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DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTIC  
OF CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCE  
IN ADULT THIRD CULTURE KIDS (ATCKs)



By  
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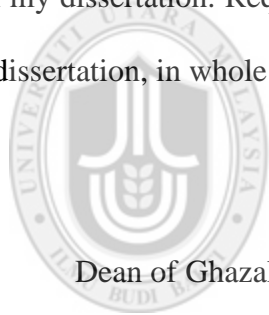
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## **Abstract**

This study focused on the past and current literature on self-efficacy, cultural flexibility, ethnocentrism, Third Culture Kids and Adult Third Culture Kids, and multiculturalism seen from a perspective of Adult Third Culture Kids early experience (Chapter Two). Thereafter, the researcher employed a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews to study the perceptions of ATCKs with regards to self-efficacy, cultural flexibility, ethnocentrism competence (Chapter Three). The results of this analysis (Chapter Four) and the interpretations (Chapter Five) confirm what has been indicated by past research and provides avenues for future research. The “adult third culture kids” (ATCKs) is an individual who has spent significant periods living outside his or her parents’ culture. Research is needed to identify specific experiential variables responsible for the development of components of cross cultural competencies (CC) in ATCKs. The goal of this study is to gain insight into these relationships and provide a foundation for continuing investigation by examining how early international experience variable impact CC in ATCKs. Specifically, the study examines how adult third culture kids early international experience impact three dynamic characteristics of CC. These variables will be examined through in-depth interviews conducted in a small sample size, with sample taken from different sojourn populations, data from multiple sources and refinement of measurements with different forms of measurement. Additionally, the results indicated that ATCKs are able to successfully impact two dynamic cross cultural competencies: self-efficacy and cultural flexibility but negatively impact ethnocentrism on ATCKs early experiences.

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## Table of Content

Title Page .....	i
Permission to Use .....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgement .....	iv
Table of Content.....	v
 1 Chapter 1: Background of Study.....	
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	4
1.3 Research Objectives.....	8
1.4 Research Questions.....	8
1.5 Significant of Study.....	9
 2 Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	
2.1 Third Culture Kids and Adult Third Culture Kids.....	12
2.2 Adult Third Culture Kids Early Experiences.....	14
2.3 Cultural Flexibility.....	16
2.4 Self Efficacy.....	17
2.5 Ethnocentrism.....	18
2.6 Research Framework.....	19
2.7 Propositions.....	20
 3 Chapter 3: Methodology .....	
3.1 Introduction.....	21
3.2 Research Approach.....	21
3.3 Qualitative Approach using Interviews .....	22
3.4 Data Collection Process.....	24
3.5 Respondents Selection .....	28
3.6 The Interview Process.....	29
3.7 Data Analysis.....	31

3.8	Conclusion.....	32
4	Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis .....	
4.1	Introduction .....	33
4.2	ATCKs Early Experiences and Self Efficacy.....	33
4.3	ATCKs Early Experiences and Cultural Flexibility.....	38
4.4	ATCKs Early Experiences and Ethnocentrism.....	45
5	Chapter 5: Discussion.....	
5.1	Introduction.....	50
5.2	Self Efficacy and ATCKs Early Experiences.....	50
5.3	Cultural Flexibility and ATCKs Early Experiences.....	52
5.4	Ethnocentrism and ATCKs Early Experiences.....	54
5.5	Conclusion.....	54
6	Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	
6.1	Introduction.....	57
6.2	The Main Findings.....	57
6.3	Implications of Study.....	58
6.4	Limitations and Future Research.....	60
	References.....	63

## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The flow of ideas, goods and people across cultures is not new, but has significantly increased due to technology and media (Jensen, 2003). Diverse people are interacting and exposing each other to various ideas, values, beliefs and cultures. The interface of cultures has created a multicultural world where increased immigration, bicultural marriages and international adoptions have contributed to our world becoming a global village. Emerging from these cultural exchanges are people who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside of their parent's culture due to a parent's occupation. These people are often referred to as "Adult Third Culture Kids" (ATCKs) or "global nomads" (McCaig, 1994). (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) explain that, "the TCK builds relationships to all cultures, while not having full ownership in any, although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background"

Several terms have been given to these internationally mobile children and adolescents such as global nomads (McCaig, 1992), cultural hybrids (Bhabha, 1994), and cultural chameleons (McCaig, 1996). For the purpose of this research, the term adult third culture kids (ATCKs) will be employed, a term used for children and adults alike. This term was first coined by sociologist Useem in the 1960s and she defined it as follows: "TCKs" is a term that "describes young people raised in a country other than that of their parents. They blend the culture of their passport country with their country of

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