to

emphasize that no responses will have an effect, positive or negative, on school grades. An appeal to their willingness to help others was made by explaining that the research may serve to assist future students in a similar situation to them, and may even help them. I prepared two consent documents. The first one was geared towards the students. This was written in simple, straightforward language so that there is no ambiguity about the intended research process. Because the main participants are minors however, a second form had to be prepared for parents or guardians to grant their permission for their minor children to participate.

The interview questions centered on gaining some context of the students' backgrounds. If necessary, parental input for the questions related to the students' backgrounds and the circumstances surrounding expatriation and subsequent repatriation was sought. At the second and subsequent interviews, the questions attempted to articulate the similarities and differences between life in Saudi Arabia and in the students' former host countries. More importantly, the ongoing discussions evolved towards a line of questioning that was aimed at uncovering the participant's repatriation experience. During these conversations, I attempted to gain some knowledge about what, if anything, has helped the participants with their readjustment.

During the research phase, the students were requested to complete six activities in a journal. Each activity could have been completed in approximately 10 minutes. The main purpose for these activities was for them to report their experiences abroad as well as their experiences since returning to Saudi Arabia. The student participants were encouraged to produce artwork in the form of drawings. While artwork may provide an opportunity to uncover some hidden meaning in what the participants have experienced, another goal is sought by asking the students to produce artwork; producing art aids in relaxation and hones individuals' creativity (Kamali & Javdan, 2012).

After the data collection process, I offered a final member checking period with each participant. During this debriefing, I provided a summary of themes mentioned and important points made by the individual participants. Upon completion of the member checking and the submission of journals, participants were rewarded with a gift certificate for a local chain of bookstores. Each participant received 100 Saudi riyals, which is equivalent to approximately US$26.67 (fixed exchange rate of SAR 3.75 to USD 1).

Identification of Attributes

Throughout the duration of this study, I sought to establish the common life experience of Saudi Arabian children who have lived abroad and subsequently have returned to Saudi Arabia. In order to achieve this goal, a phenomenological design was employed, and the data were interpreted through a social constructivism lens. Throughout the interview process, there were four phases: participant background, experiences while abroad, repatriation, and closing.

During these different phases of the interviews, there are three main attributes that were considered: social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and cultural adjustment. These three attributes should encompass all of the data that are collected, and will be utilized to establish themes. In turn, the themes that have been discovered within the data can be used to establish a shared experience.

Social adjustment refers to how well the student participant has established relationships. This applies to both his experiences as an expatriate and as a repatriate. Conversations were steered towards a discussion of whether it took longer than expected to make friends, and if so, what changes occurred that facilitated social adjustment.

Emotional adjustment looked at both the expatriation and repatriation phases of the participants' experiences. There was a greater emphasis placed within the interviews during the

repatriation phase of questioning however. The reason for this extra emphasis in the latter interviews was to develop a deeper understanding of the repatriation phase of the participants' lives. Any instances of grief or a sense of loss can be uncovered at this point in the interview process. Likewise, if the overall experience of repatriation has been positive, this would have emerged through investigating the attribute of emotional adjustment.

Investigation into the attribute of cultural adjustment gave the individual subjects the chance to talk about culture and the similarities and differences that he perceived both as an expatriate and as a repatriate. Clashes of culture and cultural *faux pas* were discussed. Lessons learned by the participant about cultural differences will also be investigated.

All of these attributes were tracked throughout the investigatory process. Along with the actual data, they were entered into the analysis software that was used. In this manner, themes have emerged that can be interpreted using a social constructivism lens.

Data Analysis Procedures

Phenomenological data analysis builds upon the data that were gathered through the research questions and transcribed interviews, with special attention paid to statements that the researcher considers to be especially significant (Creswell, 2013). Wolcott (2009) echoed this sentiment and expanded upon it by stating that analysis must follow a set of procedures that have been predetermined. Wolcott suggested that data are not considered valid based upon their factual content, but rather through the following of standard procedures.

Data can, however, be interpreted. The data can be given meaning through interpretation, which allows for a more "human" touch (Wolcott, 2009). Through the interpretative process, I considered the results of the interviews, as well as the other data that are to be collected. Along

with these data, I used my own observations and what I understand about the phenomenon to guide in the analysis.

Member checking refers to the process of allowing the participants to review their answers and the researcher's interpretations of the answers before the study is published. It also gives the participants a chance to revise or restate his or her responses.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach and a phenomenological design that was interpreted through the lens of social constructivism. As such, this study was limited in the sense that it neither sought to prove any hypotheses nor did it seek to quantify anything. Instead, this study functioned as a means to report on the shared experiences of the research participants. Phenomenology functions as a means of distilling the shared life experience of participants (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Thus, this study was limited to answering the question, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" There were no efforts to investigate all aspects of any one subject's life experience, as might be done in a case study (Creswell). Additionally, there was no investigation into the culture of third culture kids, as would occur in an ethnographic study (Creswell).

To delimit the study, I only considered Saudi Arabian children who have lived for a minimum of one year abroad. These students were limited to between the ages of nine and 13 years old, and should have been old enough to have an awareness of differences between Saudi Arabia and the host country. I also delimited the sample by only seeking to interview boys. The reason for this delimitation is that within Saudi Arabia, it would have been legally and culturally unacceptable for me to interview girls. The country in which they lived must be outside of the Arab World, which is defined as the countries of the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros,

73

Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria (suspended), Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Arab League, 2012).

Validation

According to Shenton (2004), frameworks that ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative studies are relatively new developments. Guba, as noted by Shenton, defined four constructs that can be employed in an attempt to demonstrate that qualitative studies are trustworthy: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These constructs work together to ensure that a qualitative study has a basis in theory.

Credibility. Credibility refers to the collected data being detailed and accurately analyzed by the researcher. Hoepfl (1997) noted that the data can be checked by the participants to ensure that the data as presented reflect what the participants have stated. Additionally, triangulation methods can be used. Credibility is the primary means for a researcher to establish trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability. Transferability is a measure of whether research findings can be applied to subjects in other situations or settings (Shenton, 2004). Shenton stated that there is a responsibility on the part of the researcher to establish context when demonstrating transferability. Hoepfl (1997) clarified the concept of transferability by advising that the researcher cannot determine the amount of transferability; rather it is through the amount of context provided by the researcher that the reader is able to make this determination.

Dependability. Dependability refers to the idea that the findings could be repeated in a similar study and are consistent (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Lincoln and Guba (as cited by Hoepfl, 1997) proposed an "inquiry audit" which would measure the consistency of the entire

research process and the results for a given study. Shenton (2004) noted that the dependability of a study hinges on the research design and implementation, the level of detail in the description of the data gathering, and a reflection on the entire data gathering process.

Confirmability. Confirmability evaluates the objectivity of the research. This is a measure of how much the results reflect the participants' views versus those of the researcher (Hoepfl, 1997). Another aspect of confirmability is a statement of researcher biases placed within the report (Shenton, 2004) so that there is a level of context of how the researcher relates personally to the data. Shenton also stated that it is necessary to provide detailed steps by which the data were collected and analyzed.

Expected Findings

I expected that after this study, I would find that Saudi Arabian third culture kids have reactions to repatriation that are similar to those of third culture kids from other countries, as noted in the literature. They would be more aware of the surrounding world. They would also follow a culture that is neither Saudi Arabian nor that of their former host country. Instead, they would have formed their own culture.

These children will have dealt with, or will be in the process of dealing with, issues related to social, cultural, and emotional adjustment. These are the three themes that seem to be repeated throughout the literature that is associated with repatriation. Among the more prominent emotional responses that I expected to uncover was that of unresolved grief and loss (Hurn, 1999; Bikos, et al., 2009; Davis, Suarez, Crawford, & Rehfuss, 2013).

Regarding social adjustment, I expected that participants would talk about friendships gained and lost, sometimes with a certain regularity, depending upon the circumstances surrounding their expatriation and subsequent repatriation. I thought that there would be some

narratives introduced by the participants about the necessity to find new ways to negotiate the social landscape and the need to be adaptable, so that language, culture, and pop culture are not factors that inhibit social development. I expected that participants would talk about triumphs and failures with regard to making new friends, both in the host country and in Saudi Arabia.

On the cultural adjustment issue, I anticipated that discussions would center around comparisons of the host culture and the culture of Saudi Arabia, and how it can be challenging to transition from one to the other. While I do not place value judgments on any culture, some cultures certainly have more rigid rules governing behavior when compared to other cultures. This is true in the case of Saudi Arabian culture versus North American culture, for example. While it is inaccurate to label one culture as "more correct" or "better" than another, these differences in rigidity will likely play a role in participant-led discussion. There are a lot of rules that children need to learn in order to function properly in any unfamiliar culture. In the case of these students, that "unfamiliar" culture may very well be the one into which they were born.

At present, there appears to be no literature that relates to Saudi Arabian third culture kids and repatriation. There are studies that address third culture kids from other countries, mostly the United States, and the challenges that they face during repatriation. Only one dissertation has been found that addresses the repatriation challenges faced by Saudi Arabian university students who have studied abroad (Al-Mehawes, 1984). It is expected that the reactions that young children have to repatriation challenges and those experienced by university graduates will differ significantly, considering the differences in maturity. Because of the difference between the demographics of the group that were researched in this study and those in previous studies, the results have created an area of new knowledge, thus filling in a gap in the existing literature.

Ethical Issues

In studies that involve human subjects, ethical guidelines must be followed in order to prevent abuses. According to Moustakas (1994), some of the ethical concerns that must be considered include: agreements that are comprehensible to the participants, confidentiality, informed consent, and full disclosure of the nature, purpose, and requirements of the project. Additionally, participants should be voluntary, and risk should be minimized.

Conflict of interest assessment. I am or have been in a teacher-student relationship with five of the ten participants. Because of the teacher-student relationship, I had to take measures to ensure an even balance of power regarding data gathering practices. Additionally, I took steps to prevent the relationship from showing any signs of favoritism in the classroom, through explicitly stating on the consent form that participation or lack thereof will have no bearing on classroom interactions or a student's marks.

Researcher's position. In conducting research regarding repatriation of students who have lived for extended periods abroad, I am cognizant of my personal biases, insomuch as I have experienced reverse culture shock firsthand.

Since earning a BA in modern languages in 1995, I have spent approximately 16 of the past 22 years living outside of the United States. Eleven years were spent in South Korea as an English teacher, and the past five years have been spent in Saudi Arabia as a grade five teacher. I have experienced reverse culture shock whenever I have moved back to the United States, my country of birth, and where the rest of my family resides.

As a long-time expatriate, I am aware, firsthand, of the phenomena related to living overseas: cultural ambiguity, unconsciously shifting between languages while in conversation, differing accents that are adjusted according to the audience, and difficulty in answering the

question "Where are you from?" While living overseas, one is exposed to people of various cultural backgrounds, countries, language backgrounds, and customs. As an example, I count among my friends and acquaintances, people from dozens of countries, with representation from all six inhabited continents.

Biases do not have to be a detriment however. In phenomenology, there should be a connection between the researcher and his or her topic of research (Groenewald, 2004; Hammersley, 2000; Mouton & Marais, 1990). However, Husserl's concept of epoché suggests that researchers should attempt to "forget" what they know about the phenomenon so that they can "experience" it vicariously (Caelli, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). Further, biases allow for a "baseline for [your] inquiry; [your] own starting point" (Wolcott, 2009, p. 20).

Before conducting this study, I had to take a personal inventory of my own biases, which were based upon my personal experiences as a long-term expatriate, and an occasional repatriate. In line with achieving epoché, one must consider his or her own biases and then bracket them, meaning that they must be considered and "filtered" out of the questioning and subsequent reporting of the phenomenon that is being researched. In my case, I found this exercise to be challenging. Creswell (2013) also noted that it is challenging to bracket personal experiences because these experiences typically influence the initial assumptions that are made regarding the phenomenon that is being researched.

I am personally aware of the challenges involved with both expatriation and repatriation, and thus have my own views about phenomena that are related. I had many preconceptions based upon my informal observations of students I had taught over the years who had repatriated

to their home country. I noted that there tended to be differences between the repatriated children and their monocultural peers.

However, once it came time to actually interview the participants, I found that it was difficult, particularly in the earlier interviews, not to let my personal experiences affect the line of question. In time and with practice however, I soon found that I was able to keep an account of my biases in order to prevent the tainting of the data being collected.

Ethical issues in the study. There are two basic ethical issues that must be addressed in my study, so that the participants are not harmed in any way nor will the data be compromised. The first issue is that my participants will be minors, rather than adults. This requires an added level of protection; in addition to signed consent forms from the participants, it was necessary to obtain signed consent forms from the participants' parents or legal guardians.

Administrator or political interference. It is through Providence that I work at a school that was supportive of my efforts to expose the commonalities shared amongst Saudi TCKs. Both the Saudi Arabian and the Western administrators aided whenever necessary regarding accessing information from the Saudi Ministry of Education as well as by offering help with acquiring and translating any government policies or pronouncements that may be deemed relevant to the study.

Parental interference. There was no perceptible parental interference with a single exception. One potential participant's father vetoed his son's wish to be a part of the study, citing a busy schedule for his family. As a result, that student was unable to enroll in the study. Rather than interfere, most parents were advocates for the research. Some attempted to recruit other participants for me. It appears that the parents of students who fit the demographic were aware of the challenges that their children were facing.

Student freedom. There were no problems regarding student freedom, in the context of the permissibility of self-expression. It was forecasted that there may be some reticence on the part of the student participants to express opinions that are critical. This reluctance on their part was countered through reassurances of confidentiality and the ability to review all information at the end of the interview process, before any materials are published. In a few cases, students were eager to reveal "dark secrets" such as secret crushes, once they were reminded that nobody aside from the student and me would know what he had said.

Saudi Arabian educational policies and standards. One aspect of life in Saudi Arabia that is far different from in Western countries is the education system. Overseen by the Ministry of Education, all classrooms above the preschool level are required by law to be gender-segregated. Additionally, the study of Islam and the Quran is mandated at all levels of education (Rugh, 2002). While the Saudi government allows private schools, these schools must cover all aspects of the public-school curriculum; private schools can add to this government-mandated curriculum, but cannot leave any aspects of it out.

