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A Phenomenological Study of Bicultural Competence Among International Students

Kiplangat Cheruiyot Bii
Taylor University

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A PHENOMINOLOGICAL STUDY OF BICULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Kiplangat Cheruiyot Bii

May 2015

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Kiplangat Cheruiyot Bii

entitled

A Phenomenological Study of Bicultural Competence Among International Students

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
in Higher Education and Student Development

May 2015

Drew Moser, Ph.D. Date
Thesis Supervisor

Todd Ream, Ph.D. Date
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

Steve Bedi, Ed.D. Date
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

Tim Herrmann, Ph.D. Date
Director, M.A. in Higher Education and Student Development

Abstract

International students come from cultures different from the ones predominant in small colleges in the US. Overcoming the differences during the transition to college proves critical for integration, persistence, and, more importantly, involvement and engagement. To overcome the cultural differences, international students develop bicultural competence. Bicultural competence refers to someone's internationalization of more than one culture in order to function effectively and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships in those cultures. For international students in transition, bicultural competence involves acquiring competency in the predominant American culture in college while maintaining their identity in their heritage culture. The present study uses a phenomenological approach to explore the factors facilitating or hindering the development of bicultural competence among international students. College offers space in which pre-arrival experiences, personality type, exposure and support, autonomy, and sense of purpose play a critical role in facilitating or hindering the development of bicultural competence among international students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Globalization—the process by which nations become more and more interconnected—impacts higher education around the world. People move from one country to another with ease and with speed in search of education. Additionally, globalization has led to the internationalization of organizations through the employment of personnel from various nationalities and regions. Globalization has resulted in the phenomenon of diversification and internationalization of organizations around the world (Maringe & Foskett, 2010).

In higher education, globalization and internationalization hasten the pace of global student mobility because students from different parts of the world access colleges beyond their geographical locations (Maringe & Foskett, 2010). In response, colleges and universities internationalize their curricula and programs to attract and retain students from other countries and cultures. In the US, the population of international students in colleges continues to grow. In the 2013-2014 academic year, new enrollments of international students increased by 7.5%, raising the total population of international students in U.S. colleges by 8.1% (Institute of International Education).

As international student populations grow, so do research and scholarship in this field. International students prove essential to the diversification of college populations, campus environments, and culture. International students add to the structural diversity

and contribute to the development of global worldview within the campus environment (Denson & Chang, 2009; Pike & Kuh, 2006). However, international students face various challenges in adjusting to new campus environments and predominant host cultures. Research shows that the process of adjusting to new cultures becomes crucial due to its impact on international student's overall college experience (Schwartz et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2010; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008).

Primary challenges for international students involve adjusting to a new culture and building friendships to replace family support structures left in their home countries (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). This process of making friends seems a daunting task that may push international students to gravitate towards other students similar in nationality, culture, or region as a coping mechanism of adjusting to the new culture (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Furnham and Alibhai (1985) add that international students develop layers of support networks to help them adjust and succeed in college. The friendship network is critical to surviving the transition but also significantly distressing for international students. Further research showed culture learning as a coping mechanism, with its success or failure significantly impacting the overall experience for international students (Zhou et al., 2008). Culture learning for international students directly impacts the level of involvement in college, academic progress, and retention (Mamiseishvili, 2012).

Research has advanced in understanding the process of adjusting and transition by international students. Adjustment and transition include making friends, learning the culture, and navigating college structures to integrate into college. This process, mainly identified as acculturation, entails adjusting to and internalizing a new culture (Berry,

1997). Earlier models understood acculturation as a linear process mainly involving the acquisition of the host culture. However, current research posits this process of adjusting to the new culture as bidirectional, involving the internalization of more than one culture or the development of bicultural competence (Cheng, Lee & Benet-Martinez, 2006; David, Okazaki & Saw, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2011).

Bicultural competence refers to one's ability to internalize and acquire two cultures while functioning effectively in both without confusion or losing one's identity. Bicultural competence shows knowledge of both cultures, positive attitude to both cultures, communication skills in both cultures, efficacy, social groundedness in both cultures, and role repertoire (David et al., 2009). For international students, bicultural competence facilitates the acculturation process by mediating experiences such as making new friends and learning the culture with energy essential for integrating and persisting in college (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Andrade, 2008; Mamiseishvili, 2012; McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

Problem Statement

Numerous studies conducted on international students' transition mainly focus on the challenges of adjusting to a new culture. Such studies clearly establish the problems associated with acculturation of international students particularly as a minority group (Fischer, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Wei et al., 2010). Most established literature has conceptualized acculturation as a unidirectional concept. Further research has suggested acculturation as a bidirectional process leading to bicultural competence or the internalizing of more than one culture (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). In relation to adjustment, literature regarding college

students has established the value of engagement and involvement in college success (Astin, 1984; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). However, little research has conceptualized the intersecting, interwoven nature of involvement and acculturation to explore the development of bicultural competence among international students. Furthermore, little research has investigated factors contributing to or hindering the development of bicultural competence among international students.

Purpose of the Study

The present study explored bicultural competence as a phenomenon crucial to the overall college success of international students. Additionally, the study sought to understand from the international student perspective the factors that hinder or contribute to bicultural competence during the college experience. The study conceptualized bicultural competence as interwoven with acculturation and involvement. Therefore, the phenomenological study explores bicultural competence among international students.

Significance of the Study

The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge on international students' adjustment to college life by exploring factors associated with these students' development of bicultural competence. Such knowledge can aid in the conceptualization and programming of student development curriculum for international students. From the study's findings, scholars of international students can better understand the implications of successful adjustment to host cultures in which international students participate. The findings of the study also help further the body of knowledge on the subject of international students in higher education as well as identify areas for further research.

Research Questions

The current study offers an exploration of the following questions:

Q1. Does the college environment promote bicultural competence for international students?

Q2. If so, what factors promote or facilitate bicultural competence?

