

GOING HOME: HOW DOES THE IDENTITY OF THIRD CULTURE KIDS IMPACTS
THEIR RETURN MIGRATION INTENTIONS AFTER GRADUATION?

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Abstract

Third Culture Kids or TCKs are individuals who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside of their parents' culture or country. The characteristics of TCKs have been extensively analysed in literature, but there is a lack of empirical data available on their migratory patterns, especially that of TCK university students. Therefore, this research investigates the relationship between the identity of Third Culture Kids and their intentions to return to their home country after graduation. The sample population used in this research is gathered through an online survey of 114 individuals who identify as TCKs and are university or college students. A statistical analysis is conducted to establish the effect the identity of a TCK and his/her contextual factors on return migration intentions. The results show that only sense of belonging in home country and languages spoken influence the return migration intentions of TCKs after graduation. The findings of this research can help guide future research and organisations that aim to facilitate the re-adjustment of TCKs in their home countries or seek to give them support through their migratory journey.

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Introduction

“Where are you from?” can be considered a simple question but for some people it is complex to answer. For example, Ndele Faye (2016) is a writer who has expressed her struggle as she was born to a Finnish mother and a Senegalese dad in Helsinki, but is unable to simply state where she is from as she spent her childhood moving from Luxembourg to Brussels, to London. Over the past decade, people like Faye have been more and more common, and are estimated to be around 220 million (Iyer, 2013). Those people are often identified as ‘Third-Culture Kids’, ‘Global Nomads’, ‘Cross Cultural’ or ‘Missionary kids.’ Third-Culture Kids or TCKs are people who have spent most of their upbringing in different countries or cultures, usually due to their parent’s work, transnational marriages or enrollment in an international school (Mayberry, 2016). Though, TCKs are not necessarily considered migrants because there is an expectation for them to eventually return to their home country.

Third-Culture Kids have developed an identity for themselves, sharing characteristics that make them unique to their own population. Characteristics common between TCKs are an expanded worldview, knowledge of multiple languages and having a more mobile lifestyle (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Gillies 1998; Fail et al., 2004; Lam and Selmer, 2004). These characteristics come together to define this group of individuals, essentially creating a part of their identity. However, the contradiction to that is that most of TCKs struggle to establish a sense of identity. Their mobility disturbs their identity formation that should occur in their developmental years and thus they hold on to the characteristics that make them a TCK as a large part of their identity (Walter and Auton-Cuff, 2009). Through their developmental years, TCKs try to develop a stable self-identity, and seek to answer questions such as “Who Am I?”. These questions are loaded with curiosity about where they belong and where they identify as “home” (McLachlan, 2007). Their sense of belonging or lack of is a big part of their identity, as many feel they do not fit in or look like their home culture (Rustine, 2018). TCKs experience different cultures during their adolescence, they struggle to establish a cultural identity, and instead this process is delayed to their late twenties or thirties (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). When an individual has spent most of their lives forming homes in different locations, it can trigger a train of thoughts led by “where is home to me?” During one’s life course, this question can arise frequently, especially when experiencing a transition, for example, from education to an occupational career. Specifically, Third-Culture university graduates often face this question (Bonebright 2010). Should they travel

back to their home culture or possibly to the county their parents live in? Or should they travel elsewhere? The curiosity behind this research is inspired by this transition in a TCK's life. Specifically, how their return migration intentions after graduation are influenced. Alas, there has not been enough empirical literature to explain the intentions behind migratory patterns of TCKs, let alone of TCK university students. Most literature contain qualitative analysis of the characteristics of TCKs and their tendencies. However, no literature delves into the identity formation of TCKs and its impact on significant life decisions. As this population continues to rapidly grow, it is important that information and data is offered to aid them in decision-making and to cater towards their struggles.

Therefore, this research will analyse the identity of TCKs and how that impacts their intention to return to live in their home country after graduation. The main research question is *How does the identity of Third-Culture Kids impact their intentions of return migration after university graduation?*

1 Theoretical framework

1.1 Third-Culture Kids

TCKs were first identified by Ruth Hill Useem in 1963, when she described “third-culture” as the shared possession of western culture that belongs to the individual's home country and the non-western culture where the individuals live. This bi-national third-culture is then described as a “complex of patterns learned and shared by communities of men stemming from both a Western and a non-Western society who regularly interact as they relate their societies thereof, in the physical setting of non-Western society” (Useem et al., 1963). Since the identification of TCKs, many academics came forth to research and study TCKs, their patterns and characteristics. The definition given by Useem et al., (1963) was later adapted to be more dimensional and less limited in gender and geographical dimensions. Literature collectively defines TCKs as people who have lived a ‘significant’ part of their developmental years outside of their parents’ culture or country usually due to the parents’ work (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; McLachlan, 2007; Davis et al., 2015; Lam and Selmer 2004).

