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**Educational and Career Choices of Adult Third Culture Kids:
A Comparison Study Featuring Bicultural and Multicultural ATCKs**

Masters of International Education

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Abstract

The identity of Third Culture Kids, individuals who have spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents' culture, is nothing new in today's society. In fact, the number of Third Culture Kids is becoming more prevalent as the world moves to a global community where families travel and live all around the world. This thesis includes a comparative study between Ann Cotrell and Ruth Useem's previous research from 20 years ago, focused on Third Culture Kids born to American parents, and a new recent survey that features the identity of Adult Third Culture Kids born from Bicultural and Multicultural parents concerning their educational and career choices. Moreover, it will also analyze whether these decisions have changed over the past 20 years, and try to determine if patterns have changed.

The importance of the research proposed in this paper can be seen in how this global population is interacting with society as adults. Has the overseas experience been positive? Was it a difficult transition back to home country? How did it affect education and career choices? Experts themselves underline the limited amount of research and the need for more in-depth research across different platforms. The survey will focus on aspects such as current job, social life, economic status, and cultural identification; and whether they feel their experience had a positive or negative impact on their adult lives.

It can be extrapolated from this study that Adult Third Culture Kids' education and career choices are heavily influenced by their time growing up abroad and can be seen to have an international or service aspect. Furthermore, Third Culture Kids' identity and schooling play a stronger role in their educational and career choices than their Bi/Multicultural background. This may be due basically to the shared traits of identity, educational, and career choices that TCKs share while growing up abroad than having parents from different nationalities and cultures.

Definition of Key Words

Third Culture Kid (TCK): “A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.” (Pollock, 19)

Traditional TCK: “Children who move into another culture with parents due to a parent’s career choice.” (Van Reken and Bethal, 3)

Bi/Multicultural, Bi/Multi-Racial Children: “Children born to parents from at least two cultures or races.” (Van Reken and Bethal, 3)

Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK): Third Culture kids who enter adulthood.

Cross Culture Kid (CCK): “A Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK) is a person who has lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years.” (Van Reken and Bethal, 3)

Sponsorship: The employer (organization, government agency, business, school etc.) of a TCK’s parent/s, responsible for a family’s global mobility. (Wisecarver)

Home Country: The country where the TCK’s parents come from.

Host Country: The country where TCKs grew up during their formable years and where their parents got sponsored to come for work.

Host Nationals: citizens of host countries.

Expatriates (expats): A group of people who live abroad in a foreign country

International Schools: An international school is specifically established to cater to students from a wide variety of cultures who are likely to be internationally mobile as their parents move from country to country, the staff also represents a mixture of nationalities, such schools normally teach an international programme of study or one or more national programmes. (Hayden, 2006) (Morales, 52).

Cultural Marginality: “cultural marginality describes an experience; one typical of global nomads [a.k.a. TCKs] and others who have been molded by exposure to two or more cultural traditions. Such people don’t tend to fit perfectly into any one of the cultures to which they have been exposed but may fit comfortably on the edge, in the margins, of each.” (Van Reken)

Repatriation: the return of TCKs to the country of their parents’ or nationality/origin.

1. Introduction

The term “Third Culture Kid” (TCK) has been used since the 1950’s when Ruth and John Useem first coined the term while studying children whose parents moved overseas for professional reasons:

The Useems called the community created by the expatriates “third culture”; the first culture characterized the parents’ country of origin and the second culture was the host country. (Ruth and John Useem)

The third culture is the amalgamation of the first and second culture. (Morales, 52)

Since then there has been countless research on Third Culture Kids by leading experts such as Ann Cottrell, Ruth and John Useem, David Pollock, and Ruth Van Reken; amongst others, ranging from the different identity issues they face to how they should be recruited to work for global multinational companies. Thus, being a TCK is a relatively new cultural identity which started during the 50’s and has continued to grow due to the globalization of today’s world.

Back in the 50’s these TCKs were normally children from military or missionary families who had to travel for employment; however, nowadays this group has expanded to children of families from a variety of careers, as well as different countries, due to the social changes of the global work climate. This is interesting because for the first time topics such as the relationship between being a TCK and life choices in adult life can be studied. For the past 20 years the TCKs were originally studied as children but now they are well into their adult years and working in many different career fields. The resulting information gap has been articulated by TCK experts such as Ann Baker Cottrell and Jan Selmer, who focused on the importance of multicultural skills:

There has been very little research, however, on how ATCKs weave their often complex, multicultural childhood experiences into their adult life choices. (Cottrell, 24)

Our tentative findings also point to the permanency of these multicultural abilities which can be made to good use by adult third-culture kid self-initiated expatriates in a variety of situations. However, this exploratory study should be replicated in other locations and with other categories of globally mobile individuals. (Lauring. Selmer 433)

It can be hypothesized that that most ACTKs will maintain international aspects in their career and studies as a result of the international background during their developmental period as TCKs. This paper hopes to fill in the information void by providing further research on Adult

Third Culture Kids (ATCK), from different perspectives, by focusing on the major life decisions they seem to make in their education and careers. The method that will be used is based on the following steps:

1. Theoretical background on aspects related with the identity of TCKs, ATCKs from bi/multicultural families.
2. Empirical research to gather data by administering surveys and interviews to current ATCKs, which is congruent to the method in which the leading experts in the field had previously analyzed this topic.
3. Analysis of the data obtained and comparison considering the results from previous studies. The findings will be analysed considering the literature review and results regarding identity, impact of sponsorship, career choices, achievements, educational choices, and recruitment from multinational employers.
4. Discussion regarding bicultural and multicultural aspects and identification of any similarities or differences in their major life decisions in education and career choice compared to the rest of the results. These findings will add value to this new topic that is ever growing.

2. Literature Review/Theoretical Overview

Several studies are relevant for describing the state of affairs regarding TCKs. Most of the current research on adult TCKs and the way in which their identity shapes their future life choices including location, education, and occupation, have come from studies carried out by Ann Baker Cottrell and Ruth Hill Useem on the one hand, and Kathleen Finn Jordan and John Useem, on the other. It was funded, in part, by the College of Arts and Letters, San Diego State.

This research appears most predominantly in Cottrell's publications, "*Educational and Occupational Choices of American Adult Third Culture Kids*," "*Adult TCKS : Life Choices and Personal Characteristics*," and in "ATCK," *Strangers at home: Essays on the Effects of living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land.*" Cottrell and Useem's research and survey are extremely important, not only because they are the leading experts in the area, but also because their study is referred to by other researchers and dissertations when studying the life choices of ATCKs.

The following sections will explain their findings regarding the way in which Adult Third Culture Kids' decisions in their major life choices can be attributed to their identity, educational, and career choices. The main ideas will be based on several works that address key definitions concerning Third Culture Kids and Cross Cultural Kids; Cottrell and Useem's previous findings, the effects that sponsors and international schools have on Adult Third Culture Kids choices, as well as a study by Jan Selemer and Hon Lam in, "*Are former "third-culture kids" the ideal business expatriates?*," which discusses how children that grow up abroad make great expat employees.

2.1 Experts' Background

This section includes a short resumé of the three experts whose studies have been used for context.

RUTH VAN REKEN is an adult Third Culture Kid, co-founder of the Families in Global Transition conference, author of *Letters Never Sent* and co-author of *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*. Ruth has spent her career serving expatriate communities through various forms of trainings, on-site workshops, and writing.

RUTH HILL USEEM is professor emeritus of sociology and education at Michigan State University. She and her husband, John, originated the term third culture kids, and they have conducted extensive research on adults who spent many of their childhood years in cultures other

than that of their "home" or passport country. She has published numerous articles in sociological and anthropological journals and has served as a consultant, keynote speaker, and workshop presenter at overseas schools operated by the State Department and the Department of Defense.

ANN BAKER COTTRELL is a professor of sociology and assistant director of the office for International Programs at San Diego State University. Her fascination with internationally mobile lifestyles began with her own first overseas experience, a junior year abroad in Scotland. Her research focuses on transnational families eventually grew into a study of South Asians married to Westerners living in India, the United States, and Britain. Her advisors and mentors were John and Ruth Hill Useem, with whom she has collaborated in the study of third culture kids.

2.2 Definition of Main Identity Concepts

In order to fully understand a comprehensive comparative study on Adult Third Culture Kids and bi/multicultural ATCKs, it is imperative to define it first as well as its relation to the “cross cultural” umbrella. A Cross Culture Kid (CCK) can be defined as follows, “*A Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK) is a person who has lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years.*” (Van Reken, Bethal, 3) This explanation is broad, but in the academic world the terminology of a Cross Cultural Kid is just the beginning. This shows that there appear to be many different groups and identities that fall under the cross-cultural terminology and it is important to identify what type of definition people fall into in order to accurately analyze their choices. Both Van Reken’s and Cottrell’s presentation at the Families In Global Transition (FIGT) conference (“Third Culture Kids: Prototypes for Understanding Other Cross-Cultural Kids”; “Globally Mobile Children: One Tribe or Many? CCK, Expat, Global Nomad, TCK, Immigrant”) provide two different perspectives that show where Third Culture Kids lie on the Cross-Culture Kids Umbrella, as well as offering an explanation of the important terms as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2:

Figure 1: (Van Reken and Bethal, 3)