Q3. If not, what factors hinder the development of bicultural competence?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The section below provides an overview of literature on the themes of involvement and acculturation. Literature available on these topics forms the framework of exploring bicultural competence among international students. The overview below points to the intersection of involvement and acculturation in the development of bicultural competence. These themes also points to the role colleges play in facilitating or hindering the development of bicultural competence among international students.

Involvement, Engagement, and Student Success

Numerous studies in student development show a positive correlation between students' involvement and engagement on campus and their success in college life (Astin, 1984; Berger & Milem, 1999; Kuh et al., 2008). The present study complementarily used Astin's (1984) theory of involvement and Kuh's (2005) concept of engagement—related but distinct—as both prove foundational to understanding the overall experience of international students.

Student involvement. Astin (1984) articulated the amount of energy and time students devote to academic experiences directly impacts their learning outcomes. Students who spend time on classroom assignments, actively participate in social organizations, and invest themselves in their peers have a positive college experience. Inversely, students who neglect their classroom requirements and devote little or no time

to social and interpersonal interactions have greater difficulties with college life (Astin, 1984). Additional studies affirmed active involvement in various educational activities positively promotes psychosocial development (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). For minority students, active involvement in social groups and extracurricular activities promotes integration and positive academic outcomes (Baker, 2008; Fischer, 2007). Involvement also facilitates international students' adjustment to and persistence in college life (Mamiseishvili, 2012).

Student engagement. Kuh (2005) articulated student engagement as the amount of time and effort students put into educational activities and “the ways the institution allocates resources and organizes learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities” (p. 9). Additional studies affirmed positive results from students' engagement in college life (Kuh et al., 2008). However, for international students, engagement occurs in the context of a second culture, and this adjustment to a new context influences the level of participation (Kim, 2012).

Involvement and engagement in all aspect of learning experiences have proven to impact the overall outcomes of students' college life, including critical thinking and leadership skills (Wooten, Hunt, LeDuc, & Poskus, 2012). Further studies showed involvement and engagement particularly in student organizations positively impact cultural awareness and participation (Baker, 2008; Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Wooten et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2005). Involvement and engagement in all aspects of campus life for minority students influence integration and persistence (Kuh et al., 2008; Fischer, 2007). Inversely, because of minority status, involvement or engagement for international students depends on successful adjustment (Andrade, 2008; Mamiseishvili,

2012). Additionally, international students come to U.S. colleges motivated to succeed academically, as reflected by significant involvement and engagement in academics in the first year of college (Zhao et al., 2005). Academic engagement appears as one coping mechanisms for international students due to the challenges of socialization and social integration (Zhao et al., 2005).

Academic involvement for international students. Academic success for international students significantly impacts their meaning of overall college success. In a 2005 study conducted by NSSE, international students reported channeling their energy on academics in the first year. However, as they progress through college, their overall engagement in extracurricular activities increases to parallel those of American students (Zhao et al., 2005). This change largely connects to successful adjustment in orientation and integration into the campus culture (Mamiseishvili, 2012).

Additionally, the theory of student departure by Tinto (1975) pointed out that students enter college with a set of values and commitments that drive them and facilitate their social and academic integration. Those commitments then determine their persistence and overall experience. International students come from their home countries and cultures with sets of skills, competencies, and commitments to academic success developed in their native context. Academic as well as social integration influences how students then utilize those skills and commitments (Guiffrida, 2006; Mamiseishvili, 2012).

Academic success influences persistence and retention for international students because they perceive their future success as an outcome of education (Andrade, 2008; Mamiseishvili, 2012). Furthermore, the value of education cultivated in home countries

provides the impetus to stay focused on academics while in a sojourner status (Andrade, 2008). However, challenges related to language proficiency and communication negatively impact classroom satisfaction and performance (Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008). Despite challenges of language proficiency, international students persist in their core purpose by defaulting to skills and competencies developed in their country or culture of origin (Guiffrida, 2006).

Leadership exposure for international students. With leadership defined in different ways, various theories explain styles and fundamentals of leading. According to Northouse (2004), a general understanding of leadership entails four pillars that capture leading as a process, influencing others in groups and having certain attainable goals. Dugan (2006) defined leadership as “relational, transformative, process-oriented, learned, and change-directed phenomenon” (p. 335). Leadership involves the cultivation of values such as self-consciousness, congruence, commitment, common purpose, collaboration, civil controversy, and citizenship. Formal and challenging leadership opportunities help cultivate complex levels of thinking and meaning making.

For international students, regardless of the theory utilized, leadership experience cultivates skills and competencies such as knowledge of the college environment, positive attitudes toward the culture of operation, social groundedness in values, and the self-efficacy necessary for social interaction (Dugan, 2011; Thompson, 2013). These skills and competencies develop through leadership experience and intersect with and facilitate bicultural competence (David et al., 2009).

Leadership involvement for students connects with significant social and civic responsibility (Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005). Studies showed leadership experience

as helpful for students in shifting the philosophy and understanding of leadership from hierarchy to process and from others to self (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006). Furthermore, leadership development programs for first-year students significantly affect their subsequent understanding and attitudes toward leading (Posner, 2009) and contribute to persistence in college (Andrade, 2008; Kuh et al., 2008). For international students, leadership facilitates active cultural participation (Foubert & Grainger, 2006).

Acculturation as a Process of Adjustment

Acculturation generally refers to the process by which individuals adjust to a new culture. According to Berry (1997), the acculturation process involves maintaining cultural heritage and acquiring elements and values of the host culture. In the 1997 model by Berry, acculturation involves four different strategies, each impacting an individual's perception, interaction, and outcome of cross-cultural interaction. For international students, the acculturation strategy they adopt impacts their transition and overall college experience, either facilitating or hindering the development of bicultural competence.

Based on the 1997 acculturation model by Berry, Kim (2012) articulated identity development for international students with six phases of adjusting to a new culture. The first three phases involve openness towards college educational opportunities, with excitement in this stage motivated by family and national culture. The last three phases identify struggles of adjusting to realities and challenges of a new culture and the development of an identity based on how acculturation occurred (Kim, 2012). Those phases correspond with the following strategies identified in the 1997 model by Berry: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization.