Although Arabic is the official language of Saudi Arabia, many private schools in the Kingdom use English as the medium of instruction in the core subjects of English, math, and science. Non-core subjects such as physical education and art may be taught in either Arabic or English, depending upon the nationality of the teacher. Art, in particular, is not given much of an emphasis in the Saudi education system. There is so little attention paid to art that in 2000, the Saudi Ministry of Education devoted US$2.50 per school to art education for a national total of US$20,800 (Alheezan, 2009). With the advent of these schools, an industry has developed in which many private schools in Saudi Arabia follow an American curriculum and have received American accreditation. This allows the students to earn high school diplomas that are

recognized in the United States. Further, there are other schools that follow curricula from the United Kingdom, India, Germany, and France. (Helen Ziegler and Associates, 2016). A further search at the AdvancED website shows that there are 135 schools in Saudi Arabia that have been accredited by the organization (AdvancED, 2016).

      Student mobility and learning challenges. Student performance can be affected by changing schools (Rumberger, 2015). Rumberger pointed out that when a student changes schools, he or she must adjust not only to a new environment, but must also form new social connections. In general, changing schools has a detrimental effect both socially and academically for students. Although Rumberger's research looked at American students in the United States, the findings that relocation has a disruptive effect on student achievement can also be seen in the context of repatriated students (Barringer, 2000). The grief and other negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and uncertainty that relocating students often feel, can also interfere socially and academically (Bikos, et al., 2009; Limberg & Lambie, 2011).

Chapter Three Summary

      This chapter discussed the purpose of the study, which was to identify and report on the common experiences held by Saudi Arabian third culture kids. It provided the logic behind the choice to use phenomenology for the purpose of investigating the shared experiences of Saudi Arabian students who have lived abroad and have subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia. It has described by which means the data were gathered, the particulars of the study, such as how participants were selected, and the means by which the participants provided information during the research phase.

      Ethics issues were discussed as well as the ways in which risks were managed and the ethical protections that were employed throughout the entire research process. The questions

that have been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board are contained within Appendix B of this study.

Lastly, this chapter addresses my personal biases and describes the safeguards I have employed to bracket my biases, rather than allow them to skew the data. With these safeguards in place, a sound research approach, and a population to research, I am ready to progress to the next phase of the process, which is a report of the findings, contained in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the study, a description of the participants, information relevant to the research methodology and the analysis, a summary of findings, and a presentation of the data and results. This goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with the context of the study as well as highlight some insights into the findings that were derived from the research process.

This study was designed to answer to the research question, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" In order to do so, I interviewed 11 Saudi boys within this age group, who had lived for at least one year in a non-Arab country. I also collected some writing samples and artwork from these boys, in an effort to understand their experiences in a more in-depth manner. To achieve the goal of reporting on the collective rather than individualized experience, I employed a phenomenological design, which means that I considered the aspects of the participants' experiences that pointed to a common experience. Indeed, as I show in this chapter, these students, regardless of age, length of time abroad, or place lived abroad, all shared some common experiences, particularly upon returning to Saudi Arabia.

As a teacher in an English-medium school in Saudi Arabia, I have met numerous students who have spent extended periods of time abroad. After working with this demographic for a while, I started to become aware of the needs that are unique to this group. Unlike their counterparts who have always lived in Saudi Arabia, they seemed to be a unique cohort of students. They tended to be friendlier towards their teachers, but also seemed to have more

difficulty relating to their peers. In some cases, I witnessed students withdraw socially and academically.

I first became aware of the reason behind this withdrawal in 2013, when I had an A student suddenly drop to a failing mark. Upon conferring with the student's mother, I learned that he had returned to Saudi Arabia approximately six months prior, and was having a difficult time socially and culturally. He was like a fish out of water, even though this was his home country—at least according to his passport.

I also noticed that these students tended to struggle with the Arabic language, although it was their primary language from birth. This was particularly evident in their Arabic and Islamic classes, where a strong working knowledge of Arabic is imperative. Unfortunately, there are no real concessions that can be made at this time. The Saudi Ministry of Education does not differentiate between Saudi students who have grown up within the Kingdom or outside of it. Thus, some students who hold Saudi citizenship are not only unprepared for their required Arabic and Islamic classes, but have no access to any programs that may facilitate successful repatriation.

It is my belief that the results of this study will be useful in setting a foundation in an area that has not been researched previously. The demographic in question may benefit from the formulation of policies and programs at the school level, based upon the results of this study. It is hoped that the information contained in this study will serve to guide policy at the ministerial level as well.

Description of the Sample

For this study, I sought to interview approximately 10 Saudi Arabian boys between the ages of nine and 13, who had lived for a minimum of one year in a non-Arab country, and had

subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia. This specific age group was chosen for two main reasons: first, I was unable to uncover any studies that investigated this demographic group; indeed, the only study that I could find that related to Saudi Arabia students was one from 1984 that looked at the repatriation of Saudi university students who had spent time living in the United States (Al-Mehawes, 1984). Secondly, I had to consider the maturity level of the participants: younger students might not have the ability to recall details nor be able to attach meaning to their experiences. Adolescents, on the other hand, would be likely to process their experiences differently, as evidenced by previous studies that have been conducted in other parts of the world (Bikos, et al., 2009; Gaw, 1995; Klemens & Bikos, 2009).

In order for me to interview students who met the criteria that I had established, I employed a purposeful, also known as purposive, sampling approach to selecting research subjects. Purposeful sampling is the selection of participants based upon a predetermined set of criteria (Creswell, 2013). In the case of this study, it was imperative for the participants to be Saudi Arabian citizens who were male, between the ages of nine and 13 years, have lived outside of the Arab World for a minimum of one year, and have subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia. I used a type of purposeful sampling that is referred to as *typical case sampling*. This is the approach that is used when the researcher "wants to study a phenomenon or trend as it relates to what are considered 'typical' or 'average' members of the effected population" (Crossman, 2017). As the experiences of students who do not fit the criteria are irrelevant for this study, it made more sense to only interview those students who fit the criteria.

I conducted interviews with 11 Saudi males ranging in age from 10 to 12 years old. While I had exceeded my goal by interviewing more students, the age group that was ultimately included in the study was a more focused range. At the time of their interviews, the youngest

participant was 10 years, three months, and the oldest was 12 years, 11 months. All participants attended school in grades four through seven. Even within this relatively narrow age group, I found a wide variety of maturity levels and a varying ability to provide information of the nature that was sought.

While the youngest participants were not necessarily the least mature, the oldest participants tended to have the ability to add layers of personal meaning to their experiences. For example, one of the older participants recalled a personal dilemma that he faced when he learned of his impending return to Saudi Arabia. While he was excited to see his extended family again, he thought more deeply about the issue and decided that he would have many opportunities in the future to see his cousins, and so that while he cares deeply about his cousins, given the choice, he would have chosen to postpone his repatriation.

This contrasted with one of the younger participants, whose testimony was confused and often contradicted itself. In one case, this participant stated that he hated his time abroad, yet in his journal, he wrote that he loved his time abroad. Additionally, this participant used "I don't remember" as a default answer; it was only with further prodding that I could get him to provide information germane to the study.

All participants had lived in a non-Arab country for a minimum of one year. All students had lived in at least one of the following countries: Canada, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, or the United States. These students lived abroad for periods of time ranging from one to seven years. The median amount of time spent abroad was four years. At the youngest, students moved abroad as infants, and so they had no recollection of life in Saudi Arabia previous to expatriation. At the oldest, one student moved abroad at age nine and returned a year later. Additionally, he had only recently repatriated when I interviewed him. This combination of

factors allowed him to juxtapose his experiences before, during, and after expatriation with relative ease and with a sophistication that was missing from some of the other participants' accounts.

At the time of the interviews, all of the participating students attended a private school in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. This school, though catering primarily to Saudi students, conducts the core subjects of language arts, math, and science in English. Further, these subjects are based upon the Common Core and NGSS standards of the United States. The school has been accredited through AdvancED, thus the diploma awarded at the completion of high school is recognized in the United States. According to the organization's website, AdvancED is an accreditation organization that was created in 2006 when there was a merger between the Pre-K-12 divisions of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). The Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) was subsequently added to the organization in 2012 (AdvancED, n.d.)

The student participants were selected primarily through an informal method of approaching students whom I had known to have lived abroad. Following the students' interest in participating, I organized a meeting with the students' parents on an individual basis. At that time, I explained the nature of the study, why I felt that it was important to conduct the research, and the level of commitment that would be required by the students. I personally approached nine students. Of this group of students, eight ultimately participated. One student's father was uneasy about the commitment that was required; meetings were tailored around academic and family commitments, but this student's father felt that his son was too busy. Another student was recruited by a participant who had enjoyed the study so much that he and his mother recruited an

additional participant. In turn, this student connected me with yet another student from his class, who had lived abroad. Lastly, I was introduced to my final participant after I had interviewed his brother.

Although two students had lived outside of the Anglosphere for part of their time abroad, all participants ultimately spent a minimum of one year in an English-speaking country. The most frequent destination was the United States. Houston, Texas, was the most common city of residence during expatriation, with three participants having lived there. This is due to its ties to the oil industry and is the location of the American headquarters for Saudi Aramco, the Saudi Arabian state-owned oil company; these students' fathers worked for Saudi Aramco.

As for regional roots, two students had roots in central Saudi Arabia and two had roots in southern Saudi Arabia. The remaining seven participants reported that their families were originally from the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, with most reporting that their families were from the city of Qatif and the villages in the immediate vicinity.

Linguistically, all participants were fluent or near fluent in English. Most of them could speak English at or nearly at the level of a native-speaker. Additionally, most students spoke English with a neutral, North American accent. Several of these students reported that they struggled with the Arabic language.

Research Methodology and Analysis

During this study, I interviewed 11 Saudi Arabian boys aged between 10 and 12 years, who had spent a minimum of one year in a non-Arab country and then subsequently returned to Saudi Arabia. Each boy was interviewed individually by me, with the aim being to determine how Saudi Arabian preadolescent boys experience repatriation.

After obtaining written consent from both the students and their parents, I commenced the interview process. Students met for between two and six sessions. The determinants of how many sessions were conducted were the amount of time that the participants had on a given day, as well as the flow of the interview process. Some interviews moved along quickly, and the subjects were keen to keep the conversation going. In other cases, we attempted to fit short interviews in around class schedules. Seven of 11 students were interviewed in their homes. The remaining students were interviewed at school. One participant also interviewed with me twice at a coffee shop.

The interviews were based upon a set of questions that I had previously devised. These questions touched upon the following themes: background information, time abroad, repatriation, and a wrap-up of the interviews. This evolved into themes: background information, the period of expatriation, repatriation, adjustment, social relations, and reflections on experiences.

Following the completion of the interview process, I conducted member checking using word clouds. I decided that it would be more productive to use an aesthetically interesting approach to listing some points that I felt summarized the interviews, rather than expecting preadolescent children to read through transcriptions, some of which were nearly 200 pages long. The aim of these sessions was to gather the students' accounts of their experiences before and during expatriation, and then following repatriation. Additionally, I sought advice from the students themselves on how to facilitate adjustment for newly repatriated students who attend our school. Using a phenomenological design, I have "distilled" the common experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Aside from interviews, the participants were also directed to complete six activities in a private journal. Each activity was designed to help the participant to reflect upon his experience

with repatriation and the associated readjustment process. Students were also given the opportunity to produce some art that touches upon their expatriation or repatriation. Two purposes of this exercise were to provide a calming effect and to enhance memory (Kamali and Javdan, 2012). The artwork was used as an interpretive tool that gives further insight into the participants' experiences; most participants were not confident in their art skills though, and chose to write, rather than draw. I found that the option to draw a comic was not a popular choice among the participants. Instead, most participants chose to write about experiences. Further, I found that the effort required for the students to complete the journals did not yield enough quality information to justify the use of journals in any future studies that work with a similar demographic. If journals were to be used, the participants would have to complete the exercises in the presence of a researcher, to maintain focus as well as provide explanations about the expectations. While journals can be used for the purposes of triangulation, I found that they were of limited use. Indeed, when confronted with dubious claims during interviews, I sought clarification from family members. For example, one student made the dubious claim that school started at 5 AM when he was living abroad. I was able to triangulate and gain more credible testimony while interviewing the participant's brother, who was also involved in the study.

After all interviews, member checking sessions, and triangulation processes were completed, I compiled the data using Atlas.ti software. These data were organized with the help of the software to allow for themes to emerge. I was able to code the data more easily through the use of the software. Atlas.ti facilitated the process of coding and determining themes as large amounts of data had to be interpreted. Nonetheless, this was a long, tedious process that yielded

more than 500 coded quotations within six themes. I will report on these six themes later in this chapter, and then discuss them further in Chapter 5.

Given that my research question is, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" I determined that most sensible approach to approach this analysis was to employ a phenomenological approach. I believed that this was the most appropriate means of analysis, as I sought to illustrate the common experiences of the participants, and by extension, other Saudi Arabian children who are within the same age group and have had a similar experience of expatriation and repatriation. This sought-after common experience is known as transferability.

"Transferability refers to the potential for extrapolation. It relies on the reasoning that findings can be generalized or transferred to other settings or group" (Elo, et al., 2014). Transferability, which is analogous to generalizability in a quantitative study, is a means of showing that in the same context, studies with similar methods but in other settings, or with different groups of people, should have similar results (Shenton, 2004). Transferability is one of three means of determining whether there is trustworthiness to qualitative data, with the remaining two items being dependability and credibility (Rowan & Huston, 1997). Hoepfl (1997) advised that transferability can only be determined by the reader through the amount of context provided by the researcher. Given the unique society from which the participants come, any transferability would likely be limited to students who are Saudi Arabian.

Phenomenology. As a brief review, phenomenology was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Edmund Husserl. This method of analysis is employed when the purpose of a study is to report a common experience (Creswell, 2013; Groenewald, 2004; Sandmeyer, 2015). This common experience is reported by "distilling" what has been reported

by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Polkinghorne (1989) prescribed a sample of between five and 25 participants for phenomenological studies. In this study, I interviewed 11 participants. After approximately eight participants however, I started to notice distinct patterns in the participants' accounts of their time abroad. However, I decided to continue interviewing further participants as a means of ensuring saturation, which is the point in a study when no new information is obtainable that would contribute to a further understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Given that I interviewed children and young teenagers, I had to follow special protocols that take both their lack of maturity and vulnerability into account. I also followed the advice of Gill, et al. (2008) by organizing the interviews as informal and semi-structured. I allowed participants to diverge to an extent. In the earlier interviews, I allowed too much divergence, but gradually learned how to bring the interviews back into focus. Second, I made it clear from the start that participants were free to stop or skip certain lines of questioning for any reason. As it turned out, this was not a problem. Rather than wanting to stop interviews prematurely, I found that most of the research subjects wanted to continue, thus reducing the number of interview sessions.