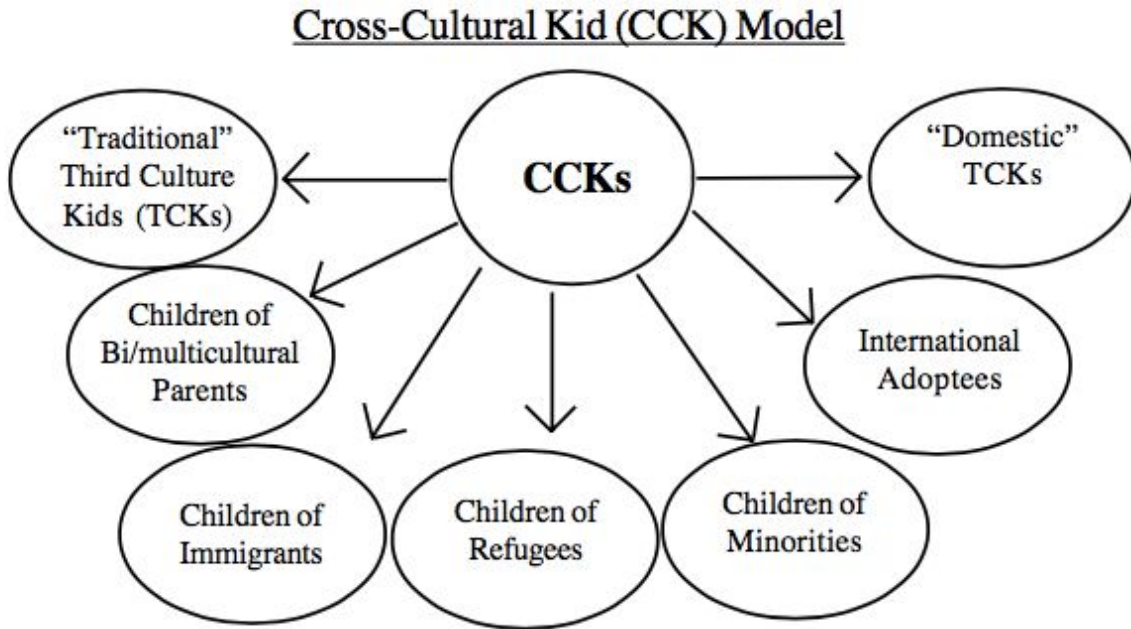
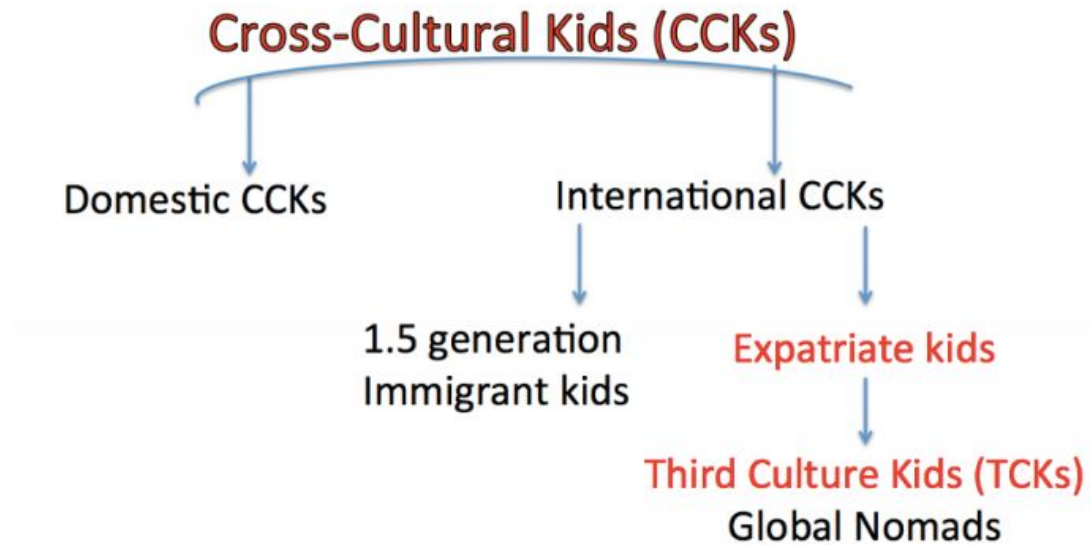


Figure 2: (Cottrell, 2)



It should also be noted that children do not fall into just one category but often have multiple identities as explained by Van Reken:

Furthermore, by seeing the many intercultural patterns possible for today's children, we get a clearer vision of the growing complexity many children face as they try to define their own identities and sense of belonging. In today's world, children are often in more than one of these circles at the same time. (Van Reken and Bethal, 8)

Figures 1 and 2 show that traditional TCKs, defined as: “*Children who move into another culture with parents due to a parent's career choice,*” (Van Reken and Bethal, 3) and Bi/Multicultural children defined as: “*Children born to parents from at least two cultures or races.*” (Van Reken and Bethal, 8) Which both fall under the umbrella of Cross-Cultural Kids (CCK). However, Cottrell's umbrella in Figure 2 goes more in depth and explains that TCKs are extend down from the international CCK branch and the expatriate children's branch; whereas Reken's figure (1) groups TCKs as a separate arm. Ultimately, each figure shows that traditional TCKs are a separate entity which extends from CCKs. In order to further understand the differences and similarities, specific definitions that both Van Reken and Cottrell agree on will be included in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

2.2.1 Definitions by Cottrell

Cottrell explains the definitions of identity related aspects that CCK comprise: “*Within the broad category, CCK, different types can be identified according to the primary reason their lives encompass more than one culture.*” (Cottrell, 2) This is important to note because it shows how she sees the different type of Cross Cultural Kids throughout her works and how she chooses to analyze and segregate her data.

- **Domestic CCKs:** people whose lives are cross-cultural without ever leaving their home country; for example, a British girl whose whole life has been in Bradford with an Indian father, a second generation Turkish-German or an African-American attending a predominantly white school.
- **International CCKs:** people whose lives are cross-cultural because they have lived in more than one country as a child (although they may also have other cross-cultural dimensions in their childhood lives).

- **International CCKs**
 - **Immigrant children:** children whose traditional immigration patterns are sufficiently different from expatriate patterns to keep them separate. As traditionally understood, immigrants make a permanent move from country A, where they belong, to country B, where they are expected to assimilate and belong. When talking about International CCKs, children who have lived a significant amount of time in more than one country, only 1.5 immigrant children are included. These are children who immigrate to a new country during childhood. Neither immigrant parents nor second generation immigrants are included.
 - **Expatriate children:** children who live abroad with parents outside their home/passport country for any reason. They are outside of their country, ex-patria, but do not intend to settle. They expect to return to their home/passport country.
- **Third Culture Kids & Global Nomads:** are one type of expatriate children. Their parents are abroad due to employment in another country. These terms have been used interchangeably, however, TCK is preferred because it is more widely used; it is the original term for this population.

2.2.2 Definitions by Van Reken

On the contrary, Van Reken and Bethal use a different model and defines similar concepts. Her perspective is reflected in the following statement:

We believe this model accomplishes several purposes. First, by looking at the commonalities of issues children face when they are raised in meaningful interaction with two or more cultural worlds, each group does not have to “reinvent the wheel” and assume all responses are due to their specific situation. This can help to normalize each of these experiences rather than having them lead to a sense of “terminal uniqueness” as described by Janet Bennet. (Van Reken and Bethal, 3)

The following concepts are key in their model:

- **Traditional TCKs:** Children who move into another culture with parents due to a parent’s career choice.

- **Bi/Multicultural/ Children:** Children born to parents from at least two cultures or races.
- **Children of immigrants:** Children whose parents have made a permanent move to a new country where they were not originally citizens.
- **Children of refugees:** Children whose parents are living outside their original country or place not by personal choice but due to circumstances such as war, violence, famine, other natural disasters.
- **Children of minorities:** Children whose parents are from a racial or ethnic group that is not part of the majority race or ethnicity of the country in which they live.
- **International adoptees:** Children adopted by parents from another country other than the one of that child's birth.
- **Domestic TCKs:** Children whose parents have moved in or among various subcultures within that child's home country. (Van Reken and Bethal 3-8)

2.2.3 Children of Internationally Mobile Compared to Cross-Nationally Married Parents

Another source that helps illustrate the differences between traditional TCKs and Bi/Multicultural children is Ann Baker Cottrell's, *"Explaining Differences: TCKs and Other CCKs, American and Japanese TCKs."* This is significant because Cottrell explains that even though both groups belong under the TCK umbrella, there are some differences in the definition and in their fundamental characteristics. Cottrell presents a different definition for each.

Third Culture Kid:

A child who moves with her parents to a new country starts as a member of a society where she and her family are recognized as members and see themselves in the same light. When they move they are seen, and see themselves, as outsiders. The family is monocultural and adds new cultural elements by virtue of contact with the new cultural environment.
(Cottrell, 3)

Bi/Multicultural Kid born with parents from different nationalities and cultures:

The child of the cross-national couple, in contrast, grows up in a family which is itself bicultural, often a blended culture (assuming they choose to incorporate both cultures). Assuming, for the purposes of conceptual clarity, this archetypical family lives in one

parent's home country and in a homogeneous community, the only cross-cultural element in the child's life is the foreign parent. The child of such a marriage is a full member of that parent's country; she just happens to have a foreign parent. She may be seen as somewhat different or exotic because of looks or cultural practices inherited from the foreign parent, but she is in her home country and culture. (Cottrell, 3)

Therefore, Cottrell mentions the differences between a monocultural family (a family with parents of the same nationality) and those forming a cross-national couple when living in one of their parents' countries. She explains that the child may look foreign but still shares the same customs and cultures of the country he/she is living in, since one of the parents is from that country. It differs from this paper's study in that Cottrell focuses on bicultural families living in one of the parent's home countries, whereas this study intends to also include research concerning bicultural/multicultural families who are living in a country in which none of the parents are from. This in essence will provide more research and hopefully gather new data to the ever growing research in this field. Furthermore, it offers further insight into bi/multicultural and bi/multiracial children when studying how they behave as adults.

2.3 Cottrell's and Useem Survey Results

Ann Cottrell and Ruth Useem's original study of the 604 ATCKs, in 2002, is extremely important because the majority of past studies and ATCK character analysis of have been primarily based on these findings. In order to get a better picture of bicultural and multicultural landscape, it is crucial to delve deeper into Cottrell's original study and analyze her findings concerning the characteristics of ATCKs and their future life choices. Moreover, this is also essential because this paper will also compare Cottrell's previous data with a more recent survey focusing on educational and career choices of ATCKs, which will be one of the focal points of this paper. The reason behind this is, as stated before, Cottrell's and Useem's previous survey is one of the leading works in the Adult Third Culture Kids research.

Cottrell's research has been studied, analyzed and presented in three of her works. These are, *'Educational and Occupational Choices of American Adult Third Culture Kids,'* which appear in Morten Ender's *Military Brats and Other Global Nomads: Growing Up in Organization Families*, *'Adult TCKS : Life Choices and Personal Characteristics,'* in *'ATCK,'* in Carolyn D. Smith (Ed) *Strangers at Home: "Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming Home."* These papers define what an Adult Third Culture Kid is, compare the similar and different characteristics of ATCKs identities, as well as provide analysis concerning the choices of majors in college and careers.

In order for Cottrell to successfully present her data she had to create a set of criteria for surveyors as well as classify them into groups. Her main criteria for her research can be described as:

TCKs come from all countries and live in all parts of the world. This study focuses on just one segment of this population, the adult American TCKs living in the United States. In order to focus on adult life choices 25 years was the minimum age for participation in this study; therefore, none were abroad in the post-cold war period. (Cottrell, 230)

As it can be seen, Cottrell's main focus was on analyzing predominantly American ATCKs living in the United States. This again illustrates that the leading research focuses mainly on American TCKs and not other subgroups, which emphasizes a gap exists in the research concerning Bi/Multicultural Third Culture Kids.

In the organization and analysis of data Cottrell established different groups depending on their parent's sponsors (that is, "organization for which their parents worked abroad.") In fact, she realized that it affected *their daily lives and experiences*: –

[it] made a difference in the type of family life and schooling that minor dependents experienced abroad. The third culture of the diplomatic community differs from that found on a military base. The third culture of business people abroad impinges differently on the daily lives of their children than does that of missionaries on their offspring. (Cottrell, 1)

Furthermore, apart from sponsors, another highly influential part of the TCKs future life choices, whether it be career choices or educational choices, is the family. According to Jan Selmer, TCKs rely heavily on family support and when moving to a new country they establish a bond and a heavy trust:

TCKs may also be more tolerant of their parents and fond of their families due to the fact that expatriate family members rely on each other for support when living in a new location. This reliance may build into trust and friendship between the TCKs and their parents. (Lam and Stemer, 433)

Evidence can further be seen as a large number of TCKs have similar jobs and interests to those of their parents, and sometimes choose the same careers.