1.2 Return Migration of Third Culture Kids

One of the assumptions of a TCK is the expectation that they will return to their home country or at least will be faced with the question of whether they should (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Although, some TCKs are unable to identify their home country, many others go through the process of return migration, which is the movement of migrants back to their home country permanently (Gmelch, 1980). The decision to return to their home country is considered difficult and often includes fear of failed acculturation and adaptation (Davis et al., 2015). TCKs can experience reversed culture shock in the re-adjustment to their home cultures after living abroad for a significant period of time (Hervey, 2009). Due to this shock, they have a hard time adjusting, possibly impacting their ability to excel in their social, cultural and professional lives (Hervey, 2009). Vast literature discusses the difficulty of returning and the integration of TCKs in their home country (Hervey, 2009; Davis et al., 2015; Brabant et al., 1990; Rustine 2018 and more). As well, most literature calls upon support for TCK returnees and draws attention towards the lack of organizations that facilitate re-adjustment of TCKs (Hervey 2009, and Pollock 2001). It is certain that most of the time TCKs will face difficulty when returning to their home culture, if they decide to do so. As this difficulty is recognized, there is still a gap in the knowledge available that helps to understand the roots of return migration. Understanding the intentions behind TCKs return home can help provide better understanding of their migration trajectories.

Intention behind return migration can be influenced by personal attributes and economic factors. Age demonstrates a concave relationship with return migration, as people tend to have stronger intentions to return home closer to their retirement age (Lu et al., 2009). Although this is irrelevant to University students, in this research, age will be named as a factor that could impact intentions of return migration. Furthermore, gender is mentioned to have a slight effect on return migration as different genders show difference in the extent to which they assimilate in their host or home country (Waldorf, 1995). Marital status can influence an individual's return migration as the location of the spouse can limit relocation decisions (Waldorf, 1995). Finally, economic factors may have an influence on return migration as the likelihood of return migration decreases with higher job satisfaction and unemployment can increase chances of return migration (Waldorf, 1995; Bijwaard and Wang, 2016). Since these aforementioned factors can have an impact on migrants, they will be included in this research as possible cofounders between the main explanatory variables and the dependent variable.

1.3 Identity of Third Culture Kids

Third Culture Kids will find their identity in the characteristics they share amongst their population, specifically, their identity is found between their peers, research and literature that they relate to (Walter and Auton-Cuff, 2009). There are common characteristics mentioned in literature that make up the identity of a Third-Culture Kid, these will be identified and further analysed. The first common characteristic of TCKs is that they carry a transient lifestyle, which means they are periodically relocating. Consequently, they are generally accustomed to frequently changing their social, cultural and personal environment (Fail et al., 2004; Ann McLachlan, 2005). The constant change TCKs face can lead to a feeling of rootlessness where they do not feel connected to a certain place. Their lack of connection can lead to difficulty in formulating long-lasting relations and, for some, unresolved grief (Hervey, 2009). TCKs experience relatively more grief than non-TCKs as they constantly go through ‘hidden losses,’ often experiencing loss of lifestyles, possessions, relationships and system identities (Pollock and Van Reken, 2010). These losses can also be existential, leading TCK to lose the feeling of security and adapt perspective that view relationships and places as being fluid (Gilbert, 2008). Sometimes, they are unable to deal with their unresolved grief as their expression could contradict the adventurous life TCKs are associated with, and thus their grief remains ‘disenfranchised’ or ‘unresolved’ (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008).

The high level of transience a TCK experiences causes a state of liminality where the individual is in an ‘in-between’ phase of relocation, where they are constantly letting go of their attachments and beginning new ones. This state of liminality can leave a TCK more comfortable in what is described by Grimshaw and Sears (2008) as a ‘third-place,’ a place which does not conform to their home culture or their host country. Unresolved grief and the state of liminality impact a TCKs acceptance towards returning to their home country, both characteristics can play a role in how they feel and how they act in the transition to the next host culture. Therefore, this research will find out if level of transience truly is a determining factor in return migration of a TCK by answering the first sub-question, *what is the relationship between level of transience and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*

The second common characteristic of a TCK is the lack of sense of belonging to their home or host countries. TCKs experience culture disjunction or alienation because of their experience of ever-changing societal or cultural norms (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008). Their constant relocation

denies them the stability adolescents should feel as they create their own self-identity (Fail et al., 2004). Although, this allows them to become adaptive, it can cause conflict and confusion as they attempt to form their cultural identity (Davis et al., 2015). In their home or host countries, TCKs are unable to fully integrate as they feel foreign often due to their different appearance or values (Pollock Van Reken, 2001). This leaves them with a lack of self-belonging to any particular place and can develop culture marginality (Bonebright, 2010). Culture marginality impacts an individual's openness to integrate into cultures and it can depend on whether they have an encapsulated or constructive marginality. Encapsulated marginality is when individuals have the ability to interact with people of the same culture, but do not actually feel a part of the culture. They are essentially lost within the different cultural frames they collected over the years, making them more out of touch with their sense of self. On the other hand, constructive marginals are those who are able to fully integrate with the multiple cultures they have experienced and still maintain a stable sense of self (Lam and Selmer, 2004). Constructivist marginals tend to have a stronger ability to assimilate with different cultures and integrate into new ones. With that being said, it is important to state that not all TCKs show struggles with their sense of belonging, but the difficulty experienced in returning home due to that feeling is common amongst many TCKs. Therefore, the extent to which sense of belonging impacts the intention to return home will be further explored in the research and guided by the following sub-questions. *What is the relationship between sense of belonging in home country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids? And What is the relationship between sense of belonging in host country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*