Assimilation. Assimilation according to the 1997 acculturation model by Berry involves a significant desire not to retain one's own culture when interacting with another culture. Individuals assimilating to another culture abandon their cultural heritage and identity to acquire the new culture because maintaining both cultures feels overwhelming. Approaches for helping international students transition based on assimilation prove challenging because acculturation appears bidirectional, and an individual can internalize two cultures without conflict (David et al., 2009). The 2012 model of international student identity development by Kim did not allude to individuals abandoning their cultural heritage. Nevertheless, international students who adjust to a college environment through assimilation may experience challenges if they perceive the host culture as in conflict with their home culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). International students who completely assimilate to new cultures have challenges related to identity development (Kim, 2012).

Separation. Separation according to the 1997 model by Berry involves the resistance to the new culture and a limited desire to experience contact with the host culture. This strategy of acculturation connects with challenges in the overall experiences of individuals in a new culture. Separation comes as a reaction and adjustment of expectations due to the realities of a new place (Kim, 2012). Additionally, separation in adjusting to a new culture correlates with culture shock and feelings of discomfort (Lee & Rice, 2007) and low levels of bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). International students adjusting to college by way of separation thus experience significant challenges in persistence, openness to diversity, making friends, and the overall quality of college life.

Integration. The 1997 model of acculturation by Berry identified integration as the ability to maintain one's cultural identity while interacting with a new culture. This retention involves "some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network" (p. 9). The 2012 model of international student identity development by Kim argued the later and more positive stages involve integration and internalizing of self in new cultures. Many studies associated integration with successful adjustment and overall quality of experience in a new culture. Specifically, integration connects to academic and social satisfaction in college (Andrade, 2008; Guiffrida, 2006; Wadsworth et al., 2008). Integration also proves critical in bicultural competence (David et al., 2009; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Thus, for international students, integration correlates with positive development, particularly in bicultural competence and overall college experience.

Marginalization. Marginalization occurs when no cultural maintenance or a possibility to acquire the new culture exists (Berry, 1997). This strategy of acculturation represents a total failure of an individual's transition to another culture and correlates with the negative effects of being marginalized (Evans, Forney & Guido-Dibrito, 1998). Also, international students whose acculturation leads to marginalization may develop an opposing culture (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), experience increased levels of stress (Tovar, Simon, & Lee, 2009), and appear less likely to persist through college (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Marginalization becomes a reality for some international students depending on their level of bicultural competence, adjustment, social distance and academic challenges.

Regardless of the acculturation strategy an international student adopts, the challenges become significant, and some cultural orientations remains irreconcilable.

Those challenges impact involvement on college life because international students “face the natural difficulties posed by a new environment causing a period of disorientation, insecurity and incomprehension that may last for weeks, months or even longer” (Kelly & Moogan, 2012, p.27). Acculturation affects health choices and correlates to risky behaviors for international students (Schwartz et al., 2011).

On the other hand, studies show international students who succeed in this process “are those who overcome challenges, resolve their identity conflicts, and successfully reconstruct their identities ” (Kim, 2012, p.109). Success for international students largely depends on how well they negotiate the difficulties arising out of cultural differences between a student’s own culture and the host culture. Individuals participating in another culture must learn to navigate two cultures, and, for international students, they must learn to navigate the host culture and their home cultural orientation in order to succeed and function effectively in college (Mamiseishvili, 2012). To navigate these two worlds, international students require bicultural competence.

Bicultural Competence

Bicultural competence refers to a social construct used to define individuals who succeed in two cultures with minimal identity conflicts. LaFromboise et al. (1993) articulated bicultural competence as the internalization of two distinct cultures. David et al. (2009) defined bicultural competence as follows:

...the ability to engage in the social interactional tasks necessary to initiate and maintain interpersonal relationships in both one’s heritage culture and mainstream culture, as well as one’s ability to satisfactorily and

appropriately behave and function in both the heritage culture and mainstream culture. (p. 212)

LaFramboise et al. (1993) argued the psychological well-being of individuals in a second culture involves the ability to develop and maintain competence in both cultures. For example, a study among black women at a predominantly white institution affirmed their “success in the academy is partly due to their fluid life structure, which enables them to float in and out of their various sociocultural groups and manage the expectations of each group” (Alfred, 2001, p. 121).

Bicultural competence mediates between acculturative family distancing and psychological outcomes by buffering negative effects of separation (Carrera, 2013). Additional studies confirmed bicultural competence buffers against minority stress (Wei et al., 2010) and directly relates to psychological well-being and development among college students (David et al., 2009). Bicultural competence mediates between challenges of adjustment and positive college outcomes (Carrera, 2013).

Further research showed individuals who integrate their divergent cultural identities overcome the challenges of adjusting in a new culture (Chen, Benet-Martinez, & Harris Bond, 2008). Additionally, higher levels of bicultural competence correlate with higher levels of classroom satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2008). Therefore, international students with higher levels of bicultural identity integration function well in the American culture because they rely on their skills and competencies from their home country to navigate the new environment (Guiffrida, 2006).

LaFramboise et al. (1993) conceptualized the domains of bicultural competence to include a set of skills and dispositions necessary for successfully navigating two cultural

milieus. David et al. (2009) expanded the model to articulate what constitutes bicultural competence, or knowledge of culture and rituals; positive attitudes to cultural groups; efficacy; communication ability; and role repertoire. Knowledge of cultural beliefs and rituals provides the degree of individuals' self-awareness of their cultural perspectives (David et al., 2009) and the extent to which their cultures shapes their worldviews (Deardorff, 2008). This knowledge also involves a deep understanding and appreciation of how cultural perspectives shape thinking (Livermore, 2010). Cultural self-awareness correlates with pride and a rich sense of community (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Cultural knowledge and self-awareness refers to the ability of bicultural individuals to internalize, appreciate, and respect orientations other than their own (David et al., 2009). Essentially, such awareness indicates "a selective incorporation of cultural elements from the various cultural worldviews and practices" (Chen et al., 2008, p. 806). For international students, this awareness entails flexibility and adaptability in tolerating the ambiguous to discover aspects of the predominant culture in college (Deardorff, 2008).