Considering the type of sponsor, Cottrell classified her findings in five categories: military (30%), government (23%), missionary (17%), business (16%) and "other." (Cottrell, 14)

the 'Other' category refers to groups who shared similar characteristics such as educators, employees of international non-governmental organizations, media, and different foundations.

2.4 Sponsorship Effect

Cottrell explains that sponsors of TCKs parents play a very important role in affecting a TCK's family experiences, as the sponsor determines how long and where the family works overseas as well as the community they grow up in. Multiple experts from Pollock, Van Reken, and others have discovered that sponsors have also been known to have an important influence in Third Culture Kids when they become adults:

Studies that look at more than one sponsor group have found sponsor to be an important factor in both overseas experience and in relation to adult lives. See, for example, Gleason (1970), Jordan (1981), Krajewski (1969), Salmon (1987), Shepard (1975), Werkman (1972). Others, such as the American Association of School Administrators (1966), Cohen (1977), Pollock and Van Reken (1999), acknowledge that sponsor communities and cultures may vary markedly (Cottrell, 233)

Moreover, sponsors also affect how much families have to adapt to their new home or how much contact they have with the country's host nationals. This can cause TCKs to have a profound connection with the community they live in, whether it be an impoverished country or living on a military base. Thus, the TCK's experience is influenced by whichever country they grew up in and then continues to influence their future life choices.

Furthermore, as mentioned in section 2.3, Cottrell and Useem show that the type of sponsor has a great impact on their lives and experiences. Cottrell found that families from missionary sponsors spent the longest time overseas (85 percent were abroad for 10 years or more) and additionally, missionary kids had the most contact with host nationals and identified the most, from all those surveyed, to their host country. Biz kids (or business families) were a close second, with 63 percent of those surveyed spending 10 years abroad or more.

As far as the mobility of the categories, military families, as expected, were the most mobile of all the groups surveyed. 41 percent were abroad for one or two tours in one or two countries for less than five years. In families from government non-military sponsors, which included the foreign service, Cottrell found that 44 percent were abroad at least 10 years and lived in 4 or more countries. What is interesting is that in the most extreme cases, where families lived in more than 6 countries, they were mostly from government families. Concerning the 'others' group, Cottrell's research shows that they were most likely to be short timers (42 percent abroad one to two years and 70 percent less than 5 years). However, families working with

international schools, the UN or NGO's typically stayed overseas longer. Ultimately, Cottrell explains, "*These TCKs are most likely to feel at home everywhere and nowhere and/or to feel most at home where they are considered locally to be a foreigner.*" (Cottrell, 334) This seems to affect the Third Culture Kids ability to adapt to many different situations. Another positive attribute of this is that it shows ATCKs can be successful in many different careers and can be successful in careers that involve cross cultural aspects and/or working for international companies. On the other hand, this can also be a hindrance as it can cause Third Culture Kids to have difficulty settling down in their careers or a place.

2.5 Career Choices

The career choices of ATCKs play an important part when analyzing their life choices and identity since one's career can reveal much about one's personality and personal goals.

2.5.1 Study by Cottrell and Useem

Cottrell's and Useem's study found trends and similarities concerning American ATCKs as a whole group, as well as specific similarities between the different groupings of the ATCKs they surveyed. It is important to express that not all careers fall under the same umbrella, and for the sake of this study, Cottrell, Useem, and this paper will group jobs into the same categories.

The most prominent similarity is that ATCKs usually try to choose careers with international elements:

Regardless of their career choice, most have incorporated an international dimension in their work lives. For some, jobs have been highly international, such as working overseas, collaborating with international colleagues, or advising international students. and More than two-thirds say that maintaining an international dimension in their lives is important to them. (Cottrell and Useem, 26)

Thus, over 72 percent of ATCKs worked in jobs that, at some point, involved an international dimension, whether it be minimal or extensive. A further similarity ATCKs shared was that they were very likely to have careers that involved having a form of high achievement. Many held professional jobs as explained by Cottrell and Useem:

One of the most notable characteristics of ATCKs is their high occupational achievement; this reflects their high educational achievement. The majority -- over 80 percent -- are professionals, executives, or managers. Their occupational choices reflect a continued love

of learning, interest in helping, and desire for independence and flexibility. (Cottrell and Useem, 27)

Just as a point of fact, not all ATCKs hold linear career paths and sometimes some have trouble settling down, (Cottrell, 241). However, even though Cottrell's study is just a small glimpse into the career choices of Adult Third Culture Kids, patterns arise that concern the future choices of ATCKs.

Another important theme is that most ATCKs choose careers that deal with helping others while being seen as being extremely independent: *"A certain independence and self sufficiency is seen in the fact that over 10% did not report to anyone over them in their jobs."* Moreover, most ATCKs in professional jobs do work that requires self-confidence, is self directed, and deal with new challenges. (Cottrell, 246) This demonstrates that ATCKs love their independence and like to keep their options open, allowing them to travel and change locations: *"Others may have chosen independent freelance work because it is transportable and can be done anywhere in the world, whether traveling or settled."* (Cottrell, 246) It should further be emphasized that ATCKs wanting levels of independence in their jobs might be due to the fact that while growing up TCKs tend to have little control over their lives, as their parents and their parents' sponsors dictate where their family lives and how they have to behave. This can cause TCKs to, *"constantly having to monitor their own behavior in terms of how it reflects on parents and/or sponsor. Independent careers could be a means of escaping such control."* (Cottrell, 246)

In Cottrell's study one of the most common occupational fields was education, working as teachers, professors, or administrators. The next popular were in professional settings such as medical or legal fields or being self employed, while some are even presidents of their own companies, managers, owners, or self-employed. Cottrell notes that ATCKs do not like to work for large corporations or in government. It is also important to mention that TCKs whose parents worked for the government are least likely to follow their parents' footsteps, unlike those in education, where they are the most likely to follow their parents' footsteps:

The most common occupational field reported by these ATCKs is education -- many are teachers, professors, or administrators -- followed by those working in professional settings such as medical or legal fields and those who are self-employed; many of the latter are presidents of their own companies. One won't find many ATCKs in large corporations or government. The small number in this sample who have government jobs are in the Foreign Service or AID, or in branches such as the Bureau of Wildlife and Fisheries or the national parks. Although they may have been influenced by their parents' work overseas, they generally have not followed in their parents' footsteps. Only a small percentage of

these respondents, for example, have chosen careers in the military or as missionaries. (Cottrell, 234)

2.5.2 Study by Wisecaver

Cottrell's original data and analysis can also be further supported by another survey taken by Kelly Wisecaver in 2014. Wisecaver undertook her own survey of the careers of ATCKs by surveying 30 of them and their career choices. Although her evidence sample size is much smaller than Cottrell's, her evidence did display a similar trend. Wisecaver found that out of the 30 ATCKs she surveyed, 8 were in education, 6 were in health or social services, and 4 were in business. These three types of jobs were the most popular in both Cottrell's and Wisecaver's studies. Those with jobs in government, military or the church were the lowest with only 2 people from the first category.

This again coincides with Cottrell's original data. Cottrell explains that the reason for these results are possibly due to the fact that expats tend not to become involved in local political issues. Moreover, those that work in the military or in missionary work do so with the intention of staying overseas. Those working in religious institutions or the military were disproportionately from that background: *"eight of nine clergy were MKs, and 56% of those in the military or military support organizations were military "brats."* (Cottrell, 235)

Cottrell also expresses that her data is consistent with the findings of *Bowen (1986)*, *Ender (1996)*, and *Truscott (1989)*, in that they show that a very small proportion of military dependents make a career in the military, and that most MK do not pursue a career in mission work. Figure 3 displays the data that Cottrell collected in her survey and shows the percentages of ATCKs that work in different fields as well as their sponsors:

Figure 3 (Cottrell, 235):

Table 13. 2: Employer/work setting by sponsor (percentage distribution)

Work Setting	Mission (N=102)	Military (N=175)	Gov't (N=135)	Business (N=90)	Other (N=80)	Total (N=582)
Business/financial	22	32	27	20	17	25
Education	25	23	17	17	28	22
Health/ social service	24	7	13	23	13	15
Self	11	14	14	14	14	13
Government	3	5	5	7	8	5
Military	2	10	6	1	2	5
Professional	3	6	12	11	10	8
Arts, Media	0	3	5	4	7	4
Religious.	10	0	0	2	1	2
Total percent	18	30	23	16	14	100

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is the fact that most adult TCKs want to pursue a career that takes them back overseas, whether by pursuing a similar job to that of their parents, a job that allows them to be independent and travel again, or one that helps them to get back to their roots by returning overseas again:

As their overseas experience grows and enriches them, TCKs may want to continue that inspiring experience by preferring a future internationally mobile career, avoiding to settle down in any one place (Gerner & Perry, 2000; Gerner et al., 1992; Useem, 2001). (Lam and Steamer, 9)

Cottrell brings up another interesting point regarding the conflict ATCKs when having to choose between continuing their nomadic life or settling down in a career:

Many struggled with the conflict between their desire to find work which would connect them to other places and other peoples, often involving mobility, and the desire to find work which would connect them to one place, one community, and spare their children the rootlessness they experienced. (Cottrell, 238)

Finally, it is important to note that considering that the study is based on the answers of 604 people, a conclusion can be hypothesized from the current study that being a Third Culture Kid affects, in the majority of cases, future adult life choices.

2.6 Achievements

Most ATCKs set very high achievement goals for themselves. The evidence can be seen in their academic work as well as their careers. One explanation for this might be the high pressure and expectations that ATCK's parents set for them. Considering the fact that TCK's parents are expats and are brought in by sponsors that employ them, most TKCs come from affluent families when growing up and attend the best schools. The standard of excellence for the students is set high by the parents as well as the elite community they live in:

Parental role models and high expectations are supported by the excellent education provided in the generally small overseas schools. And the experience of living and traveling abroad as a child provides another kind of education, as many pointed out. (Cottrell, 238)

This similar character trait of high level of achievement has already been discussed in relation to the careers that ATCKs choose in section 2.5, but can additionally be mentioned in relation to their academic prowess, as shown by Wisecarver and Cottrell in their studies:

I can confidently submit that the large majority of those sampled in my survey have pursued higher education. It would be safe to say that the vast majority have attained an undergraduate degree and several have pursued Masters and Doctoral degrees. (Wisecarver, 36)

One characteristic of adult TCKs that stands out is that the overwhelming majority of them are committed to continuing their education beyond high school. (Cottrell and Useem, 26)

The high achievement of ATCKs in relation to their education will be further discussed in the next section, which focuses on the educational choices of TCKs and ATCKs.