The third common characteristic of Third-Culture Kids is that they are often associated with being future-oriented, basing their movement on their ambitions and career rather than their social ties (Lam and Selmer 2004, and Fail et al., 2004). They usually hold on to relationships rather than places as they find their identity among other TCKs (McLachlan, 2007). With their connection to people rather than places and their high level of transience, they often lead a more mobile and international lifestyle. Thus, they can develop a 'migratory instinct' which is the continuous search for relocation and migration (Pascoe, 2000). Their decision on their next relocation can be influenced by their social network. Friendships and family in host and home country are seen as an important support for TCKs, especially during re-integration process (Bikos, et al., 2009). Their relationships can influence their sense of belonging and simultaneously

influence their connection to their host or home culture. Furthermore, some studies have shown different migration intentions between genders. For instance, migration intentions of males can be associated with the friendships they have created in their host society, but is a less significant factor for females (Lu et al., 2009). Therefore, since TCKs would carry a strong connection to their family or friends rather than a place, it is interesting to find out the extent to which this impacts their intention to return to their home country (Langford, 2012). Thus, this research will attempt to answer this sub-question *what is the relationship between social ties created in home country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*

The fourth and final characteristic that is frequently mentioned in literature is that TCKs are usually polyglots (Gillies, 1998; Bonebright, 2010; Lam and Selmer, 2004; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). They often speak multiple languages and are associated with more tangible characteristics such as different nationalities, or attending international schools (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Grimshaw and Sears, 2008; Bonebright, 2010). These characteristics can remove some of the barriers of migration but also can enhance a TCK's perception of being international, consequently encouraging their migration instinct and fostering their onwards migration (Lam and Selmer, 2004). There is a gap in literature that analyses how these characteristics can impact a TCK's migration and thus, this research will investigate the final sub question; *what is the relationship between number of languages spoken and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework of the research. The main dependent variable that will be studied is 'Return Migration Intentions,' and the aim of the research is to find out the factors that would have a relationship with the dependent variable. The main explanatory variable of the research is the 'identity of Third Culture Kids,' in which there is a focus on four underlying characteristics that influence the identity of a TCK. Moreover, the research will also investigate the contextual factors as having a potential confounding effect, this is to identify any bias that may arise. It is necessary to include these contextual factors as they were identified to have an impact

on general return migration and thus solely studying identity disregards the general push and pull factors that might impact return migration.

The theoretical framework behind this research has been explained, although it is crucial to state that there are a lot of other individual and societal variables that could explain the return migration intentions of an individual. Referring to the life-course approach, there are principles that places one's trajectory under historical, social and personal context (Edler Jr, 1998; Clausen, 1991). For the scope and feasibility of this research, other variables are not included but are recognized throughout the analysis.

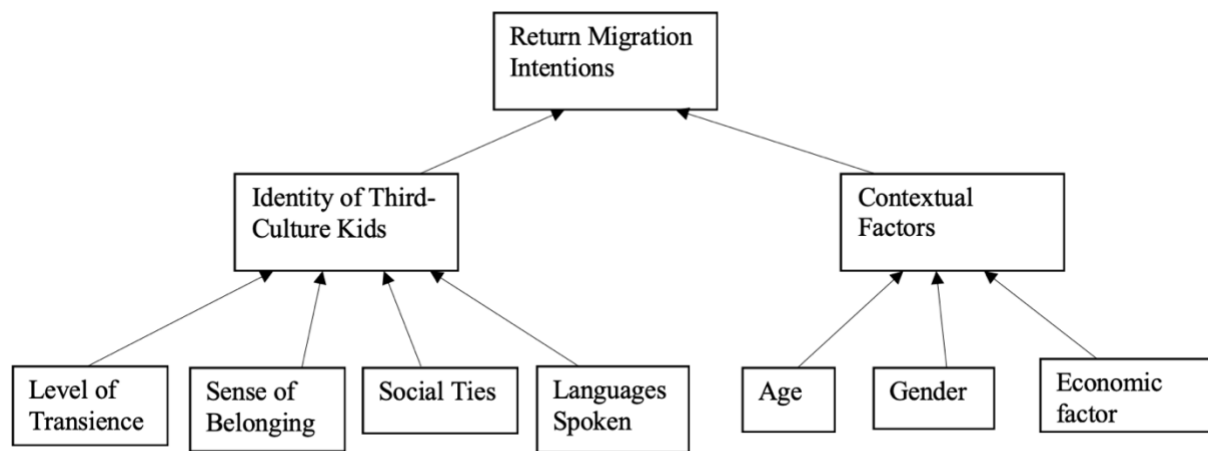


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2 Methodology

In this study, a quantitative approach is taken to answer the research question and its sub-questions. The quantitative analysis intended to study the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable that is return migration intentions after graduation. Primary data was collected through an online survey comprising of 30 questions (Appendix A). Collecting primary data was necessary as there is a lack of pre-existing datasets on Third-Culture Kids, where the largest dataset that exists was conducted by Useem in the 1990s and reached almost 700 Third-Culture Kids (Lam and Selmer, 2004). Yet, it is inaccessible and not representative of the current

population of TCKs. The online survey used to collect data in this research was thoroughly written to ensure respondents are able to answer without any discomfort. Specifically, because the survey includes sensitive questions regarding one's identity and home country, there was great focus put on ensuring the respondents are able to answer the survey. To achieve this, the first draft of the survey was sent to three TCKs, in which extensive feedback was given to the researcher. For instance, it was discovered that question 10 of the survey asking respondents to state their home country was actually imposing stress on respondents as many were not able to choose a home country. Thus, for the published version of the survey, the respondents were instead asked to signify the country they "consider" most as their home country. This was seen as easier to answer by TCKs.