Additionally, when I conducted member checking, I had to alter the way in which I conducted this process. It is through member checking that credibility of the findings can be established (Creswell, 2013). Normally, a participant would be asked to read a copy of the interview transcript and to provide feedback, correct wrong statements, and retract information when desired. Because such an exercise would likely be difficult and time-consuming for preadolescent participants, I employed word clouds that contained information that I felt was germane to the interviews. Student participants were asked to review these word clouds, cross

out any items that they believed were incorrect, and were given the choice to retract statements that they wished to disown (Appendix D).

Issues and difficulties. In general, the process of interviewing occurred without any difficulty. Upon obtaining consent from participants and their parents, I proceeded to negotiate times and locations for the interviews to take place.

Given the amount of data that I have collected, it was inevitable that there would be a few glitches during data collection and the time leading up to coding. In the case of one participant, I accidentally deleted a significant portion of his recorded interview, and had to schedule an additional session, in order to have a complete set of data from him. As mentioned previously, the journals were of limited utility. The students tended to procrastinate on completing the journals, and then submitted work that appeared to have been completed in a rushed, half-hearted manner. The general quality of the transcripts that I received from the transcription service was unacceptable, often with gibberish replacing the words that had been recorded. One example of the lack of quality control can be evidenced in the following statement which was made while discussing a sport cap, "Like Toronto Raptors, since I'm a Toronto Raptors fan." This was transcribed as, "Like John Raptors since I'm trying to rectify." In a few cases, the transcription company quoted participants as using extremely profane language, which was not the case.

Although the transcripts that were delivered to me were substandard, this problem did not affect credibility, as the recordings contained sufficiently detailed accounts from all participants. Despits the same problems mentioned previously, the dependability of the study should not be affected either, as it is conceivable that future studies would produce similar results. The confirmability of the data should not have been compromised either, as my biases remained the

same throughout the process; these biases would not have been affected by the poor quality of the transcripts.

Another factor that cannot be overlooked is that the participants in this study were all preadolescent boys. Indeed, a clear majority of the participants were born in the year 2006, and were 10 or 11 years old when I interviewed them. The participants' ages are an important consideration, as children at this age may not be as sophisticated at answering questions, especially those that involve reflection or finding symbolic meaning in experiences. As a result, I found that I had to sort through confused testimony at times. As an example, one student suggested that school started at five o'clock in the morning when he lived abroad. Sensing that this was not plausible, I asked a family member who said that school started at eight o'clock. Another student suggested that King Abdullah, the late monarch of Saudi Arabia, had given his parent money to study abroad, with the inference that the King had done so personally. This is an apparent misunderstanding of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which does provide Saudi citizens with tuition and a stipend to study abroad.

Summary of the Findings

Throughout the process of seeking to answer the research question, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" several themes became apparent. Originally, I had envisioned using four basic themes: background, time while abroad, repatriation and readjustment, and wrap-up. This list eventually expanded into six basic themes: background information, the period of expatriation, repatriation, adjustment, social relations, and reflections on experiences.

Having opened my study to participants between the ages of nine and 13 years, I ultimately interviewed students who were mostly between 10 and 11 years of age. Most of the

research subjects had lived in North America.   There were two reasons that students had moved abroad: a parental job assignment or a parent's matriculation in a graduate or postgraduate university program. Most students spent at least four years abroad, though a couple of the participants were abroad for shorter periods of between one and three years. Most of the students were born in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and their families considered the region to be their permanent home. Some students considered places outside of the Eastern Province as home: two considered Najran in the south of Saudi Arabia to be their homeland, while two others considered Jeddah in the west to be the origin of their family; the latter two participants also reported strong ties to Qassim in central Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that Saudis tend to identify with specific regions from which their families have originated. This is analogous to Americans who refer to themselves as Texans, New Yorkers, or Southerners. A person's regional background in Saudi Arabia plays a role in culture. Frequently, the sect of Islam followed by an individual can be deduced based upon the region from which he or she has come.

The time abroad was generally viewed in favorable terms by the participants. Some of the comments placed a high value on this experience, "I feel that it was the best part of my life…" Another student provided a single word answer when asked about how he felt about his time abroad, "Valuable." When asked to add to this answer he explained, "[B]ecause all things that I did [were] fun… Like, for example going on my first roller coaster…" Echoing his sentiment, another participant volunteered, "[Country lived in], it was fun. We never got—I never got bored of it [sic]."

One student had a more poignant reason for longing for his time abroad though. He felt that he was treated better by his peers abroad, and that, "[P]eople (students) [in Saudi Arabia] bother me, people hate me, people don't respect me." This student had spent a long time abroad.

A common point that was noted by the participants was that there was a lot less homework in Western countries compared to Saudi Arabia:

"The school there, they didn't take homework seriously. Like, I can remember one time they gave us one paper of homework and that's the only time I can remember."

"All the work that we did was at school. No homework, nothing. No studying, nothing."

"We didn't get that much homework. So, I had more time to play."

They also noted that there was less bullying and in-school violence in Western countries, though it did exist. The scope of bullying seemed to differ however. Some of the participants reported that the bullies while abroad were girls. Additionally, the bullying appeared to be more innocuous; furthermore, none of the participants indicated that the bullies were motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious differences:

"One bullied like most of my friends and like there is this one time he said to me like, 'Hairy.'"

"Some of the older kids try to bully the younger kids 'cause they feel like they're… I don't know… Some of the naughty kids bully the younger kids." When asked about the nature of the bullying, this participant explained that the students were teasing him by altering his name.

In an unexpected turn of events, most students reported that their best friends while abroad were neither Saudi nor nationals of the country in which they were residing. Rather, they tended to bond with expatriate students from diverse third countries, such as Colombia, Japan,

India, and Ecuador. There were cases of students befriending fellow Saudi expatriates or local residents, but this tended to be the exception rather than the rule.

It is noteworthy that the participants mentioned various places, such as amusement parks and tourist attractions that they visited while abroad. One student also talked about attending professional basketball games. Another participant, while reflecting on his time in the United States explained, "a lot of fun is there—like there's tons of fun stuff we can do." These fun events had a profound impression on the students.

While the students tended to understand that they would eventually move back to Saudi Arabia, the manner in which they discovered their impending repatriation varied. Some students knew that they would be limited by a specific period of time. Others were told at the last minute; one participant reported that he did not know that he was returning to Saudi Arabia permanently until he arrived at the airport. He thought that he was only returning for summer vacation. Based upon participants' accounts of how they found out that they were returning, and comparing them to the students' levels of adjustment, it appeared that when students knew with certainty how long they would stay abroad, they were able to cope with repatriation with greater facility. These same students who knew of their impending repatriation took the opportunity to spend as much time as possible with their friends: "The first thing that I did was like play with my friends as much as I can." His goal was to "get bored of" his friends. This plan did not work as he had intended.

The participants were unanimous in their desire to see their extended families. Most notably, they missed their cousins, and waited with anticipation to be able to see their families again on a regular basis. After the excitement of having regular access to their extended families however, some participants grew to dislike their return to Saudi Arabia and/or wished to return to

the country with which they had grown familiar. This was caused mainly by the high rate of bullying that has been reported by the research subjects. They also reported that they missed being able to go outside to play with their friends in the neighborhood. According to the participants, it is not safe to do so in Saudi Arabia due to unsafe driving practices and an allegedly high kidnapping rate. Many participants also reported frustration due to a lack of Arabic language skills. While most of the subjects could converse in Saudi vernacular, few students were confident with reading and writing Arabic and few reported having formal Arabic skills at a comparable level to their monocultural peers. Despite these challenges however, most of the participants reported that they were mostly adjusted to living in Saudi Arabia.

Socially, most students reported having close friends while abroad. Most of the students befriended boys around their age, but who were neither locals nor Saudi. Their choices of friends extended beyond the usual realm of possibilities within Saudi Arabia. Some students reported having friends who were girls, which is not typical within Saudi society. Additionally, friends were of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. A recurring theme in most of the participants' accounts was that there was little to no bias against them based upon ethnicity or religion. There were, however, a few incidences of bullying while abroad. The bullying tended to be limited to name-calling, based upon what the participants had reported. According to their reports though, there were no apparent connections to race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. Rather, the bullying seemed to be typical playground teasing. With one exception, the students reported having supportive social networks while abroad. Most students also reported making friends relatively quickly upon repatriating to Saudi Arabia.

When asked to reflect upon their experiences, all but one participant stated that he felt that his time abroad was valuable. They advised peers who were preparing for expatriation to

make the most of their time abroad and to be eager to try new things. For those students

preparing for repatriation, they stressed the importance to learn to speak, read, and write Arabic,

in order to fit in more seamlessly. The consensus among the participants was that their time

abroad shaped their personalities in significant ways; it also afforded them the ability to become

bilingual. Among their reflections were statements that celebrated the idea of being near their

extended families again. On the other hand, they missed the comparative freedom that they

enjoyed while abroad. A recurring discussion between the participants and me was the idea of

riding bicycles with friends while abroad. Many of them missed being able to go riding with

friends on a regular basis. This response was unexpected and initially it seemed remarkable.

Upon reflection, however, it made more sense, as there are not many places in this region where

children are able to ride their bicycles safely. Children who had grown accustomed to riding

bicycles while abroad, would likely wish to continue this activity which served as both a physical

and social outlet for several participants when they were abroad.

During the wrap-up session, students voiced their thoughts on how schools can facilitate

repatriation. We also entered into discussions about cultural self-identification and future plans.

I found that many of these students have been frustrated by the current system, which expects

them to be fluent in Arabic by virtue of their nationality. There were several reports of Arabic

and Islamic teachers not being helpful as these students attempt to catch up to the rest of their

peers in their Arabic and Islamic classes. Many of the participants stated that at the very least,

they would like to go to university abroad. Approximately half of the participants envision

themselves settling in Saudi Arabia after marriage. Most of the research subjects did report that

they identified as being a member of a third culture; they had incorporated a mixture of Saudi

and Western values and behaviors into their cultural repertoire. One student reported that he identified as "Kuwaiti" although he has never lived in Kuwait.

As I will demonstrate in the next section, there were many similarities reported by the 11 student participants who were part of my research. There were similarities in most of their regional backgrounds, ages, circumstances surrounding their expatriation, experiences abroad and experiences upon repatriating. They also all tended to hold similar views regarding the pros and cons of life in both Saudi Arabia and in their adopted countries. Experiences appeared to be similar too, if the minutest of details were overlooked. That is to say that while one participant had a friend who was Japanese, and another had a friend who was from the United States, the experiences themselves easily could have been swapped. Although the participants indicated varied experiences, response patterns did emerge by the time I had interviewed a few students.

Presentation of Data and Results

Although a more in-depth discussion of theories occurs in Chapter 5, I believe that it is important to provide a brief introduction to Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory. Bandura suggested that experiences and observations of others' experiences can affect one's patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1971). This is related to Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, which suggests that knowledge and learning are linked to the external forces of social experience. Vygotsky (1929) suggested that cultural development is affected by social interaction. Further, Vygotsky viewed that social interaction was inseparable from cognitive development (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015). Logically, this suggests that knowledge and learning are influenced by social experiences (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015; Vygotsky, 1929).

Thus, given the theories that were put forth by Bandura and Vygotsky, it is important to look at the participants' backgrounds and circumstances leading up to their *expatriation* in order to fully understand them and how they have experienced repatriation. Each step along the way, their social interactions with others who were of different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, travel experiences, and witnessing of events that would not be encountered in Saudi Arabia, all helped to form and develop the participants' personalities, skill sets, interests, and even ranges of acquired knowledge.

It should also be noted that this is a *qualitative* study. As such, it relies on the subjective testimony of the participants as well as my ability to compile and present a "distilled," composite of the participants' reality, and does not rely on the objective measures that would be found in a quantitative study. Although this study is qualitative, some numbers, such as ages of the participants will be included, as the level of analytical skills can likely be deduced by knowing the approximate ages of the participants; this information may be relevant, particularly by any readers who have worked extensively with children. It is also important to know at what age the students left Saudi Arabia, at what age they returned, for how long they lived abroad, and how long ago they repatriated. These figures are important, as each of these factors plays a role in the relative ease with which an individual child may adjust following repatriation.

The remainder of this section will present the data that I collected during the interviews that I conducted between January and May 2017. I have made the editorial decision to organize these data in seven subsections that are based upon the themes that I had either preselected or that had emerged while interviewing the students: background information, the period of expatriation, repatriation, adjustment, social relations, reflections on experiences, and a final

wrap-up. In this way, the reader may see how these students' backgrounds can play a role in forming who they are at the present.

Background. When these interviews were conducted (between January and May 2017), nine out of 11 participants were either 10 or 11 years old. The remaining two research subjects were 12 years old when they met with me. Nearly all of the students were also in either grade five or grade six. Given the similarity of age and academic level, it is assumed that, beyond differences in intellectual capability, the students were mostly at a similar level in a developmental sense.

Although there were some variations noted in levels of maturity and the ability to find symbolic meaning in experiences, all student participants were more similar than they were different in a few key ways. They are all preadolescent boys from Saudi Arabia, they shared many similar views on a variety of topics, such as the role that bullying has played in their development. They expressed a strong desire to spend time with their relatives, and suggested methods to facilitate the repatriation process for other students who have previously lived abroad.

All participants have at least one parent who is a professional. More than half of the participants reported having one parent who was a medical doctor or held a doctoral degree. The most commonly reported jobs were engineer and medical doctor (e.g., internist, orthopedic surgeon, psychiatrist). Most of the participants expatriated because their parents were studying abroad through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program; the balance did so because their parents had a foreign job assignment.

Most of the participants lived in North America, with Houston, Texas, being the most common destination. Two of the participants had lived in Europe; one had done so exclusively,

and one other had lived both in North America and Europe. Aside from Houston, other locales included: Canada, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Colorado, Illinois, Germany, Italy, and England.