2.7 Educational Choices

Educational decisions are another important way in which the characteristics of Adult Third Culture Kids can be analyzed. Although many similarities are shown, this still is a study that focuses on the perception of the individuals involved, their own personal choices, and the analysis of these choices can be seen as subjective. However, this study's aim is to point out similarities in order to discover a general pattern considering the educational and career decisions that Adult Third Culture Kids make. This section will explore the experts' opinions

concerning adult TCKs' decisions in majors studied and college choices, as well as the relation between this choice and the character traits of ATCKs.

As expected, most Third Culture Kids expressed that their college choice was impacted by their experience overseas. From this point of view, Cottrell's results are the following:

Most respondents say that their third culture childhood experiences affected their college choices and experiences; 43 percent say greatly, 28 percent say somewhat. Most commonly, the experience influenced what they studied. A quarter of the sample chose majors that were obviously international in content (e.g., foreign languages, anthropology, international relations). For many others the choice of a major was influenced by their overseas experiences. (Cottrell and Useem, 27)

The Adult Third Culture Kids she surveyed said that living abroad affected their decisions in college and throughout their college experience. Around 70 percent said that it had at least somewhat of an effect in their decisions. Similarly, Morgan Byttner had matching results concerning the major choices and educational focus of TCKs in his dissertation entitled, "Career Choices and the Influence of third Culture Kids on International Relations." He concluded in his independent survey results that, "*over a quarter of respondents chose international relations or foreign language related majors or minors.*" (Byttner, 36) Furthermore, he also explains that in his survey of 108 American ATCKs that, "*Nearly 66 percent of participants agreed that their experiences as a third culture kid shaped their academic interests and career choice.*" (Byttner, 32). This is very similar to Cottrell's percentage and so we can see a trend starting to form. However, it should be noted that Morgan's survey includes career choice as well, where Cottrell's survey only includes the TCK international influences on education.

An interesting question to bring up here is how much of an effect parents had in the decision? As already discussed, parents and elite communities that TCKs live in are shown to have had a great effect on their college decision process. As Cottrell explains, "*The main reason for the TCKs' high level of educational achievement, however, is the high achievement of their parents and others in TCK communities.*" (Cottrell, 6) This is an interesting hypothesis that this paper will also analyze in the results section to see if it compares to Cottrell's findings.

Another area in which Cottrell, as well as others, have examined is the high percentage of ATCKs that attend college or further education after high school. Cottrell found in her study that, "*Ninety-four percent entered within a year of high school graduation, the vast majority in the same year.*" (Cottrell, 5) This number is exceptional and a very good judge of the impact that living abroad has on the TCK's educational future, as many attended very good international schools which was due to the high pressure from their parents, community, and friends. "*The*

main reason for the TCKs' high level of educational achievement, however, is the high achievement of their parents and others in TCK communities.”(Cottrell, 6)

This educational achievement does not stop at just the bachelor's degree. As explored previously, this shows that ATCKs are very highly motivated and strive for high achievement standards. This is demonstrated in both Cottrell's and Wiescarver's studies as explained in section 2.6.

Cottrell continues this analysis by explaining that out of 604 surveyed, 81 percent completed a BA and 39 percent completed a masters or some sort of higher degree. (Cottrell, 6) These numbers are incredible considering they far exceed the USA national average, in which only 21 percent of the American adult population (24 percent of men and 18 percent of women) have graduated from a four-year college. (Cottrell, 235) Furthermore, it is a common element that most TCKs feel that they are very well prepared for college. (Thurston-Gonzales and Cottrell)

Although ATCKs seem highly motivated and focused on high achievement, they are not without their identity issues. A considerable amount of TCKs change majors two or three times while others are dissatisfied with their original college choice and in some cases drop out. TCKs may have issues with reentry and fail to find their roots back in the USA. (Thurston-Gonzalez) This can be traced back to the identity issues that TCKs noticeably possess according to Cottrell (4):

Some young adult TCKs strike [others] as being self-centered adolescents... not able to make up their minds about what they want to do with their lives, where they want to live, and whether or not they want to "settle down, get married, and have children." They have what some call prolonged adolescence.

This delayed adolescence may explain some of the problems that TCKs exhibit when choosing a college or major and even further in other considerable aspects in their life. Concerning readjustment back into the US, Cottrell and Useem explain that, “*they never adjust. They adapt, they find niches, they take risks, they fail and pick themselves up again*” (Cottrell and Useem, 4). Sarah Thurston- Gonzalez also discusses this struggle:

The selection of college is also affected by the international experience. Cottrell and R.H. Useem (1994) also report that many adult third culture kids chose their colleges without visiting the campus because of the difficulties of travel and cost logistics. They make their decisions on the basis of personal contacts. Perhaps this is one reason why third culture kids have reported dissatisfaction with their first college choice or that college was not right at that time. Their research shows that 38% obtained no degree at the first college

they attended, 45% attended three or more colleges (not including technical schools and institutes). (Thurston-Gonzalez, 39)

Although identity issues are present in choosing and attending colleges, most do graduate and discover a major with international elements. Sarah Thurston-Gonzalez, whose dissertation pertains to the college choices of TCKs, shows evidence of this fact. She explains, using Cottrell and Useem's study, that Third Culture Kids' international background influenced their college experience. This includes having an international or language major and participating in study abroad programs, in which over one third have admitted in participating in a study abroad program in college. (Thurston-Gonzalez) Furthermore, she continues to explain that these TCKs continue international mindedness and that their international experience continues throughout their lifetime in, "*how they see the world, their levels of intercultural sensitivity, mobility tendencies, occupational preferences, family tendencies, and language development.*" (Thurston-Gonzalez, 40) These tendencies and identities can be seen throughout the leading TCK studies and will further be analyzed in the results section of this current study.

Cottrell also explains these tendencies and further expresses that while TCKs are in university they tend to exhibit a similarity in major choices, and while not all choose to get involved directly in international relations, most majors have international elements or were developed while abroad:

Their majors were not directly international but reflected interests developed while living abroad. One respondent majored in biology in order to go into international wildlife management. Others were influenced by parents' work or needs they saw in the world around them or in themselves. (Cottrell, 26)

Cottrell continues to explain that 63 percent mentioned international influences and,

Most commonly respondents said this was a decision to study something international such as international relations, anthropology, area studies or a foreign language. Nearly one-third (29%) of those with a BA had an international major or minor at the undergraduate or graduate level or both. (Cottrell, 239)

Cottrell states that this interest is because of the following reasons: the love of foreign cultures, especially one of the "home" cultures; an international perspective; international work, for those who choose the majors to pursue a career in international relations; to help others abroad, which was developed while living overseas and seeing the poverty that existed; continue to develop careers in social services, health care, or aid; to get back abroad; to gain perspective on one's own life; and to help others with similar experiences.

2.7.1 The International School Aspect

International schools can have a considerable effect on the shaping of Third Culture Kids' Identity. When parents take their families abroad for work, they often enroll their children into international schools. These schools are usually private and generally quite expensive. They have curriculums ranging from American, British, French, and German; although the most popular are British and American schools in which, out of all registered international schools, 42 percent (2,945) offer a UK curriculum and 23 percent (1,582) an American curriculum. (the International School Consultancy Group; Glass) These schools offer international students a place to come together with their peers from many different nationalities and are taught by teachers from all over the world. Pollock and Van Reken describe students attending these schools, stating that most students usually attend classes in English, and that TCKs are accustomed to a number of transitions:

Many international schools accommodate 40-60 nationalities and an equal number of languages (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 209). For instance the International School in Brussels (ISB, 2013), which brings together 1500 students from over 70 countries or Copenhagen International School which accommodates 750 students from over 55 countries; all with English as the principle language of instruction (CIS, 2013). Many international schools have a 30 percent or more turnover rate each year as families from all over the world are transferred in and out, hence the students know what it means to be the newcomer and the teachers understand the transition experience (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 210). TCKs who attend international schools are influenced by an educational strategy, which raises awareness towards the fact that there are multiple ways of behaving and multiple value systems different from their own (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009, p.209).

Hayden offers another dimension concerning international schools and expresses that there is not one singular definition of international schools. These schools usually serve students who are, *“not usually citizens in the country in which they are hosted.”* (Hayden, 15)

Lærke Engelbrecht, whose paper entitled *“The Relationship Between TCK Identity and TCK Educational Needs,”* continues to offer further insight into the identity traits and similarities that students from international schools share. She explains that these students form close interpersonal relationships, have similar values about their future, education, and careers as well as having high self esteem. She further explains that, due to these shared identities, TCKs who attend international schools do not need to reinvent themselves in every move, which is crucial during a child's developmental process. They also understand that their life situation is a social advantage which they can exploit in their future:

Adolescents who have come to terms with who they are have e.g. high self-esteem, are likely to form close interpersonal relationships, consider values and have thoughts about the future e.g. occupation. TCK life norms can result in vulnerable children, who depend on teachers that recognize them and strengthen bonds to fellow cultural marginals. TCKs who are supported in adapting constructive marginal competences tend to avoid getting lost in every new cultural frame that presents itself, hence they do not need to reinvent their identities with every geographical move. They can come to the acknowledgement that they fully belong somewhere in the culture with other fellow marginals. Such acknowledgement is highly important because constructive marginals are able to put their multicultural experiences to good use. They recognize that the knowledge and skills they have gained through their mobile lifestyle is a social advantage and may be a resource professionally. (Engelbrecht 31)

These connections and bonds that TCKs create while attending school abroad can have life long impacts that extend to whatever education and careers that ATCKs choose. It should be highlighted that it seems that no matter where TCKs parents are from, the fact that they are a part of their own unique community may impact their future life choices.

2.8 Strengths of ATCKs As Expat Employees

There is an emerging view point from different authors focusing on the idea that Adult Third Culture Kids are a great source of talent and that companies should be hiring them. This is new research from Jan Selmer and Hon Lam, and is noted also by Cottrell as well as Weisbord. They all explain that ATCKs are ready made expatriate employees, in that they have the experience in living overseas, understand cross cultural issues, and have a strong track record of high standards of achievement, compared with their peers. The quote below is a great indicator as it shows Lam, Selmer, Tarique, and Weisbord's views on the topic:

An emerging view in the relatively new focus on TCKs in the IHRM literature is that TCKs are a promising source of expatriate talent (Bonebright, 2010; Caligiuri et al., 2009; Selmer and Lam, 2004).

Lam and Selmer (2004) used data from TCKs and their adolescent peers to examine whether TCKs have more characteristics useful for future expatriates than do their peers. Their findings showed TCKs to have greater enjoyment of travel to foreign countries, knowledge of foreign languages, acceptance of differences among cultures, and interest in international careers. Other studies have found TCKs to be adaptable and to relate well to people of different races, ethnicities, religions, and nationalities in a variety of settings

(Eidse and Sichel, 2004; Bonebright, 2010; Useem and Downie, 1976; Lam and Selmer, 2004). (Tarique and Weisbord, 140)

Selmer continues to explain that global employers should hire TCKs because they require little to no cross-cultural training, which saves them money; and that ATCKs can also fulfil their identity requirements that they search for when living overseas. Selmer also discovered that the characteristics of ATCKs have favorable comparisons with the success criteria of international companies. He found that these included a strong connection to family, interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, and short settling down period. He then discovered that these were comparable traits of most ATCKs.