Initially, the target population of the survey was students enrolled in higher-level education in Groningen, The Netherlands. The main sampling method was random and involved sending out surveys in mailboxes of student houses within Groningen. However, due to Covid-19 crisis, social distancing measures were implemented, and it was no longer appropriate to distribute papers. Additionally, many students had left Groningen, including the researcher. Thus, the sampling method was changed to convenience sampling, and relied on social media platforms of the researcher. The target population had changed to third-culture kids, regardless of their location. This change decreased the control over the sample population as now students living in other cities were able to answer the survey. Therefore, the impact of Groningen being the host culture was no longer an appropriate factor to be studied.

The survey was sent to multiple Facebook groups that were predicted to have members that identify as Third Culture. Examples of the used Facebook groups were "International Students in Groningen" and "Expats in Groningen." Along with Facebook groups, the survey was distributed on the social media platforms of the researcher such as Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. Gradually, the survey was able to reach even more people through word of mouth and friends of friends. The total respondents of the survey were 114, although some sampling bias was demonstrated. Due to convenience sampling, most of the respondents reached were from the social network of the researcher; 31 respondents chose United Arab Emirates and 14 Egypt as their home country (Figure 2). This is not a surprising result since the researcher attended schools in the UAE and Egypt. Although there were 40 other countries represented in the survey, there is a possibility

for cultural or regional factors such as travel flexibility that could determine the return migration intentions.

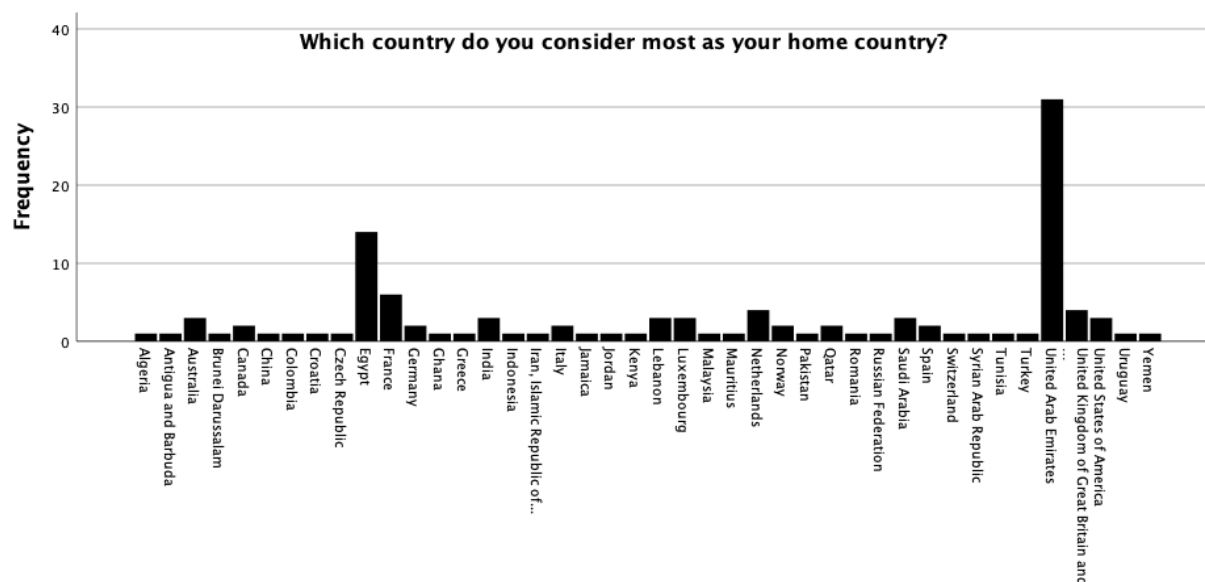


Figure 2 Distribution of Respondents

The chosen statistical model for this research is Binary Logistic Regression. This model was seen as the most appropriate as it tests relationships between a binary dependent variable and independent variables. Furthermore, the dependent variable is the intentions of TCKs to return or re-entry of TCKs to their home country. This dependent variable was then constructed as a question asking respondents if they intend to live in their home country 5 years after graduation, with “yes” and “no” as answers. The independent variables of this research constituted of two kinds; identity variables, and contextual variables. The contextual variables that were entered as covariates due to their potential confounding effects were *age*, *gender*, *marital status*, and *employment status*. While the explanatory variables which comprised the identity of the TCK were *countries lived in*, *languages spoken*, *sense of belonging in home country*, *sense of belonging in host country*, *communication with friends in home country*, and *communication with family in home country*. These six variables create six null hypotheses that guide the statistical tests and help answer research questions:

H01: There is no relationship between number of countries lived in and return migration intention

H02: There is no relationship between number of languages spoken and return migration intention

H03: There is no relationship between sense of belonging in home country and return migration intention

H04: There is no relationship between sense of belonging in host country and return migration intention

H05: There is no relationship between communication with friends in home country and return migration intention

H06: There is no relationship between communication with friends in home country and return migration intention

To investigate the presence of possible problematic underlying relationships between the independent variables, investigate research design errors and gain more insight into the sample population, correlational and multi-collinearity tests were conducted. Specifically, a Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was conducted to estimate correlation between the independent variables. Additionally, Collinearity Diagnostics helped further demonstrate any potential relationship between the independent variables by using VIF values. Finally, goodness-of-fit of the statistical tests were derived by Hosmer and Lemeshow tests to ensure the model is suitable for analysis.