While a few students expatriated while in elementary school, the clear majority did so either as preschoolers or toddlers. The youngest age at expatriation was one month and the oldest was nine years old. It was found that most of the participants were too young to understand what was going on when they expatriated. Some were old enough to understand that they were moving, but did not fully comprehend the societal differences until they started to interact with peers in their adoptive societies. Due to the young age at which most of the participants expatriated, they tended to hold no preconceptions about living in a different country.

Amongst the boys who expatriated at an older age though, the reaction to the news differed. Some participants reported feeling excited at the prospect of experiencing a different place, as noted by one participant who reported, "I remember that I was so excited; I could never forget that memory." When asked about the source of this excitement, he stated that he was excited about the prospect of moving to the United States. One student expressed that he was excited, as he thought that he would be able to see and/or meet pop stars while abroad.

These feelings of excitement were not universal among the participants however. Some reported feelings of fear or nervousness about the impending relocation. As one participant noted, "I was like afraid because I didn't just want to go there because of my friends; like most of my friends in my other school…" This student also reported that he begged his parents to let him stay in Saudi Arabia. Other students attributed sadness to the prospect of leaving behind

beloved cousins and family members. As one boy explained, "I was a bit nervous, a little bit

sad… I was going to miss my family… my grandma, my grandpa, and my cousins, aunts…"

Another student reported having mixed feelings, which he described as being "struck."

When asked to clarify what he meant by this, he said, "sad and happy."

He explained, "I had just made a connection with my cousins and we had to go live

somewhere. I don't really play with my cousins. I'm kind of shy with them. But then I got

together with them and then my mom told me we had to go."

Seven of the participants lived abroad for between four and six years. The longest period

abroad was seven years, while the shortest time spent abroad was one year. Most of the students

had repatriated within the past two years; three had repatriated within nine months of

participating in this study.

Period of Expatriation. During the participants' time abroad, they appeared to fit in

well with their peers. None of the research subjects reported any major cultural

misunderstandings. One participant reported that he became upset when a classmate greeted him

with the Spanish, "hola," as he had thought that the other students had said something bad to

him. Upon realizing that this was merely a greeting, he apologized immediately for his

misunderstanding. Another student cited a conversation that he had had with another boy at

school. That boy had a friend who was a girl. The participant referred to her as the boy's

"girlfriend," not realizing the difference between a friend who is a girl and a girlfriend.

Several of the students reported that their English language proficiency was at level 0,

i.e., they had no English knowledge when they initially expatriated. It is interesting to note that

two of the boys mentioned that they recalled their first spoken word in English was "toilet."

Initially, those who lacked English language skills relied upon their parents to teach them some

survival phrases. When necessary, students were sent to ESL classes, though most students attributed their English language acquisition to their immersion in an English-speaking country. It should be noted that the participant who lived in Germany attended a bilingual school. The classes were conducted in both German and English with equal time given to each language. The student who had lived in Italy reported that he had attended an English-medium international school. Some of the students who had lived abroad for longer periods considered English to be their primary language and stated that while abroad, all family members tended to converse in English, although this was not consistently reported. Additionally, participants and parents tended to speak in Arabic to each other, while they often spoke to siblings in English. Nearly all participants appear to be fluent in English, with some qualifying as being fully bilingual.

When asked what they found to be surprising about living abroad, the students tended to show their resilience. None found anything particularly surprising while there. One participant expressed his shock when he had read about his former host country's past participation in genocide, as this was a subject that was never broached in class there. Instead, he learned about this dark part of that country's history after he had repatriated to Saudi Arabia. Another student was surprised when he saw a baseball game, as he did not realize that there was such a sport. In Saudi Arabia, the most popular sport is football (soccer). Few other sports are played with basketball being a distant second place to football. Interestingly, several of the participants expressed that they liked playing basketball and had lamented the recent loss of the basketball court at their school; a second football pitch was installed in its place.

As will be described in deeper detail in the social relations section, nearly all students reported making close friends while abroad. While some of the participants found other students from Saudi Arabia or other Arab students to befriend, most of the subjects reported that their

closest friends were neither from the host country nor from the Arab World. Some of the countries represented through participants' friendship included: The United States (while living in Europe), Mexico, India, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, Ecuador, and Palestine. The students who lived in one place for a longer period tended to befriend other local children as well, but on balance, there seemed to be little thought about a friend's ethnicity, race, religion, or even gender. One participant noted that many of his friends were girls. Several more indicated that they had played with girls while abroad; some also admitted that they had developed crushes on girls while abroad. Interaction between boys and girls is proscribed in Saudi Arabia from a young age for cultural and religious reasons; indeed, from preadolescence, the only girls that a Saudi boy may interact with are his own sisters and female cousins.

The students tended to remark upon the comparative lack of homework in the schools abroad. One participant stated this fact emphatically, "It was much easier because the school over there, all the work that we did was always, always, always at school. Like, we had very little homework. Like maybe six or seven assignments in a year." They also reported having a lot more freedom to socialize with other children within their neighborhoods. One of the more popular activities appeared to be riding bicycles around the neighborhood, and in some cases the town, with friends. This is a relatively rare occurrence in Saudi Arabia for several reasons including the extremely hot weather and a lack of safe places for children to ride bicycles; motor vehicle traffic tends to be very heavy in the region of the Eastern Province where the students live.

The participants relayed to me that there were certain aspects to life in Western countries that challenged their views on several topics. One participant recalled being initially shocked when, as a fourth-grade student in North America, the teacher presented a lesson on puberty. He

reported that not only were the girls and boys not segregated for the lesson, but there were detailed diagrams of both male and female anatomy, as well as extensive accounts of the changes that members of either sex would experience.

Sometimes students were exposed to issues and situations that would be taboo in Saudi Arabia. For example, one student reported his bemusement when he encountered a Gay Pride march, "Yeah, they have like a big parade and I found it weird that boy and boy because in Saudi Arabia has to be boy and girl and not boy... I found it strange and then I accepted it after a while." Another mentioned his shock when he went to a beach and saw women wearing bikinis. The only thing that he could do was to shield his eyes, as it was too shocking for him. Further, another participant recounted an experience at a public venue in which he was waiting in a line behind a young couple who were kissing constantly, thus making him feel uncomfortable through their public displays of affection, which are prohibited by law in Saudi Arabia.

Commenting on the level of environmental consciousness in Germany, between the frequent use of renewable energy, an extensive network of public transportation, and an emphasis on recycling, one participant expressed that this was one of the things that he enjoyed the most about life in Germany. One of the common observations by the participants regarded traffic and driving. Specifically, they noted that their mothers learned to drive while abroad. Another comparison that was commonly drawn regarded the driving styles in Saudi Arabia and in Western countries; a high percentage of drivers in Saudi Arabia act aggressively while behind the wheel. Some students expressed uneasiness when riding on the highway in Saudi Arabia.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of living in a foreign country for these participants though, was the amount of green space that they encountered in their host countries. Indeed, aside from comments on the driving styles of the West versus Saudi Arabia, one of the most

common observations was the difference between the vast desert of Saudi Arabia and the trees, forests, and grass of Western countries. When asked about this, one participant remarked, "The grass, because there is no grass here that we could play soccer on."

When asked to note one thing that he liked the most about living abroad, a student who had lived in Canada explained, "The fact that it has green all around the city. It's not just a stone city that has no plants; it is full of plants and full of crops. It's beautiful."

On a more sociocultural note, most of the participants pointed out that they felt as though they had full acceptance while living abroad. Some participants explained this phenomenon as not being treated as a "foreigner." Religious, ethnic, and racial differences were not reported to present any problems for the participants. While there were some cases of bullying that happened while the participants were abroad, the nature of the bullying was generic, mostly name calling, and did not appear to be motivated by any of the factors mentioned above. Indeed, as will be shown in a later section, bullying turned out to play a larger role in the participants' lives after they had repatriated.

Repatriation. The way students learned of their impending repatriation differed significantly. Some students knew from the time that they arrived in their host country that they would be leaving after a specified amount of time. This was particularly true with the students whose fathers had work assignments abroad.

Other participants, whose parents were abroad for educational reasons, reported varied experiences when learning about returning permanently to Saudi Arabia. One student told me that he had had no idea that he was leaving until his teacher presented him with a poster with photos and notes from all of his classmates, wishing him the best in the future. It was only after receiving the poster that he asked his mother what was going on, that he learned that he would be

moving. Another subject talked about not realizing that his trip to Saudi Arabia was a permanent relocation until he got to the airport. He lamented the loss of his scooter, which his parents had given to his friend's family. He was also saddened because he was promised a new scooter by his father, but had not received it as of the time of the interview.

The participants noted that there were a few aspects of life in Saudi Arabia that was different from life abroad. One student noted that he found Arabic names to be unusual after spending most of his life in North America. This is in spite of his having an Arabic name. Another participant noted that he needed to get used to censorship of images, particularly those of women in advertisements. Other subjects mentioned that they found their compatriots to be significantly more materialistic than their peers when they were living abroad. As one participant reported, "I got really surprised and thus was my biggest surprise I got, was that people here have iPhones and stuff like that. That's the biggest surprise I got. I almost didn't believe it because you live in a country and it's okay if you don't have anything. But here, they can't even live without them and so it's kind of weird."

The students were diverse when discussing the things that they found surprising about Saudi Arabia, or just things that they needed to become accustomed to. Several students mentioned that Arabic was initially a challenge, but they soon reacquired their spoken Arabic according to their accounts. While many students stated that they could converse in Arabic, there was a tendency for them to not know how to read or write the Arabic script.

Conversely, one student noted that he was surprised by the amount of English that is spoken in public in Saudi Arabia, "I didn't expect that I would find any other person that could speak English. I found people at restaurants that worked there that could speak English. I found people that I never even knew that came to our school… that started talking English and they

109

asked me what school I go to." Some were surprised or unaccustomed to shops and restaurants closing for prayer five times per day. Another participant was surprised to discover that there is a debate in Saudi Arabia about whether it is acceptable to listen to music. Another participant lamented that he felt like a shut-in, as there is nowhere near his house to play. He had to learn how to have fun inside his house without the benefit of having his friends there. Another participant touched upon a similar notion, as he said that he was unaccustomed to having to be accompanied whenever he went outside as his parents fear for his safety due to an allegedly high rate of kidnapping that exists in Saudi Arabia.

   Adjustment. Upon returning to Saudi Arabia, the participants tended to start off with a positive outlook. The reason for this optimism was unanimously attributed to the promise of being able to see extended family, and more specifically, their cousins, more frequently than in the past. For some participants, this meant being able to see cousins at least once a week; for others who are not from the Eastern Province, this meant being able to see cousins a few times a year, as opposed to once every year or two when they lived abroad. One student did note that he experienced mixed emotions, with feelings of happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. He attributed this happiness to the prospect of seeing extended family. He was sad to leave his friends behind though. Several participants echoed his sentiment regarding friends who were being left behind. This same participant felt fear due to his unfamiliarity with living in Saudi Arabia beyond the annual vacations he had taken in the past, which consisted of a month each summer. He felt uneasy about being in a school full of boys whom he did not know who were speaking a language that he was largely uncomfortable speaking. Lastly, he stated that his anger came from telling his parents that he wanted to return to Saudi Arabia. At the time of the interview, the participant had been back for approximately six months and reported that he felt as though he

110

was struggling culturally. This is not an unexpected response, given the amount of time that had elapsed since the participant's repatriation to Saudi Arabia.

In general, the participants reported patterns that were similar to Gullahorn and Gullahorn's Reverse Culture Shock W-Curve (1963), which attempts to illustrate the different phases of reverse culture shock that are experienced following repatriation. Most, but not all, participants reported feeling especially homesick and negative about being in their native country after approximately three months. This was generally expressed as being bored with their new life in Saudi Arabia, disquieted by the numerous societal differences to which they must adapt, and a feeling of frustration in their Arabic and Islamic classes. It is during this time that approximately half of the participants reported being the victims of taunting and bullying at school or in their communities. Within about two years, most participants feel mostly adjusted to life in Saudi Arabia, however. There were two outliers in this line of enquiry. One student claimed that he was 100% adjusted upon arrival in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, another participant who has been in Saudi Arabia for approximately four years stated that he still feels like an outsider. He attributed much of this difficulty to bullies at school who have not relented in their taunts since his arrival at the school in grade two.

When asked what the most striking cultural differences were that they noticed upon repatriating, most boys noted the differences in national dress. They were unaccustomed to seeing men wearing the *thawb*, *ghutrah*, and *aqal*. Similarly, they were no longer used to seeing women wearing the black robe known as *abaya* or the veil known as *niqab*; their mothers had worn clothes similar to their Western counterparts while abroad, with the addition of the *hijab*—the head scarf that Muslim women tend to wear in public. Most of the students' mothers acquired driver's licenses while abroad. The students found it frustrating, upon returning to

Saudi Arabia, that their mothers could no longer drive them around. Instead, they would have to wait for their father, get a taxi, or, if the family is prosperous enough, ask the family driver to bring them places. As one boy told me, "Another thing I found strange was every time I used to ask my mom, 'Mom, can you bring me to my friend's house?' And she's like, 'Ask your dad, not me. I can't drive.'"

Regarding differences in the classroom, the most frequently cited differences were that classes in other countries were mixed-gender. Another frequently mentioned difference was the comparative lack of homework in Western countries. The students at the participants' school in Saudi Arabia often have two or three hours of homework in a night. Students also noted differences in subjects. For example, in Saudi Arabia, there are no music classes at school and art is generally limited to drawing pictures. Instead of emphasizing the arts, Saudi schools teach Islamic studies as a major subject. Through this class, students learn about the teachings of Islam, different *hadiths*, or sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, and readings from the Quran.

One student pointed out that the cultural differences that govern sense of humor were personally significant for him. In the country that he had lived in before, people tended to be more selective with what they found to be humorous, whereas Saudis tend to laugh at more things.

A number of the students also noted the differences of opinion between Saudi Arabia and the West when considering dogs. In Islam, dogs are considered dirty and should only be kept outdoors as a guard. In Western countries though, dogs are frequently treated as a member of the family. One student lamented that he wished he could have a dog, but that his mother will not allow one in the house.

Many of the students also had to get used to differences in holidays. A few students mentioned that they used to wear costumes on Halloween when they lived abroad, but this is an unacceptable practice in Saudi Arabia. Approximately half of the students celebrated Christmas in the cultural sense and not in the religious sense. One student even reported that his family used to display a Christmas tree every year. Another subject recounted participating in an Easter egg hunt while abroad. Interestingly, all students identify as Muslim. When asked about participating in these holidays, they explained that it was fun, and that it was a means to spend time with friends who were also participating.