Cottrell agrees with this idea and she believes that the identity, character, and experience living overseas allows them to be successful in the global workforce. She states that, “1. *ATCKs are internationally experienced and continue their international involvement.* 2. *ATCKs are adaptable and relate easily to a diversity of people.* 3. *ATCKs are helpers and problem solvers.*” (Cottrell, 250) These factors are just some of the reasons why Adult Third Culture Kids are perceived as successful international employees.

Based on the ideas extracted from previous research, there seem to be many factors that contribute to Adult Third Culture Kids decisions for entering university and the workforce. These include their identity, lifestyles, family, friends, pre-university education, and location; these aspects will be further analysed in an attempt to identify aspects related with the current ATCK climate and similarities to conclusions from past studies.

3. Research methods

3.1 Methodology

The ultimate purpose of this paper is to compare Adult Third Culture Kids from different nationalities, whether from the United States, a different country or a combination of countries, considering their perceptions and major life decisions regarding education and professional careers. Most of the research that has been conducted in the past has been focused primarily on Traditional TCKs born from predominantly American parents. The present study focuses on both quantitative and qualitative data on TCKs from around the world. A survey for Adult TCK's from ages 18-65+ was designed, which included inductive and deductive questions covering aspects such as TCK identity, demography, education, and career choices. The questions asked respondents to choose a number on a scale of (1-5) asking if being a TCK influenced their educational or career choice. This scale was repeated in many of the survey questions and can be described as follows: A 5 represents that they agree with statement strongly, a 3 somewhat, and a 1 not at all, with 2 and 4 representing the feelings in between. They were also asked to fill in open ended questions concerning their TCK identity and what influenced those decisions.

The first section in the survey included demographic questions asking the respondents about their background information, age, gender, birth nation, nationality and parent's nationality. The objective was to gain a general overview of where the respondents came from, what year they grew up abroad, as well as an idea of who their parents were. Moreover, it also aimed at distinguishing between traditional TCK's from the bi, and multicultural ones.

The survey was distributed among classmates and connections of the author known from Egypt who had the characteristics required as well as through online TCK communities such as *facebook* groups, online TCK conferences and websites, most notably: "*Families in Global Transition*" and TCKID.com.

3.2 Limitations

This survey was not without limitations. One of them is the fact that several TCK's had doubts concerning their identities, which might have affected their level of subjectivity; thus, it is nearly impossible to determine exactly where they are from. Other researchers on the subject have expressed this same feeling of limitation:

It is evident from these responses that being "from" somewhere is a subjective term for most TCKs. It does not necessarily match where you were born or what your heritage is,

but instead where you have lived the longest or perhaps where you have felt most at home. It may even be in a country you have never lived in before, if that is where your family is.
(Byttner, 28)

However, it was hoped to get around this problem by asking the questions that gave a better idea of who the ATCKs thought they were, by compiling information about their birth country, their nationality, and the nationality of their parents.

Secondly, the intention of the author was to only receive answers from those who had already graduated college and entered the workforce. However, since the survey was available on *facebook* message boards and was made available to high school alumni, a handful of replies were received of some individuals who were still university students, and thus, had not yet entered the workforce. In order to find a solution to this problem, extra categories were created in the surveys and analysis which included sections that grouped this age into their own separate section, usually explaining that they are still in college.

Thirdly, some of the people who answered did not really understand what a Third Culture Kid was. When asked if they considered themselves a TCK with a definition provided by Ruth van Reken 482 answered “yes”, 18 answered “no” and 16 were not sure. One student said she didn’t feel like she belonged anywhere, *“I’m not sure. I did not feel assimilated into any host countries ever, so they don’t feel comfortable to me, yet I don’t feel American either. I have always referred to myself as homeless,”* Although she fit the definition by having lived in five different countries, was born in the USA and her father was working for a sponsor. Another answered that she did not feel like she was a TCK Although she had lived in 14 countries and graduated high school in Egypt; while her parents, from New Zealand, worked for the embassy. However, most of the respondents explained their identity in a similar fashion to this ATCK:

“100% I think of myself as a third culture kid because my life experiences and formative years were spent living among cultures. I was born outside of my passport country so in essence I don’t really know what “home” is or what it means to be from somewhere in the traditional sense.”

Most respondents stated that they have a feeling that they don’t belong in the country that their parents are from or where they had grown up.

Another limitation in this survey was that 194 of the TCK’s interviewed had graduated from Egypt or more specifically from Cairo American College, the author’s alumni. Although their data should be measured just as equally as the others who did not graduate from CAC, there are some facts that should be noted. Most of their parents either worked in oil or government

agencies and were predominantly from America. Furthermore, since the survey was posted on the CAC alumni page, some of the respondents might have missed reading the definition of what makes a TCK and completed the survey anyway, although they might have been a Domestic Cross Cultural Kid or an Immigrant Kid, such as one classmate who stated:

Although an Arab, I grew up in expat bubbles both in Saudi and Maadi/CAC. Family and local friends can't fully relate to my acquired western culture and likewise I find it difficult to relate to my Egyptian countrymen when I lived in Egypt or to westerners when I lived in the US and now in the UK. I relate best to those who have had a mixed upbringing: 1) western expats who grew up in Asia/Middle East/Africa 2) Asians/middle easterners/Africans who went to international schools in their countries 3) 2nd generation immigrants in western countries who attended local public schools and are fully immersed in their culture of birth but experienced the same culture clash as I did since they grew up with traditional 1st generation parents.

Since the definition of a TCK is quite distinctive and has to deal with personal identity, it is again a very subjective topic that has lifelong impacts. This is also expressed by others who study this field stating that the identity of TCKs and ATCKs are subjective. This includes some of the respondent's answers concerning their nationality. For example, some respondents considered themselves to be American, although they had two parents from different nationalities. They consider themselves to be American because to them, that is home. This subjectivity caused some difficulty when entering the data for this survey into separate categories such as Traditional ATCKs or Bi/Multicultural ATCKs. Furthermore, some ATCK's parents are naturalized citizens of the USA, causing them to feel more attached to America than the nations their parents originated from.

Some past surveys could also be seen as subjective when they grouped the careers of ATCKs into categories. This paper's survey also has this limitation. The respondent's careers were put into separate categories using best judgement in order to evaluate them. This can also be seen as subjective and needs to be noted when analyzing the data concerning the career choices of ATCKs.

A consideration of the data that will be presented in the educational section is that although a majority of ATCKs attended schools in the United States, several also attended university in other countries. For this reason, many students who attend schools that are not in the USA don't have 'majors' or 'minors' but have another way they declare the area of study. For the sake of this study it should be added that all mentioning of majors and minors also include the areas of focus of students that attend schools outside the USA. These are just a

handful of limitations that appear in this survey, however the data collected was thought out in a carefully and structured way that will benefit future studies in this field.

4. Results

4.1 Demography of the ATCK's Surveyed

It was surprising how quickly and how many responses were obtained as well as with the interest levels in the topic; many offered to help and many others sent private messages asking to see the results. It had seemed that a nerve was hit among the ATCK community as the survey had to be shut down once it passed 500 after only three days. The biggest surprise was a private message received from a fellow Cairo American Alumni whose name appears in the work cited, as he wrote a paper titled, "*Career choices and the Influence of Third Culture Kids on International Relations*," months before sending out the survey and finding out he was a fellow alumni whose work had already been read, cited from his paper as research.

In order to analyze the career and educational choices of Adult Third Culture Kids from different backgrounds, their demographics must be first addressed and analyzed as a whole. Out of the 516 people that answered the survey, 217 respondents listed their nationality as American and had both parents from America. 140 respondents were from families that had parents that were from the same non-American country, while 159 respondents were from bi and multinational families and often listed themselves as dual citizens. This last grouping of bi and multicultural ATCKs will be a new sub group analyzed in this paper, as the majority of the previous research has focused primarily on American born Third Culture Kids.

The participants of the survey came from a large number of different countries, which is to be expected, but the majority came from the USA. Even 97 of the bi/ multicultural ATCKs had one parent that had US nationality. Thus 314 out of 516 of those surveyed had at least one parent who had US nationality, approximately 60 percent.

The age group of the respondents, represented in figure 3, displays a mixture of ages. It also illustrates that the data collected includes several generations, with the majority coming from ages 25-35, which represents more than a third of everyone surveyed. Morgan Byner explains that this diversity of ages can further show that the identity of a TCK and ATCK are not a new type of person. "*It is the thirty, forty, and fifty year olds who primarily responded to the survey. This further demonstrates that TCKs and ATCKs are far from being a "new" type of person.*"(Byttner, 27)

Figure 4 indicates the gender of the respondents. Approximately 75 percent of the people who took the survey identify as female, which expresses an uneven ratio in the respondents.

Figure 3

Age Group (516 Surveyed)

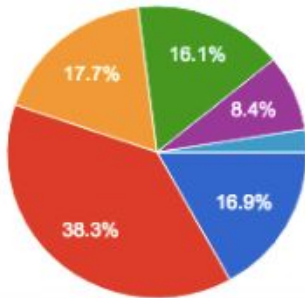
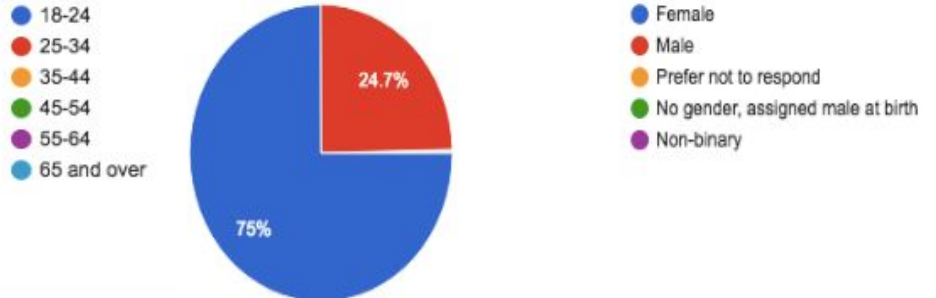


Figure 4

Gender (516 Surveyed)



Many of the respondents spoke a multitude of languages which can be shown on figure 5. Many TCKs and ATCKs have lived in several different countries and 299 of the respondents have at least one parent who is not from the USA. Many ATCKs attended international schools where English was the primary language spoken. Furthermore it was discovered in my survey that many ATCKs spoke different languages while at home, with their friends, and their spouses if they had one. We can infer that ATCK's had and continue to have an international presence in their lives with the amount of different languages they spoke and currently speak.