2.1 Ethical Considerations

There are ethical limitations when conducting this research, the most significant being the researcher's positionality. The researcher identifies as a Third-Culture Kid; therefore, their experiences could imply assumptions on the expectations of the research and could apply bias during analysis. For instance, one assumption made by the researcher was that TCKs would be able to identify their home country, but in reality, some respondents were unable to identify their home country. Although, these respondents were small in number, it is still important to take into consideration that being a TCK does not guarantee identical experiences.

This research could also have an impact on the target population itself, if the theory that Third-Culture Kids always feel a lack of sense of belonging is true, then perhaps focusing a research on just them would make them seem more different and further marginalise them. As well, the survey could trigger some discomfort to the respondents as it asks them to answer questions related to friends or families, and how they feel in their host or home country. To minimize this discomfort, the research design followed the European General Protection Regulation to guarantee intervenability, confidentiality, transparency and unlikability (Bieker et al., 2016). Respondents are provided with contact information of the researcher with the option to withdraw their response and ask questions. In addition, respondents' anonymity was ensured by not recording any contact information or any personal information and only the researcher could access files containing response data.

3 Results

3.1 Spearman's Correlation and Multi-Collinearity Tests

A spearman's rank correlation coefficient matrix is displayed in Figure 3, where independent variables are tested to detect underlying correlation. This test has yielded some significant results that are interesting to discuss as they give deeper insight into the population. Especially since there is a minimal number of existing datasets, these relationships can help contribute to the knowledge base of TCKs. As shown in the model, there is a negative correlation between age and employment status, and the B coefficient is estimated to be .323. This could be explained by the respondent population being mostly students, they are more likely to be unemployed or have part-time careers when they are younger. A negative correlation is found between an individual's 'gender' and 'countries lived in,' as well as 'gender' and 'communication with family in home country.' These results suggest that females are likely to communicate less to family in home country and they are likely to live in fewer countries.

According to Brabant et al. (1990), females can notice changes in friends or family in their home country, which could possibly weaken their relationships with them. Although, there is no argument that could justify why females specifically are likely to live in fewer countries. It could be a sampling error where the females who have answered the survey happened to have lived in

less countries. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reach a sampling population that even slightly represents the total population of TCKs around the world.

Furthermore, an interesting significant positive relationship is found between the sense of belonging in host and home country, as the coefficient is 0.212 . This implies that the more foreign an individual feels in their home country, the more foreign they feel in their host country. This relationship essentially explains the identity of TCKs, where they feel belonging to a “third place” rather than their home or host country (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008). At the same time, it describes people that have high sense of belonging in home country, to also have high sense of belonging in the host country. Possibly, this is a difference in character, some people might find comfort in feeling attached to a place or they are able to integrate better, by perhaps having a constructive marginality. This result sparks interest in the role of place and sense of belonging, it would be intriguing to further explore how ‘place attachment’ can influence return migration of a TCK.

Additionally, there is a negative significant relationship between sense of belonging in host country and communication with friends in home country. The two variables share a correlation of -0.237 , which implies that the less communication TCKs have with their friends in their home country, the more local they feel in their host country, and vice versa. Although this is unrelated to the dependent variable, it still suggests that the friends in the home country are a contributing factor to the sense of belonging of a TCK. Perhaps if TCKs communicate with their friends at home, they do not feel the need to integrate as much in their host country, or if they do not communicate with friends in their home country, it can mean they are more integrated in their host country. Finally, gender did not show any correlational results between sense of belonging in both home and host country which nullifies for this research the assumption that genders show different assimilation into cultures (Waldorf, 1995).

		Correlations										
			Gender	Age	Employment Status	Marital Status	Number of Countries Lived In (Transience)	Languages Spoken	Sense of Belonging in Host Country	Sense of Belonging in Home Country	Communication With Family At Home	Communication With Friends At Home
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.019	.009	.138	-.200*	.065	.025	.105	-.221*	-.017
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.840	.925	.142	.033	.492	.794	.266	.019	.855
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	.019	1.000	.323**	.045	-.004	.028	.124	.053	.016	-.078
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.840	.	.000	.633	.969	.768	.190	.575	.864	.406
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Employment Status	Correlation Coefficient	.009	.323**	1.000	-.040	-.019	.055	.153	.157	-.088	-.004
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.925	.000	.	.669	.843	.560	.105	.096	.355	.967
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Marital Status	Correlation Coefficient	.138	.045	-.040	1.000	-.134	-.127	.054	.160	.137	.112
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	.633	.669	.	.154	.178	.568	.090	.149	.235
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Number of Countries Lived In (Transience)	Correlation Coefficient	-.200*	-.004	-.019	-.134	1.000	.121	-.013	-.035	.054	.001
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.969	.843	.154	.	.199	.892	.709	.570	.989
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Languages Spoken	Correlation Coefficient	.065	.028	.055	-.127	.121	1.000	-.150	.004	.035	-.036
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.492	.768	.560	.178	.199	.	.111	.968	.710	.708
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Sense of Belonging in Host Country	Correlation Coefficient	.025	.124	.153	.054	-.013	-.150	1.000	.212*	-.036	-.237*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.794	.190	.105	.568	.892	.111	.	.023	.703	.011
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Sense of Belonging in Home Country	Correlation Coefficient	.105	.053	.157	.160	-.035	.004	.212*	1.000	.009	.073
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.266	.575	.096	.090	.709	.968	.023	.	.926	.439
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114
	Communication With Family At Home	Correlation Coefficient	-.221*	.016	-.088	.137	.054	.035	-.036	.009	1.000	.031
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.864	.355	.149	.570	.710	.703	.926	.	.744
		N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
	Communication With Friends At Home	Correlation Coefficient	-.017	-.078	-.004	.112	.001	-.036	-.237*	.073	.031	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.855	.406	.967	.235	.989	.708	.011	.439	.744	.
		N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	113	114