The question then arises, just how well are these participants adjusted? Additionally, if they are adjusted, how long did it take them to get to the point of no longer feeling like a foreign visitor in their own country? When asked how adjusted they were, all participants reported being at least halfway adjusted. Only a few students reported being fully adjusted. These were the students who were most confident with the Arabic-language skills. One participant who has been in Saudi Arabia for nearly three years now told me that it only took a few months to regain his Arabic language skills. At the time of his interview, he said that culturally, he still felt different, but that he has accepted that he is not the same as his peers who have only lived in Saudi Arabia. This illustrates the distinction between readjustment and reassimilation. While this student has learned to accept the new reality of living in Saudi Arabia again, and it has become "normal" for him, he has indicated that he is different, almost like an outsider looking in. His status is similar to that of an expatriate who has lived in a foreign country for an extended period. He or she may understand the culture and the language, but remains as an outsider, looking in.

Another participant told me that he was adjusted, but after being back for six months, he went through a phase of wanting to return to his former country of residence. One boy mentioned that he was embarrassed at a social gathering because he was charged with the task of serving traditional Arabic coffee. Unknown to this young man, who is left-handed, it is considered rude in Arab culture to serve food or drink with one's left hand; he had used his left hand to pour the coffee and was corrected by a family member in the presence of family and friends. A participant summed up the entire process by stating, "Yeah, I think the first six months, you're adjusting. I would say, nine months, you've adjusted. And I would say a year, you would start getting okay that you've moved."

In general, the participants do not discuss their time abroad frequently. They will volunteer information when asked however. When talking about their former country of residence, the discussion is centered on drawing comparisons between school abroad and school in Saudi Arabia. Most participants have discovered that others may only be mildly interested in the topic. This is particularly true when the audience is a cousin or friend who has never lived abroad. One student said that he avoids discussions about his past time abroad, as he is concerned that peers will think of him as a braggart. Another subject said that he limits discussions to his closest friends and those who have lived abroad. They are more likely to understand the challenges that he has faced with repatriation.

Social Relations. Most participants reported having strong social lives while living abroad, and had established solid support networks of friends. Only one participant appeared reticent to discuss friends while living abroad. Initially, he reported that he always played alone. With some coaxing though, he said that he remembered playing with large groups of students while abroad. Most of the students reported that their best friends while abroad were from third

countries, i.e. neither from Saudi Arabia nor from the host country. Those whose friends were local, tended to be more likely to adopt the mannerisms of the host country. They also reported staying in better contact with their friends than those whose friends were from elsewhere. There were exceptions however. One research subject only recalled small details of playing with friends while abroad. He was unable to recall his friend's name. On the other hand, a participant who had lived in Europe mentioned that his best friend was Japanese and that he had returned to that country, subsequent to moving, to visit that specific friend.

While a few participants maintained contact with friends in the former host country, via social media or Skype, the majority stated that they had moved on and had expected that their friends had also moved on and found new friends. A surprising number of students said that their mothers knew how to get in contact with friends' mothers, but that they had not asked to speak with their old friends. Instead, they tended to concentrate on establishing themselves in Saudi Arabia.

Nearly all of the participants reported being subjected to some form of bullying. Some reported it as comparatively innocuous teasing while abroad. Several others mentioned more serious incidents following their repatriation. This bullying consisted of students directing profanity towards the research subjects, physical threats, and incessant taunting; in one case, the participant reported that he has been subjected to taunting and harassment for the past four years. When asked about their compatriots' attitudes, some students said that they felt that many Saudi boys their age were too spoiled. Others felt that there are anger issues at work, but they were unable to speculate why so many children their age had so much pent up anger.

Some students felt that there were issues with children being spoiled in Saudi Arabia. One student summed up the attitude by giving a hypothetical example of a student whose parents

bought him a new phone: "There [*in foreign country*] they are like, 'Oh, it's a phone. Yes, I got a phone!' Here they're like, 'Oh, why did you have to give me a Samsung? I wanted an iPhone 7 Plus!'" Others discussed reaching out to neighborhood children with the hopes of befriending them, only to be rebuffed in a barrage of profanities.

This contrasts with the prevailing attitude that the students abroad were mostly kind and accepting of others, even if they looked different, had a different accent, or worshipped in a different way. Some students reported becoming virtually inseparable from their friends while they lived abroad. Some reported that their parents and their friends' parents had also become friends and that sometimes the two families traveled together to amusement parks or other tourist attractions. Some students even went to summer camp with their friends.

It should be noted that these students have not failed socially upon returning to Saudi Arabia. All of the participants have made at least one close friend, although one participant mentioned not having any friends. It turned out that he does not have any close friends at school, but has made friends outside of school. While one student said that he felt like a social outcast during his first year in Saudi Arabia, the majority of the participants reported making some close friends within two weeks of starting school. Some had made close friends by the end of the first day of school. Some said that they approached other students, while at least one participant noted that he was approached on the first day by classmates who wanted to befriend him.

Reflections on experiences. When asked to reflect upon their experiences, most participants were rather adept at providing information that gave a feel for how they felt about their time abroad. All except one participant considered his time abroad to have been a positive experience, even if some negative events occurred while abroad, such as some bullying and, in one case, being bitten by a dog. The participant who had expressed a negative opinion about his

116

time abroad did write a more positive assessment of his time when he completed his journal though.

More important to this study than their opinion of their host country though was how they felt about discussing their experiences. Indeed, when I first applied to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct this study, there were some concerns expressed by the IRB that some students could become upset if I were not careful with my wording. Luckily, this was not the case, and in fact, many of the participants were excited to participate and felt good knowing that their information may help other students in the future. Some participants said that it felt good to be able to discuss things that they had experienced for either of two reasons: it refreshed their memories or it gave them the opportunity to talk to someone who was interested in what they had to say about their time abroad. One participant characterized it as a mundane event. Apparently, he is frequently asked questions about his time abroad, and many of the questions were familiar to him.

The most frequent response to the question, "What is one thing you liked about the country you lived in?" was that there was more green space. The second most common reply was that people there were kind and open-minded. This was shown by being treated "normally" as one participant put it. Students also discussed the concept of having more freedom, particularly in the context of being able to go out and ride bicycles with their friends.

Students were realistic though, and understood that their host countries were not perfect. When asked to discuss things that they disliked about their host countries, bad weather was the most common complaint. One participant noted his discomfort when he saw scantily clad women on a public beach, and thus disliked the way that some people in Western countries dress. In a novel answer, one student stated that he disliked that he could not celebrate Christmas. He

tended to feel left out at Christmastime, because he saw his friends and classmates celebrating, yet he was unable to do so. Another student recalled that the thing he disliked was how "flawless" restaurants were in his former host country. He explained that this has caused him to raise his expectations, and now he is disappointed whenever he goes to a restaurant in his town. Also related to food, one participant noted his frustration with not being able to eat at many restaurants because the meat was not *halal*, which refers to meat that is slaughtered and prepared according to Islamic principles. Further, meat and derivatives from certain animals, e.g., pork and pork products, are strictly forbidden. This relates to a common experience that many of the participants had; they accidentally ate non-halal meat. In a couple cases, they were unaware that something contained pork; bacon for example, as bacon that is sold in Saudi Arabia is always made of turkey or beef. In one case, a student may have eaten a proscribed food item accidentally. He ate a marshmallow at school. He thought that it would be safe to eat, until he realized that it contained gelatin which is assumed to be from pork unless otherwise specified.

Participants commonly described their time abroad as having been "valuable" in helping to form their identities. The reason that it was valuable often related to there being "tons of fun stuff" to do. Others were thankful because of the friendships that they had made while abroad. In spite of the participants' youth, they also appreciated that their time abroad was a learning experience and that had they not been given the opportunity, perhaps they would not be as worldly as they are; they also noted that they would not be nearly as proficient in the English language.

While reflecting upon their past, the research participants made some altruistic statements in the form of advice for two groups of students: those who are preparing to expatriate and those who are preparing to repatriate. All of the suggestions for children who were preparing to move

abroad centered around social relations with students in the host country. All of the participants gave advice that was a variation on the concept of being kind to others and keeping an open mind. One response urges the future expatriates to learn as much about the host country's culture as possible. Several students also warned that fighting in school is strictly forbidden in Western society. When asked to give advice to Saudi Arabian students who were going to move abroad, one student stated, "Don't be a jerk. If you're nice, you'll make lots of friends quickly."

For the students who are preparing to return to Saudi Arabia, the advice was somewhat different. Most commonly, future repatriates were urged to start learning Arabic as soon as possible, if they were not currently using it. While some participants advised those students who are still abroad not to worry or wished them good luck, several warned that future returnees should be aware of the frequency of fights and "bad behavior" in Saudi schools. Some students also characterized Saudi Arabia as a hard place to live, although they did not provide further details into why they had characterized it as a difficult place to live. One student qualified his more critical statements with a more diplomatic declaration that, "There are nice kids in Saudi." Another boy tempered his criticism by stating that "You'll get used to it [living in Saudi Arabia]."

Final wrap-up. During the final phase of the interviews, the participants discussed their personal suggestions on how schools in Saudi Arabia could facilitate a smoother readjustment to Saudi society for repatriated students. They also voiced what they wished others knew about them before judging them. They told me about how expatriation has altered their cultural self-identification. Lastly, they talked about their plans for the future.

On the subject of how schools could help repatriated students to adjust more smoothly, the majority of the participants suggested that schools should develop Arabic as a Second

Language (ASL) programs for returning students. One participant explained that simply having a class in which an Arabic-speaking teacher simply wrote some words and phrases on the board is insufficient though. Most students were already able to at least express themselves in Saudi vernacular. The real needs were to develop reading and writing skills. Grammar and standard Arabic instruction were the real areas that needed improvement, rather than vocabulary and conversational Arabic. The participant further went on to qualify his statement by suggesting that anyone teaching ASL should be trained specifically to do so.

Another student recommended establishing a buddy program in which newly repatriated students are paired up with students who had previously returned. In this way, they could be mentored on the culture of the school from a peer. This buddy would also be able to understand the challenges that face a new repatriate, having experienced repatriation previously. Most students agreed that a program of this type could be beneficial, provided it is voluntary and the participating students are assessed for compatibility, i.e., they should share interests.

There was one participant who held a dissenting view, though. He felt that such a program would open up the newly returned student to peer ridicule. He said that at least in his grade, there would be students who would taunt the student for not being self-sufficient. The alternative suggested by this participant was simply to have more opportunities for students to interact, such as school field trips and sports days. He felt that during these days when students have extended amounts of time to talk, it is more possible for students to meet others who would make good friends. Because of the short amount of time allotted for recess and lunch though, there is little opportunity to get to know other students during a typical school day.

While a minority of students suggested cultural awareness and special Islamic classes at school would be beneficial, most of the participants said that they believed that these were

subjects best left for their parents and other family members to teach. One reason for their reticence to have special cultural awareness and religion classes may be that there are differences in culture according to regions of Saudi Arabia. Sectarian differences likely play a role in the reluctance to suggest the utility of a special Islamic class. The different sects of Islam have different methods of praying. Because sectarian issues can be contentious in Saudi Arabia, any explicit discussion of this subject was avoided during interviews.

 "Don't judge a book by its cover. Open the book and read it." This statement by one of the participants summed up his closing thoughts on how he wanted people to think of him and other students who have repatriated. According to most of the students, there was a need for others to be understanding of them and that just because they are Saudi nationals does not mean that they necessarily act as a Saudi in a cultural sense. The consensus amongst the participants was that they felt a certain level of frustration surrounding Arabic and Islamic classes. "[T]he students, they say, 'Why don't you know Arabic and you're Saudi?' And also, they also say, 'Why –like you should know Arabic, you should know.' So, what if I didn't get the chance to learn?"

When asked about the teachers' reactions to his lack of command of the Arabic language, the same participant replied, "They say that you should be learning. But they say you should be good at it by now. See, I haven't gotten the chance. But sometimes, the teachers are okay with this, sometimes they're not."

In their view, they were expected to be grade level in Arabic and Islamic studies even though most of the participants had spent most of their elementary years attending English-speaking schools in Western countries. Some students noted that they were accused of being disruptive or a class clown because they were unable to read or write at the level required by the

curriculum. Another student reported the nature of the difficulties that he faced in his Islamic class:

> [The teacher] makes me write when I'm not learning anything. He's just teaching me the letters when I already know the letters. The handwriting when I already know the handwriting. And so he's not teaching me anything, but he's telling me, 'You have to do stuff. You have to.' And then, I tell him, 'But I can't do that. I can't do it.' And then whenever I raise my hand for something, and then I forget the thing, he says, 'Oh, so now you're trying to act like a clown.' And then he makes me go outside [of the classroom] or do something.

In at least one case, the student was never allowed to explain to the teacher why he was deficient in his Arabic and Islamic. Another participant called for peers and teachers to be more understanding of him and the other students who have spent extended periods abroad. While most of the participants felt that some people were judgmental, some other students did note that they have not faced these same problems and that their teachers and peers have been understanding. Again, this difference is most likely attributable to the individual's level of Arabic ability.

The existing literature concerning third-culture kids has suggested that if a person remains in a foreign country for an extended period, he or she eventually develops a third-culture, i.e., an appropriation of cultural traits from both the person's native culture and that of the host country. When asked how they identify themselves in a cultural sense, the students responded with a highly variable set of answers. Some feel almost completely foreign, while some others feel completely or almost completely Saudi. Most participants reported being a mixture of the cultures within which they have lived. One participant characterized himself as

having "green blood," i.e., being proud to be Saudi, but when he considers his behavior and mindset, it reflects more of the culture that he lived in while abroad with inflections from his Muslim faith and his ethnic background.

The cultural aspects that participants tended to appropriate from the host culture tended to be related to acting in an orderly fashion, e.g., lining up to wait for things; lining up is not necessarily expected in Saudi Arabia. Another subject noted that he developed a greater sense of safety awareness due to his time in North America. Another student developed a strong sense of environmental awareness after living in Germany. A student who lived in Italy attributes his love of walking to his time spent there, as he often traveled around town on foot.