Positive attitudes toward both cultural groups indicates a willingness to engage and internalize the values of other cultures (David et al., 2009). Positive attitudes toward more than one culture entails seeing cultural congruence (Chen et al., 2008). Individuals with high bicultural competence have positive attitudes because they do not see conflict between two cultures (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). One's attitude toward a culture significantly impacts how one acculturates to that culture. For international students, attitudes toward the predominant culture within college shape how they adjust, get involved, and engage in the overall college experience (Berry, 1997).

Self-efficacy as a domain of bicultural competence brings the belief in self to succeed in more than one cultural context (David et al., 2009). Self-efficacy finds inspiration in one's self-confidence in determining necessary actions for given situations (Livermore, 2010). Self-efficacy comes naturally with the ability to communicate effectively with members of other cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). For international students, developing personal relationships necessitates efficacy in communication (Zimmerman, 1995). Fundamental to self-efficacy in bicultural competence, role repertoire refers to the skill of understanding how to respond appropriately in a given cultural context (David et al., 2009), or "the ability to empathize, gather appropriate information, listen, perceive accurately, adapt, initiate and maintain relationships, resolve conflict, and manage social interactions and anxiety" (Bennett, 2008, p. 13). Role repertoire also entails the kind of information one seeks out from members of another culture in the process of comprehending unfamiliar cultural situations (Livermore, 2010).

Current literature thus indicates bicultural competence as an important component of transition for international students in college. The natural acculturation process occurs as a result of international students operating in a new culture. Campus environments and programming provide the opportunity for involvement, while bicultural competence mediates the acculturation process and such involvement. Therefore, the present study conceptualized involvement and engagement, acculturation, and bicultural competence as interwoven and critical to overall college success for international students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The present study utilized a qualitative phenomenological design to understand from the perspective of international students what factors hinder or contribute to the development of bicultural competence. Qualitative research offers “a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; ask broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words; describes and analyzes these words for themes” (Creswell, 2008, p. 46). As a result, a qualitative method of research best suited the current study in understanding the experiences of international students in general with the use of in-depth interviews. Additionally, the study specifically used a phenomenological design to understand the essence of bicultural competence.

Phenomenological design facilitates the reflections of lived experiences and gives voice to the essence of the experience by using descriptive words, sentences, and themes (Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994). The factors hindering or promoting the development of bicultural competence seem best captured through a phenomenological design because such an approach involves gathering reflections from the participants, thematically analyzing the responses, and using words to provide a rich description of the findings.

Participants

The researcher conducted the study at a small, faith-based, and predominantly white institution in the Midwest with an approximate population of 2,000 students. The

international student population represents 6% of the college student body (about 120 students). The nine participants identified as international students who came to college from countries other than the US. Participants represented both genders and an age range of 18-24. Typically, students in this category come to the US under the F-1 visa to primarily attend college and go back to their home countries. The study purposefully selected international students in their senior year because they have at least two years or more of exposure to U.S. culture. The researcher selected participants through the maximal variation sampling strategy, a “purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristics” (Creswell, 2008, p. 214). Among the international students population, the study identified the following characteristics as relevant: nationality, region, and primary language. Basic demographics such as age and gender also proved useful in understanding the context of participants. This strategy helped to avoid homogeneity in nationality and culture.

Procedure

Following IRB approval, the researcher obtained participants’ email contacts from the registrar, then identified and contacted one participant to pilot the interview protocol to ensure the protocol would collect all data necessary for a successful study. Results from the pilot testing refined the interview protocol so as to enrich the quality of the data from the other participants. The researcher then contacted ten participants meeting the study criteria for the main study; nine responded and agreed to participate in the study.

Participants then learned about the study, their role, and potential risks, and signed study participation forms to give informed consent. The consent form explained the participants could choose not to participate or had the freedom to stop the interview at

their discretion. For confidentiality, participants remained anonymous in the study, referred to by assigned pseudonyms to protect each participant's identity and personal information. All data stayed in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. The researcher recorded the interviews for the conversations to occur as naturally as possible. A hired assistant signed a confidentiality agreement and transcribed the interviews.

Data Collection, Instrument, and Analysis

The study included nine in-person, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2008). The protocol began with general demographics (e.g., participant country of origin, cultural orientations). The interviews transitioned to participants' experiences in U.S. college culture, including challenges, successes, and reflections on lessons learned. All interviews ended with factors participants attributed to the success or challenges in their college experience.

The researcher analyzed the data thematically by assigning codes to the data based on relevance to themes discussed in the literature review. The coding process seeks to "make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine the codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes" (Creswell, 2008, p. 251). The researcher reviewed the data and obtained a general sense of the information before creating a detailed theme coding for analysis. The researcher also layered the findings based on the interconnecting themes of involvement, acculturation and bicultural competence and inductively narrowed the themes for discussion of the phenomenon. To check against researcher biases and to ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher had two colleagues member-check the coding process for data and researcher triangulation (Creswell, 2008).

Chapter 4

Results

The current study sought to find out whether a college environment facilitates the development of bicultural competence among international students. Additionally, the study identified factors associated with the hindrance or facilitation of bicultural competency development among international students. The chapter below presents the findings from nine hour-long interviews recorded, transcribed and thematically coded. Participants openly shared their lived experiences and provided rich descriptions in response to the protocol questions. From the coded participants' responses, the following five major themes and corresponding subthemes emerged: pre-arrival experiences; personality type; cross-cultural exposure with support; autonomy; and sense of purpose.