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 3 Correlation Matrix

The collinearity tests conducted demonstrate low VIF values for all variables ranging from 1.041 to 1.270 (Appendix B). VIF values are lower than 5, which implies low correlation between the independent variables, and no requirement of necessary independent variable adjustments. Furthermore, Appendix C shows the goodness-of-fit of the statistical model. P-value of the F-text comparing the estimated model with the null model is 0.01 which proves significance and shows that the model fits better than with no predictors. In addition, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test is not significant which implies it's a model of good fit, as the predicted values match the observed values. In conclusion, the conducted tests show that the model is of good fit and there is minimal confounding effect between independent variables.

3.2 Regression model

Results from the binary logistic regression test are displayed in Figure 4. Out of the 10 independent variables, only two variables show a significant effect. The first significant effect is of *languages spoken*. The p-value is *0.007*, which rejects the null hypothesis and shows that there is a relationship between number of languages spoken and intention to return. The B coefficient is *-0.777*, which means that there is a negative relationship between the explanatory and dependent variable. In other words, as the number of languages a TCK speaks increases, the less likely they will have the intention to return to live in their home country. Plausibly, when an individual speaks multiple languages, the opportunities to work in the countries that speak the same languages increases. Therefore, a TCK is likely to have more options after graduation of where they are able to work and live. Additionally, fluency in multiple languages is mentioned as one of the characteristics that make up the identity of a TCK, and it could contribute to their perception of being international. A TCK having a stronger perception of being international may increase their migration instinct (Lam and Selmer, 2004). Consequently, increased migration instinct can enable a TCK graduate to decide to travel onwards rather than return to their home country. Furthermore, the ability to speak multiple languages can mean the person has multiple nationalities or already has lived in multiple countries where they learned the languages. These privileges can allow them to live in more countries and return to countries previously lived in, reducing their intention to return to their home country after graduation.

The second significant result is the sense of belonging in home country. The p-value is *0.007*, thus rejecting the third null and showing a significant effect of *sense of belonging in home country* on *intention to return to live in home country*. The B coefficient is *-0.755*, which shows a strong negative relationship between the dependent and explanatory variable. This suggests that the more foreign a TCK feels in their home country, the less likely they will return to live in their home country after graduation. This result is in clear line with the literature, especially since the re-adjustment into home culture is one of the hardest phases of a TCK's life. The sense of belonging a TCK feels in their home country is crucial to their readjustment, if they are made to feel like outsiders in their own home culture, they will feel alienated (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008). Therefore, it can be stated that the way the society makes a TCK feel in their home culture plays a great role in the extent to which a TCK will feel connected to their home country. Consequently,

this will impact their intention to return, whether after graduation or in another period in their lifetime. The intention to return can also be influenced by a TCK's marginality. If a TCK carries a more constructive marginality, they are able to integrate better with different cultures and thus do not feel the acculturation that would occur when they return to their home country (Bonebright, 2010).

The rest of the explanatory and covariates did not show significant results. Therefore, null hypothesis 1, 4, 5 and 6 cannot be rejected. Age does not portray significance, possibly because all of the respondents were university or college students, with the mean being 20.5. In addition, sense of belonging in host country is not significant, showing that rather, sense of belonging in

Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a					
Gender			.290	.865	
Male	-23.989	40192.970	.000	1.000	.000
Female	-.291	.540	.290	.590	.748
Age	-.149	.131	1.291	.256	.862
Marital Status			4.362	.113	
Single	-1.847	1.779	1.079	.299	.158
In A Relationship	-2.888	1.884	2.349	.125	.056
Employment Status			3.626	.305	
Employed (Part-time/internship/traineeship)	1.187	.627	3.580	.058	3.277
Employed (Full-time)	19.001	40192.969	.000	1.000	178574055
Unemployed (Looking for work)	.578	.693	.697	.404	1.783
Countries Lived In (Transience)	-.095	.175	.295	.587	.909
Languages Spoken	-.777	.288	7.291	.007	.460
Sense of Belonging in Host Country	.389	.230	2.874	.090	1.476
Sense of Belonging in Home Country	-.755	.277	7.404	.007	.470
Communication With Friends At Home	-.330	.238	1.917	.166	.719
Communication With Family At Home	-.453	.275	2.714	.099	.635
Constant	8.447	3.869	4.767	.029	4660.256

Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Age, Marital Status, Employment Status, Countries Lived In (Transience), Languages Spoken, Sense of Belonging in Host Country, Sense of Belonging in Home Country, Communication With Friends At Home, Communication With Family At Home.