Figure 5

Languages Spoken	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	5	6	7	10
ATCK's	107	6	171	7	115	7	44	26	12	2	1

Of the 498 that responded, 385 spoke two or more languages, which is around 77 percent. This is an outstandingly high number. Most of the respondents speak 2-3 languages on average. 85 spoke more than four with one even speaking as many as 10 different languages. It should be noted that .5 represents that the ATCK surveyed believed to have different levels of proficiency but not comfortable enough to say they are fluent.

Figure 6

Counties Lived in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
ATCK's	4	52	105	72	90	57	49	28	21	31

Figure 6 shows the number of countries where respondents lived throughout their lives. The majority of the respondents lived in 3 to 7 different countries. Exceptionally, one respondent lived in 36 countries, stating that he lived in 30 different ones before he was 18 years old. This respondent had a father who worked in religion as a missionary and a mother who worked in social services, spoke 3 different languages, and worked as a teacher. He also describes that he sees himself as a Third Culture Kid, “*because I see my culture as global instead of national.*” This incredibly high number as well as the large number of countries that the respondents have lived in, really demonstrates how mobile Adult Third Culture Kids can be throughout their lives.

4.2 Parents Influence of ATCKs

One of the key aspects of the definition of a Third Culture Kid is that their parent(s) are brought in by sponsors to work in countries that are not their own. Part of this study is to research if ATCKs work in the same field as their parents. It was found overall that the ATCKs surveyed do not work in the same field as their parents, as 80 percent answered “No” which can be shown in figure 7. This is similar to what other studies on this topic have concluded:

For the most part, ATCKs deliberately choose not to pursue careers related to those of their parents. However, most do desire to return overseas and to remain in a mobile lifestyle. Indirectly ATCKs do influence international relations. Many pursue jobs that will take them back overseas and most want their children to have the same lifestyle that they did when they were growing up. (Byttner, 35)

Concerning the data that shows the percentage of ATCKs that work in the same career paths as their parents; 25 percent of ATCKs who work in education were in the same career path, the highest out of any group. The next highest were those who worked in the NGO field at 20 percent, followed by government jobs at 19 percent, then healthcare professionals at 17 percent. Business was next at 13 percent, then social services at 10 percent. An interesting outlier was that 50 percent of ATCKs who worked in the military had the same career path as their parents. However, only a total of four ATCKs had careers in the military. These results are both similar and different with Cottrell’s and Useem’s results in which they also had education as their highest percentage of ATCKs. However, their survey was different as they had government workers and military as the lowest percentage, but there were relatively high in this survey.

Figure 7

Are you in the same career path as your parents? (514 Surveyed)

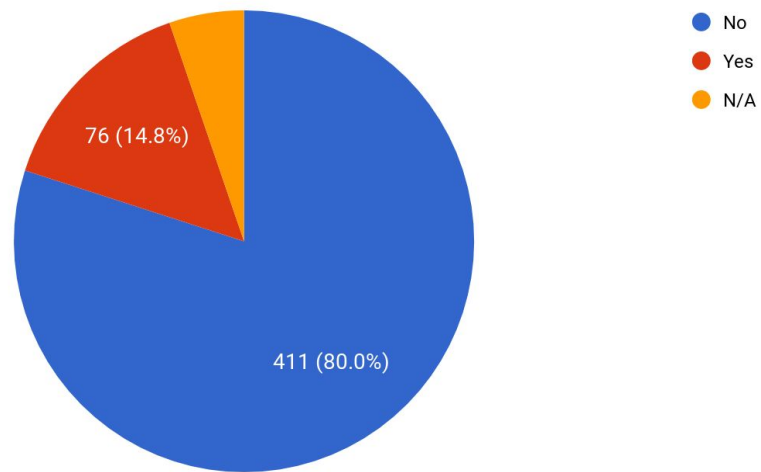
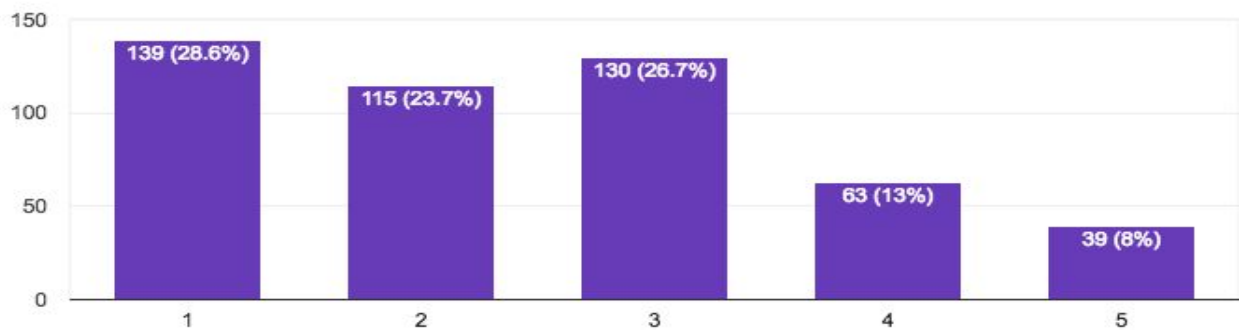


Figure 8 shows this on a scale of 1-5 which asks if the respondent's parents influenced their career choice. Only 8 percent felt that they strongly did whereas the majority of 80 percent answered (1-3), while a quarter felt that their parents had little to no effect.

Figure 8

Did your parents have any influence on your career choice?

486 responses



Below are graphs shown in figures 9-12 that shows the jobs of ATCK's parents and also their education levels. This is done to help illustrate the fact that the parents of ATCKs can be seen to have a high level of education respectively and a variety of successful careers.