Theme 1: Pre-arrival Experiences

All nine participants narrated experiences related to interacting with cultures other than their own prior to arriving on campus. According to all participants, cross-cultural experiences seemed significant in shaping their attitudes and perception of other cultures. The pre-arrival experiences accorded the participants opportunities as minorities in their own cultural context and sowed the seeds of positive attitudes toward cultures different from their own. The pre-arrival experiences included going to an international, missionary, or bilingual school or significantly interacting with mission teams. For example, Dieudonne said,

I went to a missionary high school, Rainforest international high school. It was very similar to what I have heard about other missionary schools around the world. It was diverse in terms of you had missionaries from all over the world in Central Africa, would send their kids to Rainforest.

Simon added,

Growing up in a bilingual school environment, our textbooks were in English so obviously there are examples of like books that were made here we would use them over there and also my classmates most of them were sons and daughters of big financial guys. They had their resources and they got to travel a lot and came back with something that at the moment was weird. But once it got accepted by the rest, it became the norm and the bilingual school environment becomes a culture.

These experiences seemed helpful in facilitating smooth transitions to the U.S. culture and college environment. Additionally, pre-arrival exposure to other culture(s) became the building blocks to internalizing the values predominantly displayed in college, such as locus of control and self-motivation. Esther stated, “I feel like I am becoming more and more selfish. I don’t meant that American culture is selfish but I learned how to care about myself. So in Korean culture I have to care about others first.” Such cultural shifts, in part, resulted from students’ exposure to American culture before arriving on campus.

On a negative note, lack of exposure to other cultures prior to arriving on campus can hinder the development of bicultural competence. Esther said,

When I first came, I thought they would be really nice but they were all mean. I think it is because I went to California. When I couldn't speak what I want to say, they always like did this to me and I got so hurt. So like at first I did not like Americans because I thought they were so rude and arrogant. They were different from what I thought.

Lack of pre-arrival experiences can lead to culture shock, driving a student to focus on homogenous friendships for comfort and to disengaged from the rest of the community. Culture shock and lack of support hinders the development of bicultural competence.

Theme 2: Personality Type

An individual's inherent personality type rose to the surface as a factor when entering into a new cultural environment and, more importantly, when acquiring another culture. Eight of the nine participants discussed at length how their personalities played a role in the development of their bicultural competence. To explain further, the following subthemes illustrate different aspects of personality types of international students.

Subtheme: Open-minded. Six participants discussed in depth the value of open-mindedness in new cultural situations. Open-mindedness allows an individual to see norms as inherently part of a culture. For example, Dieudonne described,

You know one moment you can be talking with somebody and you guys you know you are having a good interaction then the next moment you are walking you don't even have any eye contact. That is something that a lot of international students struggle with understanding. But something like that I have come to understand as part of the culture.

The perspective of open-mindedness allowed the participants to embrace the new culture for what it is and begin to learn the values inherent within (and fundamental to) the culture. Paul added, “I came in with very few expectations but a lot of great memories, and I gained a lot of knowledge, both in and outside of classroom.”

Subtheme: Flexible and adaptable. The subtheme of flexibility and adaptability emerged as closely tied to open-mindedness. Six participants articulated flexibility and adaptability allowed them to respond positively to cultural norms foreign to their own cultures. Serin captured this concept when she said,

I think sometimes, like, my first semester at college, I didn't really interact much with those from my own country because it was more, like, I am now put on this floor of women that I have to live with so I guess I should try to get to know them. Even if this was not the place I saw myself, I should at least try to make friends.

The will to practice flexibility and adaptability to the environment depends in large part on the individual. Marryanne pointed out, “There are differences and like you can't change different cultures, especially if you go to a different country and you are like okay, this how they do things. I adjust to it but not to change myself.”

Individuals who do not practice flexibility, adaptability, or open-mindedness would find transition to a new culture extremely difficult. Joanne shared,

It was really hard for me to adjust first because when I was in high school, I had a host family and they liked to hug me or like do physical touch, but in our culture, you like don't even hug your parents. So that is something I did not like about American culture. I am still not used to hugging people.

Lack of flexibility and open-mindedness denies individuals the opportunity to develop a positive attitude towards another culture and triggers a chain reaction that hinders the development of bicultural competence.

Theme 3: Exposure with Appropriate Support

Eight of the nine participants articulated exposure to college programs with appropriate support encouraged them to immerse themselves in the culture and develop positive attitudes in interacting with students from other cultures. Exposure allowed them to make initial connections with friends from other cultures. Esther explained, “It was really hard for me to become friends with people who I met in classes but yeah I met a girl in my TESOL class and then we took three classes together and we become really good friends.” Support came from friends or siblings and enabled them to initiate and maintain friendships with students from other cultures. Exposure came through activities such as group projects, off-campus trips, and residential programs. For example, Marryanne shared, “I got to hang out a whole lot with one girl on my floor because we entered a competition together, an art competition, and so we had to spend a lot of time together for like a week straight.” Because of exposure and continuous support, participants could continue cultivate friendships beyond casual or surface interactions.

Participants explained that engaging in activities with students from other cultures provided a bridge to understand other people. Serin captured this theme by saying that “seeing that there are people who even if this is not the greatest gift they have they are willing to do and willing to bond with you over activities.” Participants pointed out that invitations and nudges from others to participate in these activities aided in forming friendships that lasted beyond the first semester. Joanne added,

I think small group was helpful. Every Sunday, my dorm does small group and there are like four or five girls in one group. That helped me a lot because since they are not professors, I can ask them anything.

Added support came from participants' siblings, closest friends, and fellow students from their home countries. In contrast, lack of exposure on campus and exclusive involvement in national or regional student groups hindered the acquisition of cultural knowledge and dwarfed the development of bicultural competence. Exposure without necessary support contributed to frustration in transition and negative attitudes towards the host culture.