In some cases, the students had an extensive knowledge of Western pop culture and could have easily been mistaken for being from the host country. This was especially noticeable when one participant, while giving a presentation to his class, made numerous pop culture references to the US reality television series, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*; his class was bewildered, as they did not understand American cultural references.

When considering the future, the participants were nearly evenly split on whether they envisioned themselves living in Saudi Arabia or moving abroad. Five students stated unequivocally that they wanted to remain in Saudi Arabia. Five others wanted to return to the country that they had lived in previously, and one had dreams both in Saudi Arabia and in a foreign country with "a beach and good weather." Participants envisioned themselves as scientists, soccer players, entrepreneurs, filmmakers, illustrators, school administrators, soldiers, pilots, and a math professor. One participant stated that he wanted to open a cultural museum in the United States that would allow people to learn about different countries and their cultures. Among those participants who wanted to emigrate, at least one stated that regardless of where he

lives, he would always want to maintain his ties to Saudi Arabia and would visit for a month every year in order to spend time with family.

So where is home according to the participants? This specific question was only asked to six of the interviewees. Of those who responded, two told me that home was not a specific place. It was, instead, wherever their families were located. Two other students stated unequivocally that Saudi Arabia is home. The final two consider the United States to be home, although one of these respondents has split allegiances to the United States and his grandmother's house. When asked what his reaction would be if his extended family moved to the United States, he exclaimed, "[That] would be heaven!"

Chapter 4 Summary

Between January and May 2017, I interviewed 11 Saudi boys between the ages of 10 and 12. The purpose of these interviews was to answer my research question, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" A secondary purpose was to gain insight from these young men, regarding what steps could be taken in schools to assist others who are in the process of repatriating and adjusting to life in Saudi Arabia.

The process considered the participants' background information, and discussions focused on time spent abroad, the time around actual repatriation, and the adjustment period following repatriation. I also asked the students to reflect upon their experiences, to discuss social interactions in both the host country and in Saudi Arabia, and to sum up who they are in a cultural sense.

The main findings demonstrated that Saudi children place a very large emphasis on the importance of the extended family; all participants noted this major factor in their lives. The students also were relatively consistent in providing criticisms of certain aspects of the culture in

their home country and school. Most students noted a much higher rate of fighting, bullying, and teasing that occurs in Saudi Arabia. They also stated that they perceived many students to be suffering from anger issues.

Overall, the students appeared to be resilient and adapted quickly to the differences between their former host countries and Saudi Arabia. This was especially noticeable among students who had spent less time abroad, and those who repatriated by age ten. Students who were older at the time of repatriation tended to have a closer identification with the host country's culture. As an outlier though, a middle school student who had repatriated at age seven still identified with the host country's culture more than with Saudi Arabian culture. It should be noted that this student had spent most of his life up to that point living abroad, as he had expatriated as an infant. Repatriating after age 10 seemed to make the readjustment more of a challenge as well. The students who lived abroad for the shortest amount of time, repatriated before their eleventh birthday, and had a good command of the Arabic language tended to fare the best upon returning to Saudi Arabia.

Interviewees noted that the best thing that a student could do before returning to Saudi Arabia is to study Arabic so that they will be able to settle into class more easily. As for students who are preparing to move abroad, the interviewees recommended that expatriating students should move with an open mind and should refrain from fighting or "being mean." If they follow this advice, they "will make lots of friends quickly," as one participant stated.

The students also made suggestions for how schools could facilitate the readjustment process following repatriation. First, one participant suggested that there should be a sort of buddy program at school, in which newly arrived students are paired with student volunteers who have been back in Saudi Arabia for a longer period. The volunteer could help the new

student by answering questions, showing firsthand understanding about the challenges unique to students who have returned to Saudi Arabia after an extended period abroad, and providing mentorship for the Arabic language as needed.

The students also stated that a much more robust Arabic as a Second Language program would be beneficial. In addition to conversational Arabic, this program would offer the students the opportunity to learn how to read and write the Arabic script and would bolster their knowledge of literary Arabic. In the current situation, several participants stated that there were problems with certain Arabic and Islamic teachers lacking the patience needed to assist students who had minimal Arabic-language skills.

Chapter 4 provided findings related to 11 preadolescent Saudi Arabian boys who had lived abroad and subsequently have repatriated. Through a series of interviews with each participant, I sought to uncover the common experiences of these students, with the possibility for transferability to similar students in different settings. Chapter 5 discusses these results in the context of the literature, implications for said results, and recommendations for further research and program development.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

Within Chapter 5, I will start by providing a summary of the results in order to refresh the reader's understanding of the study. Following this summary, I will furnish a discussion of the results, thus presenting my personal interpretation of the findings of the research that I have conducted. I will proceed to relate these results to the extant literature that touches upon facets of this study. I will concentrate on three specific areas: how the results relate to the community of practice; how the results relate to the literature; and how the results relate to the community of scholars. After I have discussed the results through the lenses of my personal interpretation and through the connections to existing literature, I will provide further discussion of the design limitations. Within this discussion, I will explain any problems or unexpected outcomes that may have emerged while conducting research.

The course of the discussion will next be segued into a presentation of my views regarding the implications of this study. I will explain how I believe that the results of the study may fit into the body of knowledge, and perhaps, provide a basis for the formation of new policies governing repatriation facilitation programs at schools where the need for such a service may exist, especially within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I will make some recommendations for further research. These recommendations will consider the feasibility of conducting studies that are similar in scope to the study that has been presented here, but investigate different demographic groups.

Finally, once the various aspects of this discussion have been presented, I will provide a conclusion of the entire study. Key points and the significance of these points will be stated

explicitly. New discoveries will be elucidated in this section prior to the conclusion of this report.

Summary of the Results

As a refresher, this study sought to answer the question, "How do male Saudi Arabian schoolchildren, aged nine through 13, experience repatriation?" In order to answer this question, I interviewed 11 participants who were Saudi Arabian boys between the ages of 10 and 12, had lived in a foreign country outside of the Arab world, and had subsequently returned to live in Saudi Arabia. The reason for conducting this study was to fill a gap in the extant literature; there was only one study found in the English-language literature that discussed Saudi Arabian university students who had lived abroad and subsequently repatriated. The study was published in 1984. No published studies were found that addressed the effects of repatriation on preadolescent Saudi Arabians.

Using a phenomenological approach, I sought to form a singular, common experience that accurately reflects the realities of the participants. It is imperative that I reiterate that I did not seek to prove any particular hypothesis. Instead, I conducted this research to report on how members of the researched demographic have experienced repatriation. I utilized Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theories. Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that experiences and observations of others' experiences can affect one's patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1971). In Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, knowledge and learning are linked to the external forces of social experience. As an extension, cultural development is affected by social interaction (Vygotsky, 1929). Furthermore, Vygotsky theorized that knowledge and learning are affected by social experiences (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015; Vygotsky, 1929) and that knowledge acquisition is a collaborative process.

Among the existing literature, it has been found that preadolescents and adolescents tend to face greater difficulty in repatriating when compared to adults (Klemens & Bikos, 2009). The same study found that repatriation is particularly difficult for adolescents who have repatriated after the age of 15. Younger children, on the other hand, were found to be more resilient. This resilience was observed in most of the participants' accounts, the oldest of whom was 12 years old. The oldest student at the time of repatriation was 11 years old.

Third culture kids frequently benefit from their overseas experience. They tend to be more aware of the world beyond the borders of their own country and tend to have firsthand knowledge of various places and cultures around the world (Barringer, 2000; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). Typically, they are more adaptable to new situations and keep an open mind (Barringer, 2000; Gerner, 1994). Furthermore, third culture kids tend to excel academically; they are four times as likely to earn bachelor degrees when compared to their monocultural compatriots (Useem, 1993).

Although third culture kids tend to remain more open-minded of different cultures, they also tend to suffer from higher rates of depression and anxiety (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Gillies, 1998), especially immediately following repatriation (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). This translated to a significantly lower level of emotional stability, according to their study.

Since the start of the research process, some new literature has been published. In her dissertation, Bennett (2016) reported on the repatriation and assimilation experiences of American TCKs. One result of her research was to form a distinct differentiation between repatriation (adjustment) and actual assimilation. According to her research, repatriation adjustment can occur quickly; the repatriated TCK looks and sounds as any other native member

of that society. Actual assimilation is a longer, more gradual process, which involves changes to one's self-identity, however.

Throughout the course of my interviews and analysis, I found that it was difficult to categorize the participants' experiences into one that is common among all of them. There were strong variations that can be attributed to the following factors: length of time spent abroad, age at repatriation, length of time since repatriating, level of Arabic language skills at time of repatriation, and individual personality traits. Those who tended to exude high levels of self-confidence, coupled with a relaxed, "go with the flow" demeanor tended to adjust much faster than the students who appeared to be more introverted or possessing a lower level of self-confidence.

One universal attribute was the importance of family. All participants voiced the same notion that while their time abroad tended to be a positive experience, they wished to spend more time with extended family, particularly their cousins. While happy to see their siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents, the participants found certain aspects of life in Saudi Arabia to be difficult. A common complaint was that they had grown accustomed to being chauffeured by their mothers while abroad. While this was not mentioned by all students, a clear majority found this to be a change that took getting used to. Most students also felt that it was unsafe to play outside in Saudi Arabia. They noted that there are many drivers who do not follow safe practices when driving. Additionally, several participants expressed concern about a risk of being kidnapped. Although the kidnapping rate is higher in Saudi Arabia than in any of the countries in which the participants had previously lived, the risk is characterized as medium by NYA International (2016).

Other concerns that were mentioned surrounded language ability and an allegedly higher rate of bullying and fighting that occurs in Saudi Arabian schools. This supposition is backed up by a study that was published in the English-language media in Saudi Arabia, which reports that in one study, 50% of Saudi Arabian student respondents reported being victims of bullying (Khan, 2014). Bullying in Saudi Arabia often targets tribal, sectarian, or racial differences (NOBullying.com, 2016).

A high level of importance was also placed on learning to speak, read, and write Arabic before returning to Saudi Arabia. Students suggested that knowledge of Arabic was necessary not only to do well in Arabic and Islamic classes, but also to facilitate socializing with peers. Most students also suggested that there should be a strong Arabic as a Second Language program within schools that caters to Saudi Arabian repatriates. In order to facilitate readjustment and eventual assimilation, most participants also embraced one student's suggestion to organize a buddy program, in which a new returnee is paired with a peer who had returned previously. In this way, the two students have some common experiences, yet the one who has been in Saudi Arabia longer, likely has adjusted to a greater degree and can show the newly arrived student how to navigate Saudi Arabian school and youth culture.

Discussion of the Results

With the exception of the participants' views towards the importance of extended family, I found that it was not possible to distill the participants' experiences into a single, common account. There were too many differences that seemed to play roles in how the participants' experiences had unfolded. The factors that appeared to alter the students' repatriation and readjustment experiences were: age at expatriation, age at repatriation, Arabic-language ability at the time of repatriation, and personality. Region of origin and sectarian differences may have

played very minor roles in affecting the participants' experiences following repatriation, but these aspects were not discussed in interviews, as they can be contentious issues within Saudi Arabia.

The importance of family. There was only one area in which there was a unanimous consensus; all of the participants stated that in the time leading up to repatriation, they were excited at the prospect of spending time with their extended families. Most often, the research subjects specifically cited their desire to be able to meet with their cousins on a regular basis. As a cultural outsider, I found this commonality to be surprising; particularly that the students had specifically stated that one of their priorities was to meet with their cousins. Based upon a conversation I later had with a Saudi Arabian citizen, I learned that from the Saudi Arabian point of view, not only was this desire not surprising, but it was predictable. I had noted that I had discovered a peculiar pattern; before I could express it, this Saudi Arabian national correctly forecasted that I would mention the strong ties to cousins. His explanation was that because Saudi Arabian culture is based upon family and tribalism, Saudi Arabian people tend to feel a strong sense of duty to their extended families (M. Almarzouq, personal communication, March 21, 2017). Historically, people in what is now Saudi Arabia could only rely on their family members for security. Thus, this strong familial connection has become ingrained in the Saudi Arabian psyche.

Age at expatriation. I found that the students who expatriated at a younger age tended to have the greatest challenge with readjusting to Saudi Arabia following repatriation. The students who had the easiest time were those who had started school in Saudi Arabia, expatriated, and then subsequently returned. This may be attributable to their feeling a greater connection to Saudi Arabia, when compared to the participants who had expatriated in infancy,

and thus had no practical memories of Saudi Arabia beyond annual visits during the summer. The students who had expatriated at a younger age tended to view Saudi Arabia as a place to take summer vacations and see extended family members. Following the pattern of the U-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), it is evident that after the novelty has worn off and the new living situation is the new reality, the student may face challenges that differ from their peers who have firm recollections of what life is like in Saudi Arabia.

Age at repatriation. Participants tended to fare better if they had repatriated between the ages of nine and 10 years. This may be a result of the relatively small sample that I used in this research. The students who repatriated after age 10 tended to be more in tune with the culture of the host country, and thus found it a challenge to move back into Saudi culture. Conversely, the students who were younger than nine years of age at the time of repatriation also tended to struggle more. In one case, a participant had reported that he had been in Saudi Arabia since grade two and, now in middle school, still faced significant challenges with reassimilating into Saudi society. The student who had repatriated latest, at age 11, was much more in tune with American culture and society than with his native culture. This differentiation according to age translated into how the participants viewed themselves. The students who were nine or 10 years old at the time of repatriation were more likely to identify culturally as Saudi Arabian. The students whose age at repatriation fell outside of this range tended to identify more with their host countries' cultures.

Arabic skills. The students who returned to Saudi Arabia with a strong command of spoken and written Arabic tended to report that repatriation, readjustment, and reassimilation were easy, when compared to the students who had fewer Arabic-language skills. This may illustrate a real-world example of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which posits that language

influences one's cultural identity. It is also suggested that language affects one's perception of reality (Jackson, 2010).

Bullying. Students also tended to note that a comparatively high rate of bullying in Saudi Arabia. The bullying in Saudi Arabia tends to start as verbal taunts because of sectarian, tribal, or racial differences. In some cases, the verbal taunts gradually escalate into actual violence, ranging from tripping to actual fighting (NOBullying.com, 2016). The students who mentioned bullying as being an obstacle to reassimilation suggested that in certain cases the bullying may stem from the aggressors' feelings of jealousy towards the repatriated students. They also noted that there seem to be many angry children in Saudi Arabia. They were unsure where these negative emotions may have come from however. In one case, a participant recounted being in a playground near his home. He observed two boys playing with toy guns. When the participant commented to one of the boys that he had made an impressive shot, he was met with a barrage of aggressive language that was laced with profanities. Several other participants echoed having similar experiences at school or in their local communities.