Figure 4 Binary Logistic Model

another host country than stay where he/she is not happy or go back to their “home.” As for social networks of a TCK, communication with friends and family in home country didn’t pose as an important factor on the intention to return to home country

Discussion and Conclusion

This research has attempted to analyze the identity of Third-Culture university students and how it impacts their return migration intentions after graduation. The research has combined literature on intentions of return migration and the identity of third-culture kids to answer the research question and consequent sub-questions

How does the identity of Third-Culture Kids impact their intentions of return migration graduation?

1. *What is the relationship between level of transience and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*
2. *What is the relationship between sense of belonging in home country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*
3. *What is the relationship between sense of belonging in host country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*
4. *What is the relationship between social ties created in home country and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*
5. *What is the relationship between number of languages spoken and return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids?*

To answer the main research question, this research shows that some parts of the identity of a TCK can have an influence on their intentions to return to live in their home country after graduation. In the beginning of this paper, the identity of a TCK was determined using four characteristics: *level of transience, sense of belonging, social ties* and *languages spoken*. Only two of the characteristics portrayed a relationship between return migration instincts. The first characteristic was languages spoken, where the number of languages a TCK is fluent has an influence on return migration intentions. Furthermore, this answers the fifth sub-question, languages spoken does have a relationship with return migration intentions of Third Culture Kids. This relationship shows that speaking more languages can provide more opportunities for TCKs to migrate onwards rather than return. As well, it shows that when TCKs perceive themselves as being more international they tend to hold on to their migration instinct and decide to constantly

relocate. TCKs can feel due to their strong international perspective, that it will be difficult to find people that share the same values in their home country (Bonebright, 2010).

The second characteristic that demonstrated a relationship with return migration intentions is sense of belonging in home country. When TCKs feel more foreign in their home country, they are less likely to intend to return to their home culture. This could be related to their fear of acculturation and re-adjustment. Thus, it is easier for them to follow their migration instinct and travel onwards to other places. Although a lot of literature has already discussed the difficulty of re-adjustment into home culture implying that there is a lack of organisations or networks that facilitate the transition of a TCK to their home culture (Pollock and Van Reken 2001; Davis et al., 2015; Bonebright, 2010; Hervey, 2009; Brabant et al., 1990). This research adds on to this notion by giving empirical evidence of an actual relationship between return migration intention and sense of belonging.

The remaining results show that there are no detectable relationships between level of transience, sense of belonging in host country, social ties and return migration intentions. Furthermore, personal attributes and economic factors were shown as non-significant determinants of return migration intentions although studies suggest otherwise. However, this is merely the results of the sampling population and such conclusions are difficult to generalize to the wider population of TCKs. Statistical tests only show quantitative values and do not explain the depth of a phenomena. Specifically, when discussing concepts such as migration, an individual is his/her own active agent that are able to make their own thoughtful and proactive choice that in turn influences their life trajectories (Clausen, 1991). Therefore, applying the results of this research on any individual that identifies as a TCK neglects this idea of human agency. The results though, are certainly a steppingstone for future research regarding migration intentions focused on TCK graduates.

For future research help can be focused on building appropriate support centres for TCKs helping them with building a network of like-minded individuals of the same culture that can assist each other with return migration, if they desire to do so. Additionally, since sense of belonging in home country is seen as a strong determining factor of return migration, it is especially useful for countries that want to attract brain gain by increasing the return migration of TCKs. These countries can help build centres and networks that aid TCKs in the integration into the culture. Certainly, this is assuming the TCK wishes to return home. It is important to recognize that

although an individual can identify a “home,” there are constraints that would stop them from returning. Sometimes, TCKs simply do not intend to return due to cultural barriers, political instability, or even travel restrictions. For instance, many TCKs who consider UAE as home are unable to return to live there as they do not possess citizenship or Syrian TCKs are unable to return home due to political instability. These constraints are interesting to study further and on a larger scale future research can help further understand the decision behind the migration trajectories of TCKs.

The population of Third Culture Kids continues to grow, and possibilities of research will further grow with it. It is important for future research to start diving deeper into the migration of TCKs and its impact on home and host countries. Furthermore, it is important for future studies to conduct larger scale projects that focus on collecting empirical data. The results from this research can help guide future research, for instance by studying the role of language on the migratory trajectory of TCKs. Future studies can also include spatial aspects by analysing the role of certain countries or regions in the creation of the identity of a TCK.