Theme 4: Autonomy

All participants articulated in depth the value of autonomy in developing bicultural competence. They described how attending college in another culture provides the opportunities of independence from their parents, friends, and the social cultural heritage. Catalina's point reflected most participants' sentiments: "I mean I think definitely at home there is a lot more dependence on family which I see as sometimes negative. You go to college you live by yourself in a dorm with other people." All participants identified their cultural heritage as predominantly collectivist or community-oriented. They further elaborated that coming to college in the Midwest felt liberating in a sense because of the predominantly individualistic culture. Therefore, living alone in a foreign culture offered an opportunity to explore their identity. They felt college afforded them the liberty to exercise autonomy. The following subthemes support this theme.

Subtheme: Pride in national heritage. Five of the nine participants highlighted their nationality as a critical component of their identity. According to these participants, pride in national identity surfaced due to living in a culture that emphasizes individual

identity. They pointed out that with autonomy comes the pressure to figure out one's identity and to represent that identity positively to peers. When feeling pressured to represent their cultural heritage, participants said they responded by defaulting to pride in their nationality. Serin stated, "There is nothing wrong with being a Bahamian. I may not get as much scholarships as if I were to be American but I am proud of where I came from you know." Pride in national heritage allowed participants to thrive in learning other cultural values without fear of losing their identity. Additionally, pride in national heritage allowed participants to pick parts of the second culture to internalize and hence acquire some measure of bicultural competence.

Subtheme: Comfort with difference. Closely associated with pride in nationality came the subtheme of feeling comfortable or confident as the minority. Four participants shared that coming to college in the Midwest highlighted their minority status. While participants identified minority status as a challenge during their transition to college, pride in their national heritage allowed them to feel comfortable as the "different students" on campus. Maryanne illustrated this sentiment by saying,

Sometimes I really feel like I don't fit in with the Bahamians, I don't fit in with Americans. What am I supposed to do with myself? And it is just like okay, you are different and that is great. You are just going to live with it. You can't really change it now.

Autonomy or independence in the context of another culture allowed participants to explore their identity in comparison to others. Pride in national heritage prevented them from feeling encapsulated by the predominant culture on campus. Over time, participants became comfortable with their national heritage, identity, and independence in college.

Comfort and confidence in identity enabled the participants to explore other cultures, particularly the dominant American culture. Participants solidified their identity by internalizing more than one culture. Catalina summarized the experience in this way:

I like having a different perspective and different view on things. But it is also hard. I think it makes you feel very alone, a lot of loneliness in feeling like you are the only one that is an outsider and that nobody really understand what it is like. I mean like I fit in here for the most part but I am still kind of an outsider in some ways. And also going back home feeling like I am kind of an outsider there too. Kind of this sense of belonging is not really existent.

Internalizing two cultures set the participants apart from most people, and functioning effectively in more than one culture meant accepting the idea of differing from everybody else. Participants leveraged this unique identity phenomenon to function effectively in college. Students who could not accept themselves as different sought to assimilate in order to find identity, thus hindering their development of bicultural competence.

Theme 5: Sense of Purpose

Sense of purpose emerged as a predominant theme addressed in depth by all nine participants. In transitioning to college and particularly integrating to American culture, they all encountered highly frustrating times. The challenges seemed severe enough, at times, to cause them to reflect deeper on their purposes for attending college. In those difficult times, all participants articulated the sense of purpose enabled them to resiliently adjust and eventually acquire a deeper knowledge of students from other cultures or survive difficult periods of transition. The sense of purpose offered a strong pillar to

keep them from quitting college. Sense of purpose provided the reason to engage in college activities even if the events seemed unenjoyable. For example, Dieudonne said,

I did not grow up in this culture so I have come to terms with that. It is not that I do not try to integrate, I try as much as I can but I am reminded that this is not where I am from. I have a purpose for being here. I am here for education but that does not mean I am just here for education, I also build all these relationships.

James added,

To be honest, sometimes you might not be comfortable to stay with them but you just have to. Sometimes it is hard to continue conversations like the thing that my floor or my American friend is talking about and I have nothing to say. I have no idea and so sometimes I am just sitting there and I listen. I just feel like okay whatever it takes, this is what I am going to do.

Purpose in participants' lived experiences transcended transitions, retention, and even bicultural competence—fundamental to thriving in other areas of life. Catalina shared,

Growing up in a third world country and seeing a lot of poverty, just a lot of different economic backgrounds, differently people, really motivates me to do well. . . . Knowing that I am not just here to have some life experience or just like experience the college life, the dorm life. That is part of it and I have loved experiencing this part. But it gives me this extra motivation that one day I could go back to my country and help make a difference. . . . It is kind of a pressure that I put on myself but it helps me when it is time to like hey you really need to be on top of this or studying this or whatever. . . . that pressure of hey I am doing this not just for myself but I am representing my family and ultimately my country.

A sense of purpose helped participants translate experiences from their home countries to relevantly apply in learning cultural values predominant in campus life.

Essentially, according to the participants' experiences, the development of bicultural competence became a factor of personal, developmental, and environmental factors. A college environment provides the space through which bicultural competence either develops or becomes hindered. Engagement and involvement in campus life provides the avenue to initiate and accelerate relationships with students of other cultures. The sense of purpose motivates them to withstand challenging transition times.

Chapter 5

Discussions

The current study explored the extent to which a college environment, particularly a predominantly white institution, facilitates the development of bicultural competence among international students. International students come to college with cultural frameworks distinct from U.S. worldviews and perspectives. The study utilized a phenomenological design to capture the experiences of the student participants. Additionally, the study sought factors that facilitate or hinder development of bicultural competence among international students. The section below discusses the study's findings in light of existing literature on acculturation, involvement, and engagement.

Pre-Arrival Experiences

The study established the college environment as an open space in which many factors converge to either accelerate or slow the development of bicultural competence among international students. In part, the factors at play include personality type, developmental realities of students, and the nature of exposure or support accorded to students to engage in campus programming. The study's findings remain consistent with literature on bicultural competence, particularly the contribution of cultural immersion to students' awareness and knowledge of another culture. The study's participants had significant exposure to North American cultural frameworks prior to arriving on campus. Pre-arrival exposure proves foundational to understanding the fundamentals of another

culture and accords the international students the opportunity to consider the implications of functioning in a different cultural milieu. As identified by Andrade (2008), awareness of different cultures provides impetus to exit comfortable cultural environments and enter unfamiliar, sometimes uncomfortable cultural contexts. While not necessarily occurring on campus, pre-arrival experiences become actualized or activated in college environments as essential to survive transitions. The challenges of transitioning to college elicit those survival skills developed in another cultural environment.