Figure 9

Mother's Degree

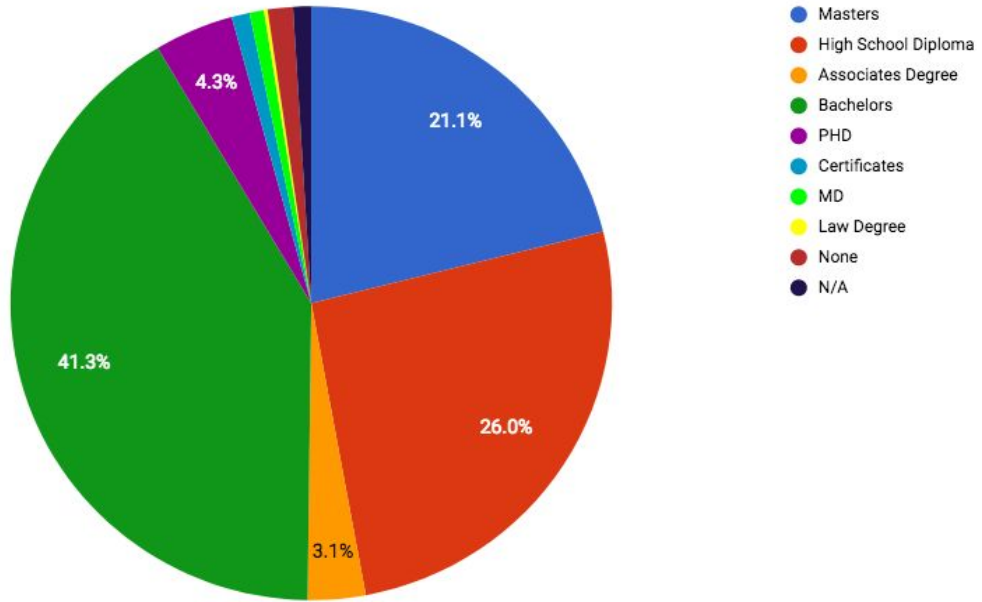


Figure 10

Father's Degree

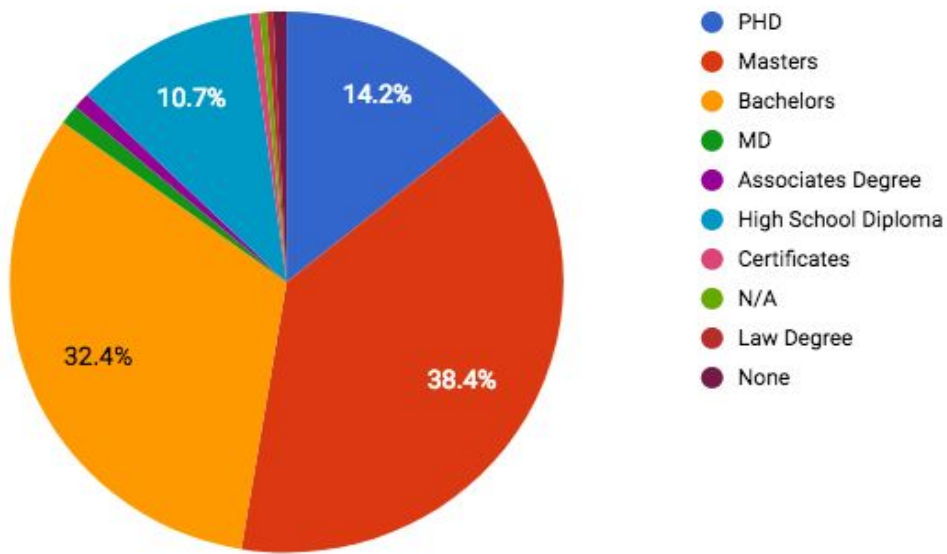


Figure 11

Father's Profession

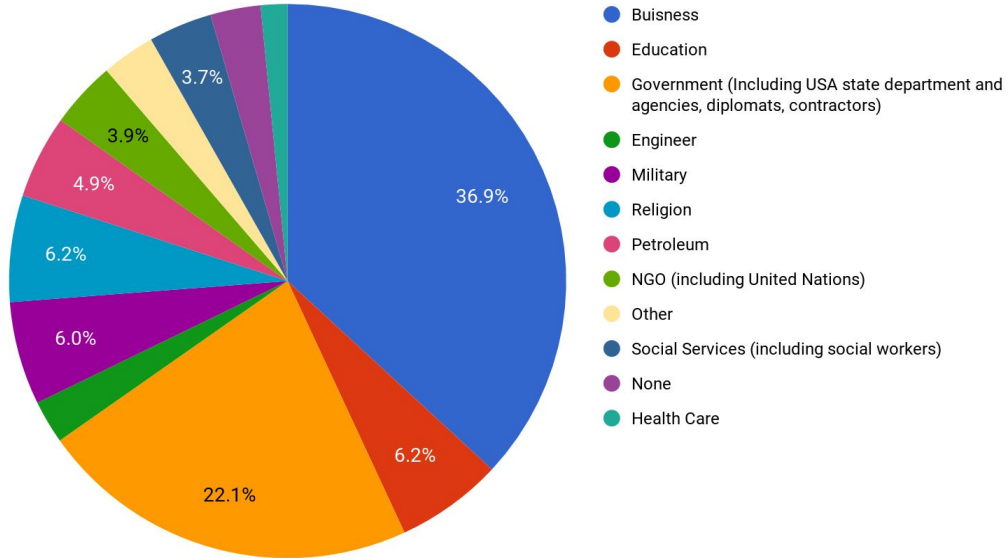
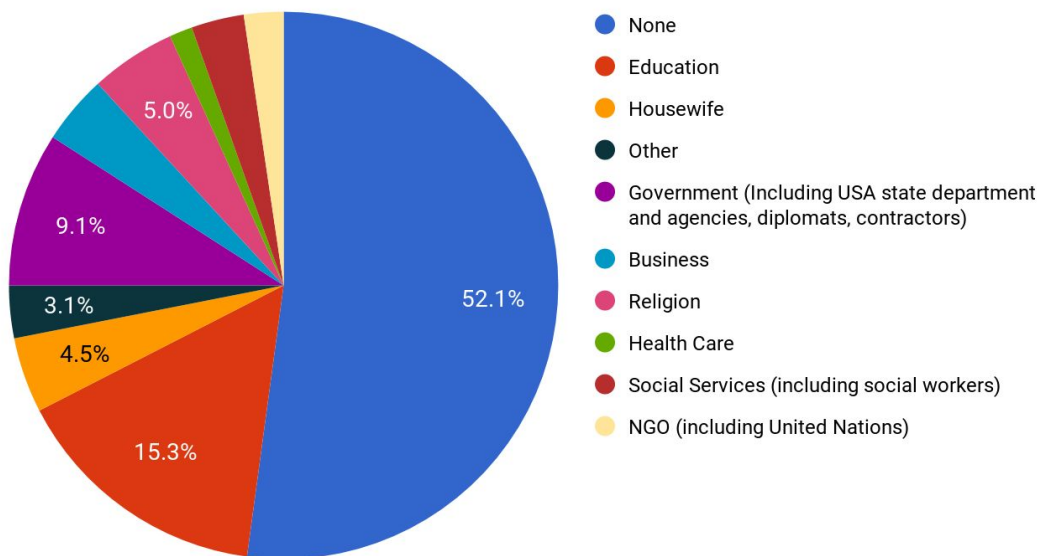


Figure 12

Mothers Profession



As indicated in figures 9 and 10, the education levels of both the mothers and fathers are very high, with approximately 75 percent of most ATCK's mothers having at least a bachelor's degree or higher and approximately 90 percent of fathers having the same. Furthermore, we can see that not only are ATCK's parents well educated, but many hold high degrees such as a masters, PHD, Doctorate, or Law degrees. What is interesting is that this does not transfer over to the professions of the mothers, as 56 percent of the respondents listed that mothers were not employed overseas or were listed as a housewife. However, this is not uncommon overseas, as usually the father's job is the primary reason why families move to become expats. Some countries have restrictions on work permits and it can be quite difficult for trailing spouses to obtain one. We can see with this data in figure 11 that most fathers work either in business, government or education. This is similar to previous research in which it was found that most TCK's parents in the past worked in these areas of employment and thus were the reasons for the creation of most international schools in the past. Parents of ATCKs hold higher career positions and are in the more elite communities of highly educated parents as we can see in the data in figures 9-12. This is further explained by Cottrell:

Because third culture communities are generally communities of professionals, TCKs are raised by highly educated parents in educationally elite communities. highly educated parents in educationally elite communities. Parents' educational levels were as high as the respondents'. At least one parent in 80 % of these families had at least a bachelor's degree; nearly half the fathers (46%) and nearly one in five mothers (18%) had a graduate degree. This is related to the sponsor, and the more broadly representative character of military personnel is again apparent when parents' educational levels are compared. At least one parent in one-third (36%) of military families had more than a BA, in contrast to the majority of missionary (83%) and "other" (89%) families in which at least one parent had more than a BA. (Cottrell, 238) (c)

4.3 Location of Highschool/University Graduation

The location of the graduation of ATCKs are as follows: About one fifth (20 percent) of the respondents graduated in their home country, showing that many families did move back before their high school graduation. Furthermore, 65 percent of those who went to university or college did so in the USA or Canada, demonstrating a trend that the majority of ATCKs attended college in the USA. This data can be seen in figure 13. This is not surprising as most of these students attended international schools, so a majority attended college in either the US, Canada, or the UK. However, a new trend is being observed in which now many international school students are attending schools in different countries, as research from the International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) shows:

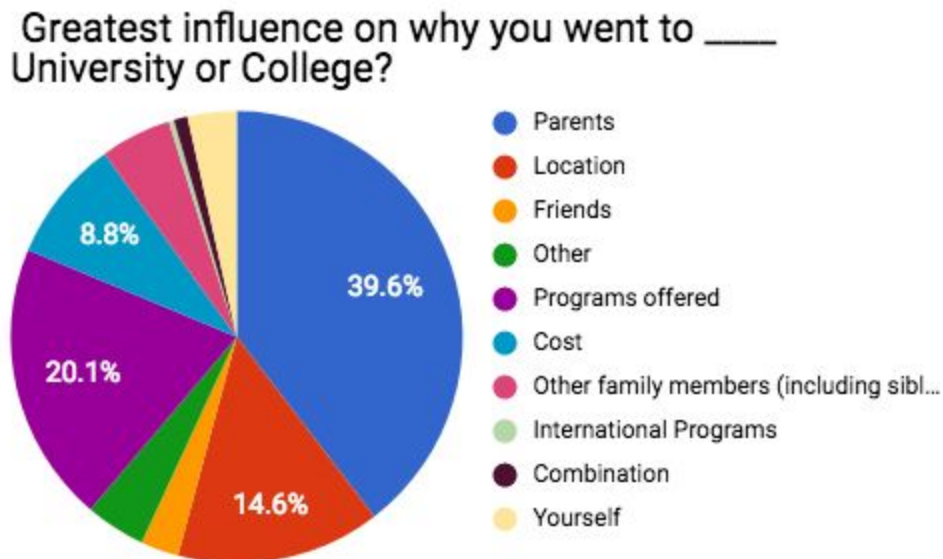
The research suggests that English-medium international school students are no longer just looking at the UK or US for their higher education destinations....Today, they are more discerning about their choice and this takes into consideration many factors, from cost, location, quality of education and subject focus, to political implications, visa challenges, scholarship potential, and subject flexibility. This suggests that the traditional destination universities in the UK and US should sit up and take note. There's much more to university selection than country and brand today. (Glass)

Figure 14 indicates that from the Third Culture Kids from this survey, the greatest influences on where they chose to attend college were from their parents, programs offered and location. What is interesting is that this illustrates that although ATCK's parents had a great influence on their academic decisions, the influence did not extend into working in a similar career path.

Figure 13

ATCK High School Graduation	ATCK University Graduation
Home country: 114	USA/Canada: 375
International: 402	International:133
	N/A 8

Figure 14



4.4 TCK Life Satisfaction

An interesting piece of data that is across the board is that most ATCKs are very satisfied with their upbringing and lifestyle abroad and how it has currently affected their lives. Figure 15 shows a scale from (1- 5) that 98 percent listed a 3 or above showing they were satisfied and 70 percent listed a 5, meaning that they are completely content with their lives as adults having grown up abroad as young adults and children. Many suggest that they wouldn't have traded their lives abroad for anything. Although at times it was difficult and caused some confusion with their identity, most think that growing up abroad was an integral part of what shaped them into who they are today. Most ATCKs had responses very similar sentiments to these statements from the respondents when asked about their satisfaction of having lived abroad as a child:

- *“Wouldn't trade my amazing childhood for anything, but it was not without its challenges. In 1969 there were no support groups upon return "home", the U.S. We moved so many times have struggled to understand and to accept the fact that attachments have great challenge. I still wouldn't change a thing.”*
- *“Was sometimes in dangerous situations, but still would not have traded these experiences for the world.”*
- *“as a kid the struggle was real but it made me to the person I am today and I could not be happier.”*
- *“My experiences growing up overseas are absolutely an integral part of my self identity and would not change that for the world!”*
- *“Living in foreign countries as a child had a great impact on my self-confidence in my ability to manage and adapt to unexplored situations.”*
- *“My husband and I both grew up living abroad. We just got our first international assignment as a family and couldn't be happier. We love this lifestyle!”*
- *“Being a TCK shaped me into who I am today and I wouldn't ask for anything else! I hope my children can grow up overseas and have the same experience I did!”*

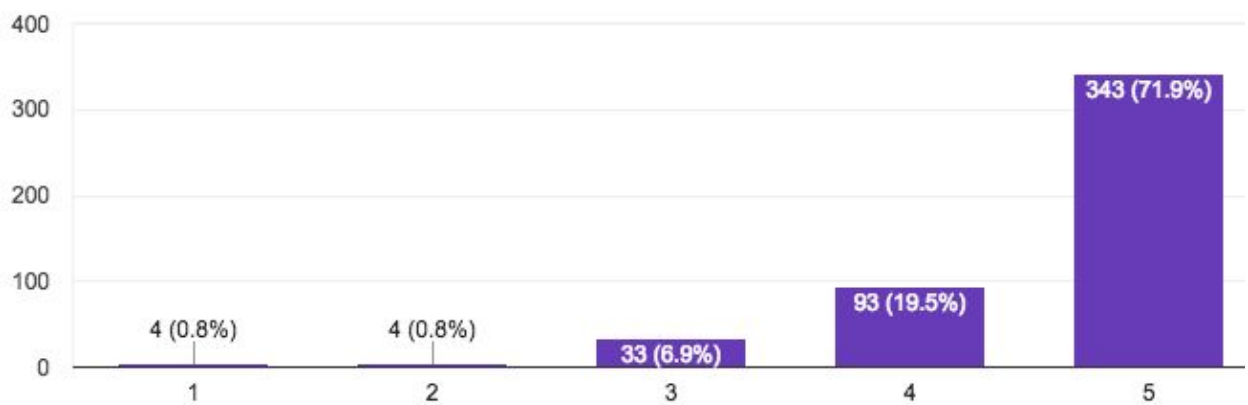
I would also agree with these sentiments as being an Adult Third Culture Kid myself I have also expressed very similar feelings. Having been born and growing up outside of my passport country, I would never trade it to live a typical childhood growing up in my home

country. Being raised internationally is a vital part of my identity and has shaped who I am today. Although I have had struggles, as many ATCKs may have, with finding a true home, feeling unable to fit in or have a sense of belonging, I have the ability to adapt and feel culturally gifted through my amazing experiences.

Figure 15

Overall level of satisfaction with having studied or lived abroad and how it affected your current situation

477 responses



We can see through this extensive data the wide range of those interviewed and surveyed. ATCKs come from many different countries, speak countless number of languages and have lived in dozens of different places all around the world. However, as this paper will explain that fact that they come from so many different places and are so culturally similar in the case of individual identity is a unique and amazing phenomenon.