As an observer, I believe that the root of this bullying can be attributed to a combination of factors. Firstly, the repatriated students, particularly those who have spent most of their lives abroad, have a different view of reality, based upon the strong Western influences on their identities, both societally and linguistically. Some of the bullying may be a matter of differences in play style between Saudi Arabian children and Western children. Also, there may be some jealousy on the part of the bullies.

Differences in values may also play a role. One student who had lived in Europe noted that while he is Saudi Arabian and a devout Muslim, he did not share many of the values of his monocultural peers. He felt that too many of his classmates in Saudi Arabia were spoiled and

materialistic. The participants mentioned several times that they felt that many of their monocultural classmates acted with a sense of self-entitlement and tended to be materialistic and judgmental. One student who had lived in North America described it, "here they'd be like, 'oh, why do you have to give me a Samsung? I want an iPhone seven plus!'" He stated that the students in his host country would have been thankful to have any mobile phone, regardless of which model it was, even if it was not the latest model.

This sentiment was echoed by a student who had lived in Europe. He stated that he neither owned nor wished to own a mobile phone, in contrast to his classmates who tended to view one's model of mobile phone to be a statement of the individual's worth. His attitude regarding the possession of technology was at odds with those of his Saudi Arabian peers, yet, according to him, more accurately reflected values he had acquired while living abroad.

When pressed to suggest the reasons behind these negative behavioral attributes, some of the participants suggested that perhaps the students who acted in such a manner had not been taught that that sort of behavior was not acceptable. There may be some truth to this, as many Saudi Arabian upper and upper-middle class families rely on domestic help and nannies, who are generally not permitted to correct children's misbehavior.

Another form of bullying that seems to occur with relative frequency is the targeting of differences in personality, culture, or lack of Arabic-language ability. The repatriated students who exhibit more Westernized behavior tend to be the ones who reported bullying the most frequently. The bullying is exacerbated when a student lacks knowledge of Saudi Arabian vernacular or culture. One student told me that while it is important for the school to help repatriated students to build their Arabic-language skills and to readjust to life in Saudi Arabia, he feared that students in such a program would be targeted for bullying, with taunts of being a

bunch of babies who cannot fend for themselves. The students who have retained their

knowledge of Saudi Arabian culture from before their expatriation tended to readjust quickest.

Easy adjustment. Among the students whom I interviewed, there were a few who

appeared to have readjusted and perhaps reassimilated with relative ease. In most cases, these

were the students who had a firm recollection of living in Saudi Arabia prior to their expatriation.

Based upon this existing knowledge, they were in a better position upon repatriation to readjust.

As discussed previously, I found that most of the participants were resilient when compared to

older adolescents, as described in the literature.

The most successful traits that I have noted amongst the participants were having a

recollection of life in Saudi Arabia from before their move abroad, maintaining a positive

outlook on life, being able to converse in Arabic, and appearing to be naturally adaptable to new

situations. Being a sort of cultural chameleon allowed these students to control their level of

conspicuousness.

Discussion of the Results in relation to the Literature

Although this study appears to be the first to delve into the subject of the repatriation

experiences of young, Saudi Arabian boys, there are parallels that link this work to previously

published literature within the field of TCKs. As cited in the extant literature, children who

spend a long time outside of their native country start to adapt aspects of the host country's

culture and fit them into their cultural identity as a hybrid with the native culture (TCK World,

n.d.). In many ways, the participants in this study would sooner be thought of as being a Western

child, rather than Saudi Arabian. This is not only because of their command of the English

language or their neutral accents. Instead, it stems from their embrace of certain aspects of

Western culture, their general knowledge of Western pop culture, and a difference in their values

136

when compared to their monocultural peers. Meanwhile, most participants equally identified as being Saudi on a cultural level. That said, I was not convinced that any of the participants felt "ownership" in either their Saudi cultural aspects or the facets of their cultural make-up that they had adopted while living abroad. This lack of ownership while claiming "membership" within various cultures is a common response to living abroad for an extended period (Gillies, 1998).

As forecasted by Barringer (2000) and Gerner (1994)), the students in my study tended to be much more open-minded and less judgmental than their peers. Several participants reported that while living abroad, they had joined in on celebrations of holidays that would not normally be celebrated in Saudi Arabia, yet they maintained their strong Muslim faith. Others had a strong desire to do so, but never broached the subject with their parents. They also did not consider peers' religions, national backgrounds, or races when selecting friends while living abroad. At least one student went so far as to attend a summer camp that catered mostly to Jewish children. His closest friend when he lived abroad was Jewish.

The boys who participated in this study also tended to have a keener sense of the world outside of Saudi Arabia, a concrete opinion of how Saudi Arabia was better than their host countries in certain ways and vice versa. This wider worldview and the firsthand knowledge that the students have gained of other places and cultures are further benefits of being a TCK (Barringer, 2000; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). Each participant was able to juxtapose experiences abroad with those that they have had in Saudi Arabia. While they were not able to make meaning with the same level of sophistication that would be expected from an adolescent or an adult, it was apparent that each respective student in this study had acquired valuable life lessons during his time abroad. Mainly, they learned that cultures elsewhere are not necessarily the same as Saudi Arabia, and that there are no "rights" or "wrongs" when comparing cultures.

These boys also learned how to switch between cultures according to the situation. None of the participants reported favoring particular languages or cultural filters for specific emotional states however; this was a phenomenon that was previously reported (Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015).

As Barringer (2000) suggested, reverse culture shock can be a challenge for children upon their return to their home country. Because of the young age at which several of the participants expatriated, however, the challenge that they faced upon repatriation was more akin to culture shock, rather than reverse culture shock. The young age at which the participants repatriated however, did help to temper the experience and added to a seeming resilience by the subjects. Bikos et al. (2009) found in their study that younger children tend to face fewer adjustment challenges when compared to adolescents.

Interestingly, while the literature tends to suggest that reverse culture shock is typically more serious than that faced when expatriating (Austin & Beyer, 1984; Barringer, 2000; Bikos et al, 2009; Davis et al, 2013; Gaw, 1995; Klemens & Bikos, 2009), I found in my study that the students who tended to struggle the most with repatriation were those who did not have a clear recollection of life in Saudi Arabia prior to expatriation. This differentiation brings forward a potential question for future research: Are the youngest expatriates *really* expatriates while living abroad or are they *bona fide* members of the host society, who hold a different citizenship? Indeed, some of the participants limited their Saudi identity to their religion and their family background, but maintained a Western identity on a cultural level.

Social learning theory. How did the students' self-identities form in this way? While abroad, they likely mimicked the observed behavior of their peers from the host country. Bandura (1971) suggested that one can learn through vicarious experiences. That is to suggest that one can learn different behavior by observing another person's experience. This may, in

part, help to explain how a child may learn a different language through immersion. Additionally, the child may observe how the other students in class behave, and will then learn that this is the way to behave in a given setting. Bandura noted that for this type of knowledge acquisition to occur, the learner needs to have the ability to "recognize the essential features of the model's behavior" (p.6). That is to suggest that the participants would not have benefitted by simply being in the company of other students. They needed to become active observers. Whether students acquired their language and cultural knowledge according to Bandura's social learning theory is unknown.

Social constructivism. Another possible way that the participants may have acquired language and cultural knowledge while abroad can be explained by Vygotsky's social constructivism. Vygotsky believed that social interaction and cognitive development are inseparable, and that knowledge and learning are governed by social experiences (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2015; Vygotsky, 1929). In this model, the belief is that the need for social interaction put the participants into a situation in which their cognitive development was pushed into action, thus resulting in language and cultural acquisition.

If one considers some of the participants' experiences in which they recount their first days at school while abroad, it becomes apparent that the Vygotskian model of social constructivism likely played a role in their development. One participant went into great detail about his first few days in preschool in the United States. He recounted not knowing any words of English, beyond a few words that his father had taught him, but he quickly befriended a classmate who was of East Asian background. Through numerous social interactions with this classmate and other friends as time went on, he gradually learned how to converse and behave in a manner that was culturally appropriate for the United States.

Limitations

In addition to the delimitations that I had applied to this study, such as opening it only to Saudi Arabian preadolescent boys, there were further limitations over which I had no control. First and foremost, I was working with young boys who ranged in age from 10 to 12 years old. Of these participants, only one had reported being interviewed in a similar fashion previous to my study.

In general, it was difficult to obtain the deep, rich line of questioning that I sought. In many cases, students simply did not remember certain details. When details were provided, there were several cases of those details being of a dubious nature. For example, one student told me that while he lived abroad, school started at five o'clock in the morning. Upon asking a family member for clarification, I was told that school started at half past eight. Several students appeared to lack the capability to provide a narrative that was detailed, on-topic, and had a level of sophistication, i.e., showed signs of self-reflection and the manufacture of personal meaning from the experiences. Instead, the participants tended to state what had happened without any further commentary. Several participants appeared to have difficulty recalling details to the extent that would have been optimal. Despite this limitation however, the interviews yielded approximately 1000 pages of material. From this, approximately 250 pages of usable quotes were selected.

Each student was given a journal with specific exercises that were to be completed. This proved to be of limited utility. The journals were generally completed in a halfhearted fashion and in several cases, were nearly illegible. I accept that all culpability for the failure of the journal exercises rests with me, as I had not sufficiently stressed the importance of neatness,

detail, and timeliness. I spent weeks seeking journals from some of the participants, only to be given a document that appeared to be completed in a rush.

While not a direct limitation of the study itself, a major hindrance to my ability to analyze the data was the poor quality of the transcripts that I obtained from the contracted transcription company. I had to send the transcripts back several times for revision. Eventually, I gave up and used the transcripts in conjunction with the recordings of the actual interviews. When I found a pertinent statement, I searched the recording to find the actual words that were spoken. The lack of quality transcripts easily added one or two months to the process of analysis, and bore its costs through high levels of frustration.

If this study were to be replicated, there are some changes that I would recommend in order to improve the strength of the study. First and foremost, I would suggest that the journal activities be integrated into the interviews. In this way, the participants will be able to seek clarification when unsure of a specific activity's objective. Additionally, real-time feedback and guidance can be provided. Quality control could be provided while the activities are completed, thus eliminating many of the problems with procrastination and rushed results.

In cases of there being sufficient numbers of potential participants, I would also suggest that students who lack a recollection of life in Saudi Arabia prior to expatriation be excluded. Given the limited population from which to choose participants however, I had to compromise and not enforce this prerequisite. The ignoring of this initial requirement, however, did preclude juxtaposing the research subjects' experiences both prior to expatriation and following repatriation; this was an area that I had hoped to investigate.

Thirdly, I would be more proactive in keeping discussions on track. Some of the earlier interviews that I conducted went on for far too long, and yielded little useful information as a

ratio to that which was unusable. One participant sat with me for more than six hours in total. While he provided some valuable insights, it was difficult to sort this important information from the large amount of irrelevant narrative that was volunteered during the span of our interviews. As a reaction to this participant's long interviews, I feel that I may have pushed some of the later interviews along too quickly. Indeed, I could have and probably should have pressed later interviewees for more detailed information.

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The primary purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the body of knowledge by reporting the common experience of preadolescent, Saudi Arabian boys who had lived abroad and subsequently repatriated. There was no intention to prove a theory. Instead, I embarked on this project with the purpose of reporting on the collective experience of Saudi Arabian preadolescent boys who had lived outside of the Arab world and had subsequently repatriated. While I was unable to distill the varied experiences of 11 boys into a singular, common experience, I found that it was valuable to hear these boys tell their stories and provide their personal insights about the subjects of living abroad, moving back to Saudi Arabia, and how their experiences have influenced their self-identities. It is my hope that the information that has been gleaned from my research can go towards the organization of educational programs that facilitate newly repatriated students' efforts to readjust to life in Saudi Arabia.

Firstly, based upon observations and the testimony of the participants, I believe that it is important for schools that serve this population to have programs in place. The programs that were most frequently requested by the participants were remedial Arabic language classes that touch upon culture and a buddy program.

Because language appears to govern cultural identity (Jackson, 2010), learning the Arabic language, especially Saudi vernacular, would assist students in feeling a closer identification with the Saudi culture. In close connection with language lessons, some cultural awareness should be introduced to the students. Although they carry Saudi Arabian passports, they do not necessarily understand the finer points of the culture. Most of the participants whom I interviewed did not fully identify with Saudi culture.

Peer programs should also be instituted in schools that serve Saudi Arabian children who have recently repatriated. Most students whom I interviewed felt that it would have been helpful to have a peer facilitator or "buddy" who has firsthand experience with living abroad and repatriating to Saudi Arabia. This facilitator would volunteer to mentor a newly arrived student. His job would entail assisting the newly arrived student while he adjusts. He would be available to answer questions about language, culture, how the school operates, and also be a social connection. In essence, the facilitator is there to "show the ropes" to the new student. Ideally, the repatriated student and his buddy would be in the same grade and in the same class section, so that the newly arrived student can have access to his facilitator at all times during the school day.

Another area that appears to need improvement is the current state of the Arabic and Islamic classes. Most students in this study mentioned that at least initially, they struggled in Arabic and Islamic classes. In several cases, the students felt as though the Arabic and Islamic teachers lacked empathy. Instead, some of these students compained that they had been persecuted and punished for not knowing Arabic at the grade level. The negative reactions on the part of some Arabic and Islamic teachers exacerbated bullying issues in some cases, as other

students treated the repatriated students as outcasts for not knowing how to speak Arabic properly.

An important idea that energed throughout the interviews was that while the students are proud Saudi Arabian citizens, they do not feel that they should automatically be expected to be competent in Saudi Arabian culture and vernacular. In some cases, these students had lived outside of Saudi Arabia for more time than they had lived within the Kingdom.

Based upon the participants' inteviews, there appears to be a number of bullying and anger issues both at the participants' school and in their community. Participants reported being the victims of verbal and physical attacks, harassment, judgmental attitudes, and bullying from their peers. When queried about the source of these negative behaviors, the participants stated that they felt that the offending students likely lacked proper character education. They also noted that there is a certain segment of society that tends to act in a haughty manner, with no regard for rules and lacking empathy for others. These problems can likely be corrected through a character education program.