In conclusion, this research has attempted to analyse the identity of a TCK and its potential effect on return migration. Results have shown that identity does have some impact on return migration of Third-Culture Kids. This research merely scratched the surface of the very complex lives of TCKs, and it stands as a guide to future research and organisations dedicated to TCKs. The importance of researching TCKs grows every day, especially since globalization allows for increased possibilities of migration and movement. In a world where ‘migrants’ and ‘immigrants’ portray negative connotations; it is interesting to find out how a group of essentially ‘migrants’ were able to create a third-culture identity that diminishes the divide between cultures and adapts to different cultural frames. Third Culture Kids can be considered a prototype for the 21st century and can be used to foster understanding and acceptance between cultures.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Online Survey Questions

Q1 Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. Results from this survey will be used in an academic research that aims to give more insight into the migratory motives and patterns of Third-Culture Individuals. This survey should take 4-6 minutes to complete. All answers provided are strictly confidential, are anonymously stored on the platform of the University of Groningen and will be deleted at the end of the research. If you have questions about how the data will be used, would like to withdraw your participation,- or want to know more about the research please email me at: d.rachid@student.rug.nl

Q2 A third culture individual is a person who has lived a significant part of their developmental years (0-18 years) outside of their parents' home cultures or countries. Do you identify yourself as a third culture kid?

Q3 What is your gender?

Q4 How old are you?

Q5 What is your employment status?

Q6 How many countries have you lived in from birth to high school graduation?

Q7 How many languages are you fluent in?

Q8 Do both your parents share the same nationality?

Q9 Are you a citizen of more than one country?

Q10 Which country do you consider most as your home country?

Q11 < For any following questions that refer to "home country," please refer to the country chosen in the question above

Q12 What are the reasons do you consider the country chosen as your home country?

Q13 Do you study in your home country?

Q14 In which country do you study?

Q15 How long have you been living in your current country of residence?

Q16 What is your marital status?

Q18 If your spouse/partner does not live in your home country, are they able to legally move to your home country?

Q19 <i>The following questions refer to the country you study in: </i>

Q20 In the 5 years after graduation, do you intend to return to live in your home country?

Q21 In your current country of residence, you feel...

Q22 How often do you communicate with your friends who live in your current country of residence?

Q23 How often do you communicate with your family who live in your current country of residence?

Q24 The following questions refer to the country you consider as your home country:</i>

Q25 In the 5 years after graduation, do you intend to live outside of your home country?

Q26 In your home country, you feel...

Q27 (Multiple Answer) In your home country, do you and/or your household...

Q28 How many times per year do you visit your home country?

Q29 How often do you communicate with your friends who live in your home country?

Q30 How often do you communicate with your family who live in your home country?

Q31 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Most of my friends are also third-culture individuals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of my friends live in my home country (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe in my home country (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel welcomed in my home country (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel integrated in the culture of my home country (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B

Collinearity Test

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.470 ^a	.221	.145	.439

a. Predictors: (Constant), How many languages are you fluent in?, What is your employment status?, How often do you communicate with your friends who live in your home country?, How often do you communicate with your family who live in your home country?, How many countries have you lived in from birth to high school graduation?, In your home country, you feel..., What is your marital status?, What is your gender?, In your current country of residence, you feel..., How old are you?

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.575	10	.558	2.895	.003 ^b
	Residual	19.646	102	.193		
	Total	25.221	112			

a. Dependent Variable: ReturnHome

b. Predictors: (Constant), How many languages are you fluent in?, What is your employment status?, How often do you communicate with your friends who live in your home country?, How often do you communicate with your family who live in your home country?, How many countries have you lived in from birth to high school graduation?, In your home country, you feel..., What is your marital status?, What is your gender?, In your current country of residence, you feel..., How old are you?

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.461	.511		2.857	.005		
	What is your gender?	.078	.089	.081	.879	.381	.891	1.123
	How old are you?	-.014	.021	-.063	-.639	.524	.787	1.270
	What is your employment status?	-.053	.035	-.139	-1.492	.139	.877	1.140
	What is your marital status?	-.016	.059	-.027	-.277	.783	.830	1.205
	In your current country of residence, you feel...	.036	.037	.095	.970	.334	.802	1.247
	In your home country, you feel...	-.111	.040	-.256	-2.745	.007	.879	1.137
	How often do you communicate with your friends who live in your home country?	-.062	.038	-.150	-1.643	.103	.921	1.086
	How often do you communicate with your family who live in your home country?	-.099	.043	-.207	-2.303	.023	.948	1.055
	How many countries have you lived in from birth to high school graduation?	-.017	.030	-.049	-.552	.582	.960	1.041
	How many languages are you fluent in?	-.106	.038	-.253	-2.785	.006	.924	1.083

a. Dependent Variable: ReturnHome

Appendix C

Goodness of Fit Tests

Block 1: Method = Enter**Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	35.948	14	.001
	Block	35.948	14	.001
	Model	35.948	14	.001

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	108.362 ^a	.272	.378

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations has been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	8.936	8	.348

Contingency Table for Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step 1		ReturnHome = No, I do not intend to return home		ReturnHome = Yes, I do intend to return home		Total
		Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	
		1	10	10.785	1	
	2	11	10.347	0	.653	11
	3	9	9.633	2	1.367	11
	4	9	9.079	2	1.921	11
	5	11	8.295	0	2.705	11
	6	7	7.542	4	3.458	11
	7	5	6.672	6	4.328	11
	8	6	5.667	5	5.333	11
	9	4	4.432	7	6.568	11
	10	3	2.548	11	11.452	14

Classification Table^a

	Observed	ReturnHome	Predicted		Percentage Correct
			No, I do not intend to return home	Yes, I do intend to return home	
Step 1	ReturnHome	No, I do not intend to return home	66	9	88.0
		Yes, I do intend to return home	16	22	57.9
	Overall Percentage				77.9

a. The cut value is .500