Additionally, the initial exposure to a different culture initiates the skills and competencies useful to short and long-term adjustment to a new cultural context such as a college campus (Guiffrida, 2006). Finally, pre-arrival exposure to other cultures for some international students creates an opportunity to experience minority status and to anticipate challenges associated with adjusting to a new cultural environment. While anticipating challenges does not eliminate transition problems, it mediates between an individual's expectations and the realities of living in another culture. The international students who can integrate their cultural diversity occasioned by the pre-arrival exposures succeed in transitioning and adjusting to the new environment (Chen et al., 2008).

Exposure and Support

The present study indicated appropriate exposure and support generates positive participation from international students. According to study participants, international students who feel nudged to participate in campus programs become active in their involvement with other students. While this involvement results from personality type and environmental factors, this finding proves consistent with established literature on student involvement and engagement (Astin, 1984; Kim, 2012; Kuh, 2005). Participants

pointed out small steps cumulatively led to their active involvement and engagement on campus. More importantly, participants acknowledged an appropriate amount of exposure and support remains critical when immersing themselves in college programming and eventually their development of bicultural competence. Developing competence in another culture comes with time and active engagement within that culture. Participants who felt supported in their endeavor to participate in the college environment continued applying their energy to getting to know other students and later acquired the confidence of functioning in another culture. The support came from friends, staff, and professors who intentionally exerted extra effort towards international students.

Furthermore, the study established that, consistent with work by Berry (1997) and Kim (2012) on cultural integration, a college environment offers space for international students to explore other cultures, and, with appropriate support, students can internalize values of other cultures. In the process, integration into the college environment proves critical and foundational to international students' overall progress. International students who succeed in integrating with students from other cultures find college life meaningful. Additionally, integration into college for participants influenced their engagement, involvement, and persistence, as claimed by Fischer (2007). Integration to college becomes both an input and a product of bicultural competence. It takes bicultural competence to successfully integrate into a college environment with a predominant culture. Similarly, persistent integration into another culture for some international students leads more bicultural competence as they expand their knowledge of the culture and perfect their skills and role repertoire for functioning effectively in the new environment.

Bicultural Competence

Finally, the findings in the current study confirm what LaFramboise et al. (1993) theorized: individuals exposed to two cultures do not necessarily disintegrate in their identity. Participants in the study acquired skills for functioning in a college environment with a predominant foreign culture. With appropriate support, participants learned the fundamentals of other cultures and over time accumulated knowledge, skills, and the poise to effectively function in another culture. The college environment facilitated their bicultural competence. They did not lose a sense of identity in order to acquire another culture. Instead, they added the fundamentals of another culture to their multicultural layers of competencies. Consequently, due to bicultural competence, the participants actively engage in campus life with significant progress in retention and persistence.

Implications for Practice

Research documents involvement and engagement as directly related to retention and persistence in the overall college experience for all student types (Astin, 1984; Kuh, 2005). International students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and their adjustment experiences affect their overall college experience. Difficult transitions for international students impact persistence and retention (Andrade, 2008). Involvement and engagement in college activities requires some level of comfort with the culture and environment. Bicultural competence mediates between active involvement on campus and cultural transitions and adjustment to college, acquired when individuals immerse themselves in another culture and have the necessary support to learn and internalize the host culture. A college environment offers a suitable space for international students to develop bicultural competence and for some to acquire multicultural competencies. For

some, a number of factors can combine to hinder the development of bicultural competence.

To facilitate the development of bicultural competence, institutions must focus programs, support structures, and outreach to international students to cultivate integration and bicultural competence. Student development professionals must intentionally create programs with concrete cross-cultural interactions and objectives. Such programs can include immersive cultural experiences for first year experience specifically geared towards international students. If needed, cultural immersion programs can give academic credit to creatively integrate international students' academic energy with cultural values. The residence life programs should include intentional pairing of international students with domestic students and trainings focused on cultivating bicultural competence. Colleges should consider campus wide, affirmative leadership opportunities for International students particularly in their second or third semester. Student development should liaise with enrollment in inventorying the capital international students bring with them from their home countries. Student development professionals should leverage those international students' prior experiences and skills in challenging them to build relationships across other cultures represented on campus.

Practitioners should also intentionally translate international students' sense of purpose into leadership opportunities to empower them to contribute to campus internationalization. International students should play active roles in study abroad programs, service trips, and cultural exchange programs. While bicultural competence among individuals may develop by sheer presence in another culture, a college environment where developmental learning occurs should have intentional programming

that cultivates bicultural competence skills. Student development professionals function in positions to catalyze the developmental, environmental, and personal factors in each individual international student to speed up transition and integration.

Limitations of the Study

As one limitation of the present study, the researcher chose participants based on the criteria of successful transition indicated by their classification, academic performance, and involvement in co-curricular activities on campus. While those descriptions indicate bicultural competence, their relationship does not necessarily indicate cause and effect. International students with high bicultural competence would typify better transition and academic success. Participants did not take a bicultural competence scale, therefore offering no evidence of their positions on the scale. The study focused on students who overall do well, and their responses may not paint an accurate picture for factors hindering the development of bicultural competence. Therefore, the study's findings, while insightful, should receive cautious interpretation.

Additionally, the institution where the study took place appears predominantly white. Predominantly white refers to a social construct that assumes the institution as monocultural; that international students experience an average American culture became an assumption not scientifically tested. Therefore, the American culture referred to in this study remains generic and broad. However, the international students' experiences remain equally real as they internalize these broad cultural values.