One possible approach to character education would be the establishment of "moral communities" within each classroom (Lickona, 1991). A moral community is a place in which students: "1.) know each other, 2.) respect, affirm, and care about each other, [and] 3.) feel membership in, and responsibility to, the group" (p. 191).

While this research has provided an opportunity for me to help fill a gap in the literature, there are further questions that have been raised as a consequence of the results that I have encountered. For example, how can the entire school community be changed to make all students as comfortable as possible? Additionally, are the experiences contained within this study exclusive to boys in this age group or is there a tranferability?

Recommendations for Further Research

In order to remain sensitive to the cultural norms in Saudi Arabia, this study was conducted solely with male participants. Because roughly half of the population has not been included in this research, I recommend a second study that is opened to Saudi Arabian girls who are between ages nine and 13 and have also lived abroad for a minimum of one year.

Additionally, I had delimited this study to include only preadolescent boys. Because of differences in how preadolescents and adolescents experience repatriation, as indicated by the literature (Klemens & Bikos, 2009), I further recommend that corresponding male and female studies with a similar design be implemented with Saudi Arabian participants who repatriated during adolescence.

Given that the students in this study all attend a private school, the participants tended to be from the upper-middle class. In order to get a more complete view of the phenomenon of repatriation adjustment among Saudi Arabian students and to test for transferability, I recommend that a study with a similar design be conducted, but that the participants be selected exclusively from public schools. In this way, socioeconomic distinctions as well as differences in the culture of public versus private schools can be considered while investigating how preadolescent, Saudi Arabian boys experience repatriation.

Conclusions

This dissertation was designed to investigate how preadolescent, Saudi Arabian boys experienced repatriation after living abroad. The boys whom I interviewed did their best to recount events, some of which may have occurred more than half a lifetime ago for them. They also shared emotions and self-reflections, and gave me an insight into how they identify

themselves. These students showed a remarkable resilience, considering the challenges that most of them faced either while abroad or subsequent to returning to Saudi Arabia.

Most of the participants identified themselves as being third culture kids; in other words, culturally, they are neither Saudi Arabian nor are they from their former host countries. They have formed their own personalized cultures. While they embraced their Saudi Arabian backgrounds and professed themselves to be proudly Muslim, most of the students professed themselves not only to be different from their peers at school, but felt that their experiences abroad provided invaluable contributions to forming their personalities and their worldviews.

Their ability to move between Arab and Western cultures will prove to be indispensable when they are adults, given the ever-increasing globalization that we are witnessing in the twenty-first century. Each repatriated student whom I have interviewed will be able to slip between these cultures and understand the frequently unspoken rules that govern both their native culture and the cultures of their former host countries.

The participants provided useful advice for policymakers. Firstly, they expressed that it is imperative for schools that cater to newly repatriated students to have a strong Arabic as a second language program available. The ability to converse effectively in Arabic seems to be a major factor in readjusting and reassimilating successfully. The importance of knowing Arabic was highlighted by most of the students when I asked them to give advice to hypothetical Saudi Arabian students who currently live abroad. They advised that the students should start learning and/or practicing Arabic before they return to Saudi Arabia.

One of the interviewees also devised a plan that most students agreed would be an effective means of facilitating readjustment. The student proposed that schools could organize a "buddy" program, in which newly repatriated students are paired with peer mentors who have

previously repatriated. The mentor would assist the new arrival with settling in, and would answer questions about the school and life in Saudi Arabia from a peer's point-of-view. Most importantly, the peer mentor would be there as a social contact and a confidant, should the new arrival need to talk to somebody who understands the unique challenges faced by repatriated students.

After reading and writing about repatriation, third culture kids, and related topics over the past two years, I have learned many things about the respective subjects. Through the interviews with the boys who participated in this study, my awareness of these phenomena was given a human dimension. Unfortunately, it is not possible to fully appreciate their experiences without sitting face-to-face and discussing the subject matter. I hope, however, that I have been able to give a glimpse into the world of these young men.

Without candid input from these students, my project never would have come to fruition. For their assistance, I am eternally grateful. In turn, I hope that this document will serve as a foundation upon which other research can be built; a body of research that will provide benefits for the current and future students who repatriate following an extended period of time outside of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I also wish to express my thanks to the parents of these boys. Some of them had never met me prior to my contacting them about including their sons in the research. Without their trusting natures, I never would have been able to gather vital information from their sons. An extra expression of gratitude goes to the parents and families who opened their homes to me during this project, provided hospitality in the form of endless cups of coffee and tea and copious amounts of fruit, sweets, and even full meals. Their show of hospitality made a difficult task enjoyable and, in some cases, delicious to complete.

It is my hope that some of the information in this work will raise awareness and even an appreciation for the challenges that these young men have overcome both while living abroad and since returning to Saudi Arabia. I thank the reader for taking the time to read what I have discovered on this topic.

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Appendix A: Protocols

Protocol

Following the recruitment process and the acquisition of consent from the participants

and their parents, I will arrange to meet with each participant once every week for approximately

thirty to forty-five minutes per session.

At the start of each meeting, I will ask the student to consent to record the meetings for

the purpose of transcribing more accurately. The student will state, on the recording:

" I, (your full name), give Mr. Todd Curro permission to record our conversations while

he conducts research about students who have lived outside of Saudi Arabia." I will also ask for

the parents to provide similar consent before the start of the first meeting.

The meetings will be spread out over a period of eight weeks.

The themes of each respective session will be as follows:

1. Background
2. While in the other country
3. Coming back to Saudi Arabia
4. Wrap-up

During each session, questions will be asked from the banks of questions included below.

Participants will also be asked to complete some of the activities listed on page 6 of this

document. The number and selection of activities will be adjusted according to each

participant's grade level, language ability, and personal preference.

First Meeting

As a reminder, I need you to give your honest answers to all questions. There are no right or wrong answers. All of your answers will be kept secret, and nobody will know which answers belong to you. Only I will know how you have answered, and I will not share your answers with anybody in a way that they will know what you said. If I write what you said in my report, you will be given a made-up name. In most cases, your information will be mixed with that of other students who are also participating. In order to report accurate information, I would like to record our conversations. These recordings will not be shared with anybody, and will only be heard by me. 100% of what you say will be kept secret, except in an emergency, such as if I honestly believe that you or another person is at risk of being harmed, based upon information that you have given me.

If it is OK for me to record our conversations, please say the following:

" I, (your full name), give Mr. Todd Curro permission to record our conversations while he conducts research about students who have lived outside of Saudi Arabia." I will ask you to state this at the start of each meeting.

You will also sign a paper before we continue. Although I don't expect anything to be upsetting for you, if you start to feel sad or upset about anything that we discuss, please let me know, and we will move past it. If you need a break, we can do that as well. If you would like a family member to sit in with us, that is fine too! We can kick a ball around or play a game—it's your choice. My goal is for you to feel comfortable and for you to have a chance to talk about things that you may feel are important in forming who you are.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Background

- Which of the following describes you? Under 10 years old; 10-11 years old; 12-13 years old; 13+ years old
- What country did you live in before?
- For about how long did you live in that country?
- Why did you and your family move out of Saudi Arabia? (parent's job, parent's education, or another reason)
- Explain how you reacted when you first were told that you were moving to [other country].
- What were your expectations?
- What did you know about [other country] before you went there?
- What things excited you about moving to [other country]?

While in the Other Country

- Please explain some cultural differences that you discovered between Saudi Arabia and [other country].
- Is there something about that country or its culture that you found to be funny or strange? Please explain.
- Tell me about school in [other country].
- What was the most surprising thing about school there?
- Did you like going to school there?
- How were the other students' attitudes?
- Were there other Saudi students at your school? If not, were there other students from Arab countries at your school (Kuwaiti, Bahraini, Qatari, Egyptian, etc.)?
- How many friends did you make in [other country]?
- Describe your best friend when you were in the other country (you do not need to tell me his name).
- Was he from that country or a different place?
- What did you like to do together?
- Please tell me a story about something memorable that you did with your friend/friends while in [other country].
- Tell me about a time that there was cultural or language misunderstanding between your best friend in the other country and you. How did you solve the problem?
- Please finish the next two sentences:
  - One thing I liked about [other country] was _____.
  - One thing that I didn't like about [other country] was _____.
- Please tell me about a usual day while you were in _____.

Coming Back to Saudi Arabia

- Tell me about when you were getting ready to return to Saudi Arabia.
- How often do you stay in touch with friends in [other country]?
- If you are not in contact, why not? Do you wish that you could be in contact again? Why or why not?
- After returning to Saudi Arabia, how did you feel about your time in _____?
- What are some things in Saudi Arabia that you found surprising or needed getting used to?
- What was something that made you happy to be in Saudi Arabia again?
- Upon returning to Saudi Arabia, did you already have friends to meet with, or did you have to make new friends? Tell me about some successes and failures that you have had in making friends in Saudi Arabia since returning from [other country].
- How often do you like to talk about things that you did in [other country]?
- What are some cultural differences between the other country and Saudi Arabia?
- How do you feel about your readjustment to living in Saudi Arabia again?
- Please tell me about a usual day for you in Saudi Arabia.

Wrap-Up

- Please give me your thoughts on how it was to discuss your experiences both here in Saudi Arabia and in [other country].
- If you could give some advice to other kids who are moving to another country, what would it be? What advice would you want to give to kids who are returning to Saudi Arabia?
- What things would you like to see done differently at school in Saudi Arabia to help kids readjust to life in Saudi Arabia? Why do you think that would be helpful?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being fully adjusted, how would you rate your adjustment to Saudi Arabia?
  - If not 10, what has stopped you from adjusting fully?
  - How can school help to turn this into a 10?
- What are your future plans?
- What are some closing thoughts that you think will help people to understand more about you and other kids who have had a similar experience?

Before I submit my final document, I will give you a chance to look over what things I am using that you said, wrote, or drew. Even though nobody will know which things you said once it is in my final document, you will be able to tell me if you want to change how something is said—maybe you have decided that you misstated something, for example.

Once my final report is written, you and your family are welcome to read what I have written.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. As a token of my appreciation, I would like to offer you this gift certificate for Jarir Bookstores, although, nothing can truly add up to the huge amount of help that you have given me.
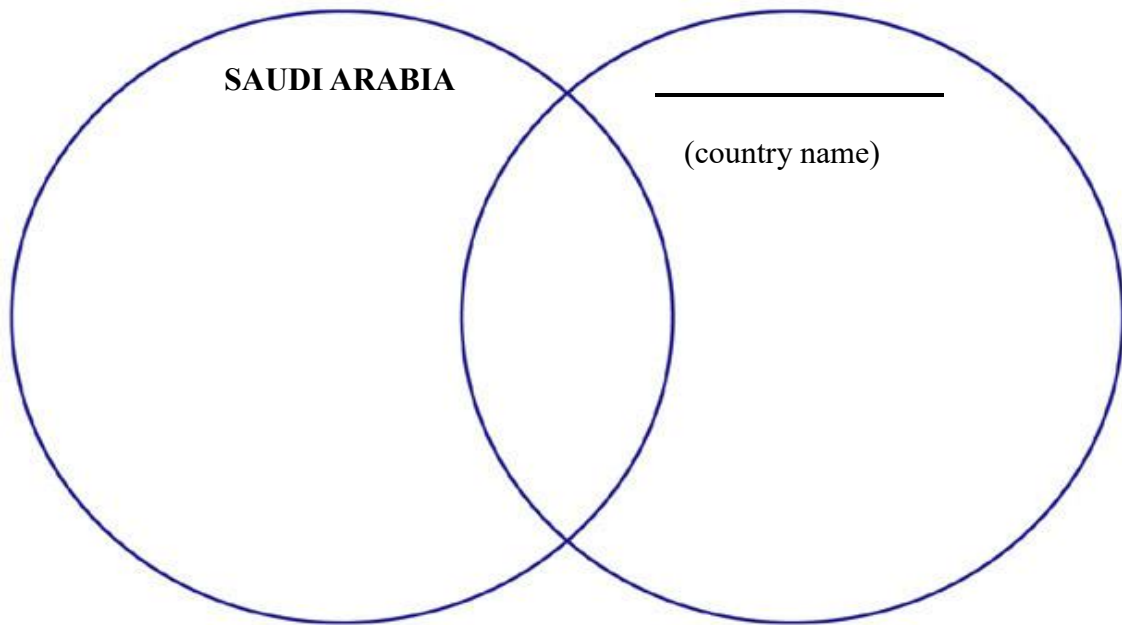
Appendix C: Art/Literature Exercises

1. Please take some time to think about two events in your life—one from when you lived in [other country] and one from Saudi Arabia since your return. Please draw a comic strip or write a (true) short story about the two events.

2. Take two pieces of paper. In the center of one of them, write, in big letters, "Saudi Arabia." In the center of the other one, write "[other country]." I will give you a set of crayons and I will set the timer for five minutes. During the five minutes, write as many words as you can on the "Saudi Arabia" paper that, in your mind, describe Saudi Arabia. Feel free to use many different colors. After the five minutes is up, you will do the same thing for [other country]—you will write all the words that come to mind when you think of [other country].

3. Write a letter to your best friend in [other country]. Tell him about life in Saudi Arabia. Tell him what your school here is like, what things you do in your spare time, and other interesting or fun things.

4. Now write a letter to your best friend in Saudi Arabia. Explain to him about life in [other country]. Tell him about your life in [other country]. Tell him what your school there was like, what things you did in your spare time, and other interesting or fun things.

5. Make a Venn diagram. In one circle, write "Saudi Arabia." In the other circle, write the name of the country you lived in. Where the circles overlap, write how both countries are similar. In the parts that do not overlap, write how they are different.

6. Write an acrostic for [other country]. An acrostic is a poem but it doesn't rhyme. Instead, the first letter of each line spells something out. For example, if I wanted to make an acrostic for France, it might read:

Fun
Relaxing
Amazing
Nice
Cool
Exciting

Venn Diagram for Activity 5

Subject No. _____

Compare and contrast Saudi Arabia and the country you lived in.

SAUDI ARABIA

_____

(country name)

Appendix D: Sample Member Checking Form

Appendix E: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does "fraudulent" mean?

"Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.

What is "unauthorized" assistance?

"Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association.*

_____
Signature

Todd M. Curro_____
Name

09 December 2017_____
Date

173