Implications for Further Research

The present study affirms bicultural competence mediates involvement and engagement by the international students. For further research, another beneficial study

could use a scale and identify students with high bicultural competence and another with low bicultural competence. A critical examination of these two groups would reveal in detail the specific factors facilitating or hindering the development of bicultural competence. Additionally, further research could establish the role (if any) that college traditions play in the development of bicultural competence among international students.

Conclusion

Cultural transition now has become understood as a bidirectional process that, if well managed, can mitigate negative psychological effects of adjusting to a foreign environment (Cheng et al., 2006; David et al., 2009; Schwartz et al., 2011). LaFramboise et al. (1993) theorized individuals exposed to more than one culture and experiencing this bidirectional process have the opportunity to develop competence in both their native culture and the foreign culture. International students experience this phenomenon when they move from their native cultures to a foreign country to attend college. Bicultural competence impact transition, persistence, and the overall success for international students (Mamiseishvili, 2012).

An established body of knowledge exists on student involvement and engagement. Bicultural competence mitigates the cultural transition and student involvement and engagement. Students who acquire high bicultural competence become empowered to involve themselves in campus programming as active participants. The current study established the college environment as a space conducive for the development of bicultural competence. Several factors including pre-arrival experiences contribute to the development of bicultural competence among international students. Leveraging the factors identified in the present study can result in a positive experience for international students, particularly in small colleges with one predominant culture.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions/Protocol

Q1. Tell me about yourself, where you are from and what are you involved with at this college?

Q2. What is life like in your country, and what are the highlights of your culture?

Q3. What are your observations of the culture here in the US?

- a. Do you see any differences between your culture and the culture here in the US? What are some examples?
- b. Any similarities? Specific examples?
- c. What are your thoughts on the differences and similarities?

Q4. How would you describe your adjustment to college?

- a. What were the most helpful things in your transition? Give some examples.
- b. What were the most challenging things in transition? Give me some examples.

Q5. What from your own country and culture did you find useful in your time in college? Give some examples.

Q6. How would you describe?

- a. Your social experience at the college?
- b. Your spiritual life?
- c. Academic life?

Q7. If you were to stay in this country, do you feel prepared to succeed in this culture?

What would you attribute that to?

Q8. If you were to return to your home country,

- a. Do you feel prepared to succeed in your own country and culture?
- b. What college experiences would you find most useful to your culture?

Q9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix B

Informed Consent

BICULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

You are invited to participate in a research study of the factors that facilitate smooth transition and success of international students in college. You were selected as a possible subject because you meet the criteria of an international student from a foreign country, in senior/junior year of college and transitioning well into the college. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. The study is being conducted by Kiplangat Cheruiyot Bii "Chip" to fulfill the requirements for the Master of Higher Education and Student Development program. This study is funded by the MAHE department.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of bicultural competence among international students and identify factors that facilitate international students to transition positively to college.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree to participate, you will be one of the 10-12 subjects who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things: You will schedule a time with the investigator for a period of one hour for a one on one interview. The investigator will ask you open ended questions and you will respond as freely as you want. The interview shall take approximately one hour.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

While on the study, the risks of discomforts are: a possible loss of confidentiality, discomfort from reflecting on your transition to college and the risk of remembering difficult times in your college life. There also may be other side effects that we cannot predict.

To minimize these risks, the investigator will take utmost care of your private information by assigning you a pseudonym. Additionally, if you feel uncomfortable during the interviews, you can tell the researcher and you are free to withdraw from that particular session or any further participation from the study. In the event of significant psychological disturbances, the researcher will terminate the interview and counsel and provide you with social support in seeking counselling services from the Taylor University Counseling Center.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

The benefits to participation that are reasonable to expect are an opportunity to tell your story and provide a perspective that will inform programming for future international students.

ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

Instead of being in the study, you have the option of declining to participate and no further steps shall be required of you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which results may be stored. The interview will be recorded and you will be assigned pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. Copies of the recordings shall be locked away at a place only accessible to the researcher. The recordings will be transcribed by one individual who has signed a confidentiality agreement to protect your identity. Computer files shall also be kept on password protected files. Once the interviews are transcribed and analyzed, your information and anything you provide for the study shall be appropriately disposed of and destroyed. Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Taylor University Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, MAHE program, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) etc., who may need to access your research records.

COSTS

You will not incur any costs to your life for participating in this study.

PAYMENT

You will receive payment for taking part in this study at a rate of \$10 an hour. The payment you will receive will be to compensate for an hour of lost wage and shall be capped at \$ 10 dollars for a maximum of 1 hour of participating in the study.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

In the event of physical injury resulting from your participation in this research, necessary medical treatment will be provided to you and billed as part of your medical expenses. Costs not covered by your health care insurer will be your responsibility. Also, it is your responsibility to determine the extent of your health care coverage. There is no program in place for other monetary compensation for such injuries. If you are participating in research which is not conducted at a medical facility, you will be responsible for seeking medical care and for the expenses associated with any care received.

FINANCIAL INTEREST DISCLOSURE

There is no financial benefit to the investigator from this study.

CERTIFICATE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher has completed the mandatory NIH certification for protecting human subjects and is governed by the laid down principles of confidentiality. The researcher is required to maintain your confidentiality at all times during and after the study. Any information you share during the interview shall be used for purposes of education only.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

Inquiries regarding the nature of the research, his/her rights as a subject, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to his/her participation as a subject can be directed to Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at IRB@taylor.edu or the Chair of the IRB, Susan Gavin at 756-998-5188 or ssgavin@taylor.edu

In the event of an emergency, you may contact the police at 911.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Taylor University and the researcher.

Your participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to your consent in the following circumstances: If during the study, it emerges that you are under the age of 18 years. Your information shall be immediately destroyed and the researcher will debrief you on the regulations governing research for participants consider minors.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

(This section should be in first person.) In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

If the study involves children who will be providing their assent on this consent document, rather than on an assent document, use the following signatures:

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ **Date:** _____