5. Analysis and data (Results and Discussion)

5.1 Education

According to Ann Cottrell most Third Culture Kids are extremely likely to go on to tertiary education institutes and are also highly likely to pursue an education beyond. She had previously mentioned that this is because TCKs are high achievers and also have the opportunity to go onto higher education because of their parent's financial status as well as being enrolled in international schools which tend to be college prep. This can also be illustrated from a report by the International School Consultancy Group (ISC):

According to the new ISC Higher Education Report, students at English-medium international schools achieve, on average, higher grades compared to the global average. Of the schools studied, the average points achieved by students in international schools in the IB Diploma was 33.2 compared to a global average in 2017 of 29.95. For Advanced Placement, examination scores greater than 3 by students in international schools was 76%, compared to 57.9% worldwide. And for A Levels, the percentage of international school students achieving A or A grades was 30.6%, compared to a UK average of 25.8%. It's not surprising then that 91% of international schools studied by ISC Research say that over 90% of their students pursue higher education. (Glass)*

This study was also found this to be similar. Of the 518 responses, 89 percent have completed at least a bachelor's degree which is displayed on figure 16. This also reinforces the Cottrell's and Useem's study in *Strangers at Home* in which they explained that 94 percent were enrolled in college or university after high school. Additionally, they also stated that this was due to the excellent educational standards of international schools, their parent's high level of education, and pressure from them as well as their community. This is further reinforced by one respondent who explained that the reason why they attended college was that, "There was no option not to. It was the norm going to college after high school." Another explains that, "It's just a thing you do." The majority of the ATCKs surveyed said that they were very prepared for university, which is also very similar to Cottrell's analysis as well; which is shown on figure 17.

This shows that on a 1-5 scale 54 percent believed that their high school education exceptionally prepared them for college. 35 percent listed it either (3-4), whereas 6 percent expressed that their high school did not prepare them at all. This continues to reinforce Cottrell's and Useem's findings in *Stranges at Home*.

Figure 16

Highest degree of ATCK's (518 surveyed)

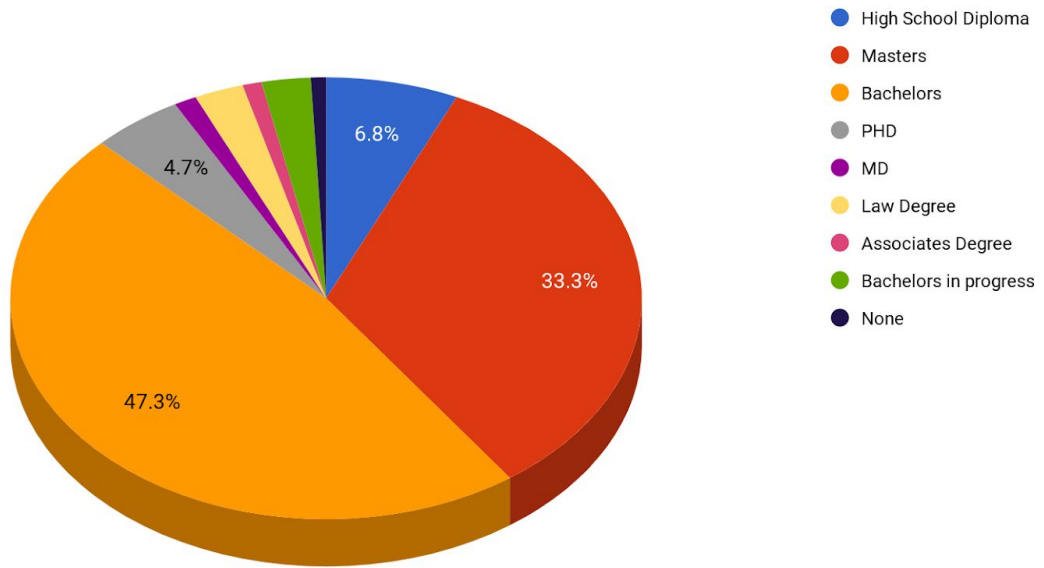
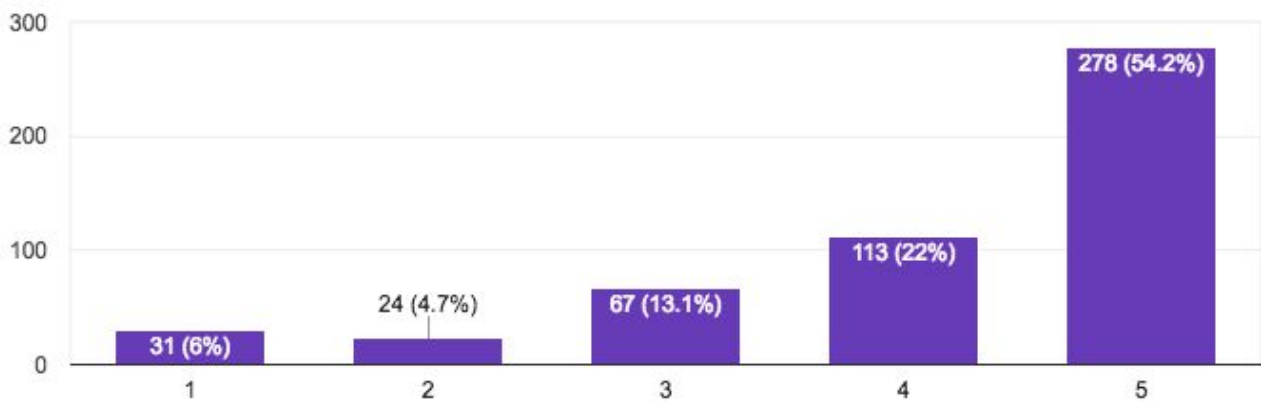


Figure 17

Do you think your high school education prepared you for college?

513 responses



5.1.1 Educational Choices

The educational choices concerning ATCKs can provide an excellent glimpse into their identity. This information can provide insight into seeing the mindset of how ATCKs view themselves as well as to begin to see where their interests lie. This also provides us a first look into their future career perspectives as well. Similar educational trends can be shown through the respondents' educational decisions, whether it be the decisions on where they choose to go to school, what they were studying, or changing majors. A common theme that appears in the results is that being a TCK had a profound effect on their academic interests, while others have expressed that this was a reason for their change of majors/ area of study. Other similar traits that we can see are that TCKs are high achievers, are indecisive in their choice of major, and that they usually choose internationally focused or service areas of study. These traits are also similar and have been also been pointed out in surveys and analysis expressed in previous studies.

The majority of the respondents believed that their identity of being an Adult Third Culture Kid had a strong influence on their academic choices throughout their university years. This survey, displayed in figure 18, shows that on a 1-5 scale, 70 percent believed that being a TCK had a profound effect on their academic interests and answered either with 4 or 5, with 43 percent representing the latter. What is extremely telling is how similar this survey results are to Cottrell's, Useem's and Byttner's, as they all have almost the same numbers dealing with how being a TCK in their childhood affected both their college choice and major, in which they state that 69 and 66 percent of the ATCKs they had surveyed said that their childhood as a TCK had affected their educational decisions.

This can be further shown in figure 19 in which out of 497 surveyed there were 122 ATCKs who majored in international areas of studies, approximately 25 percent, such as international relations, international business, international politics, foreign languages, Middle Eastern studies, Asian studies etc., and 139 service based majors/areas of focus such as healthcare, education, and social work encompassing 28 percent. These results are also consistent with the numbers presented in Ann Cottrell's study from, *"International Dimensions of Adult TCK's Lives"* in which she had discovered in her personal studies that approximately, *"30% international field of study (major or minor) for BA or grad degree e.g. IR, area study, foreign language, anthropology, international Business. 10% major or minor in another language some want a new language."* (Cottrell, 2) Byttner's study also presented similar results in which a quarter of his respondents studied in a field that had an international focus, which is exactly the same as the ATCKs in this survey group. Due to similar numbers in all three surveys, it can be deduced that a trend is forming and that around a quarter of all TCKs that attend university choose a field that has international elements. Another interesting trend that should be

noted is that 12% of the respondents had taken and completed more than one major, which is consistent with the belief that TCKs are overachievers.

Figure 18

Did being a TCK affect your academic interest?

510 responses

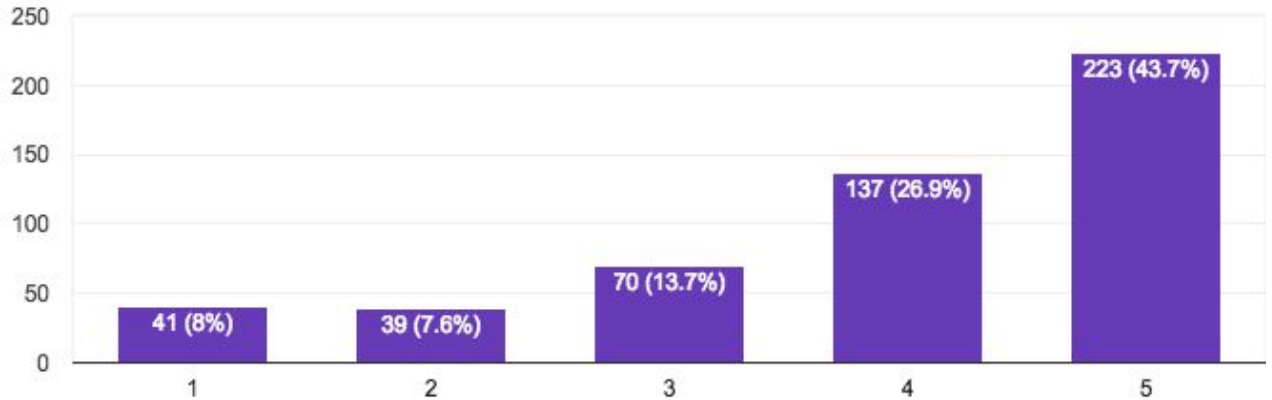


Figure 19

Area of Study/College Major (497 Surveyed)

Area of Focus/Major	Percentages of Total (497)
International Focus: 122	25%
Service Focus: 139	28%
Foreign Language: 25	5%
More than one Major: 58	12%

5.1.2 Changing Majors

Changing majors is also a prevalent theme among Third Culture Kids while they attend college or university. Out of the 474 respondents who answered this question, 165 changed majors, which is about one third (34%). Out of these, six changed two to four times, eleven changed five or more times and one even said that she changed once every semester. These numbers are relatively high but also analogous with Ann Cottrell's assessment of TCK identity, in which Third Culture Kids have trouble making decisions and often change majors while they are in university. This can be summed up by one respondent, when asked why she changed

majors, *“I didn't know what I wanted to do.”* Another common theme that is prevalent in this study is that many students decided to switch majors into a more service or internationally orientated one:

- *“From nursing to paramedic/firefighter, love to be able to help others.”*
- *“I was more interested in Social Welfare.”*
- *“Changed from Econ, because I realized I was more interested in international studies.”*
- *“I added Middle East Studies as a second major as I realized I wanted to pursue my passion for the Arab world I developed while living overseas.”*
- *“In my Masters program, yes. Switched to Childhood Education because my passion is working with children and I'm most fulfilled working with them.”*

Morgan Byttner in his study concerning the influence of Third Culture Kids on international relations, also expressed the same theme:

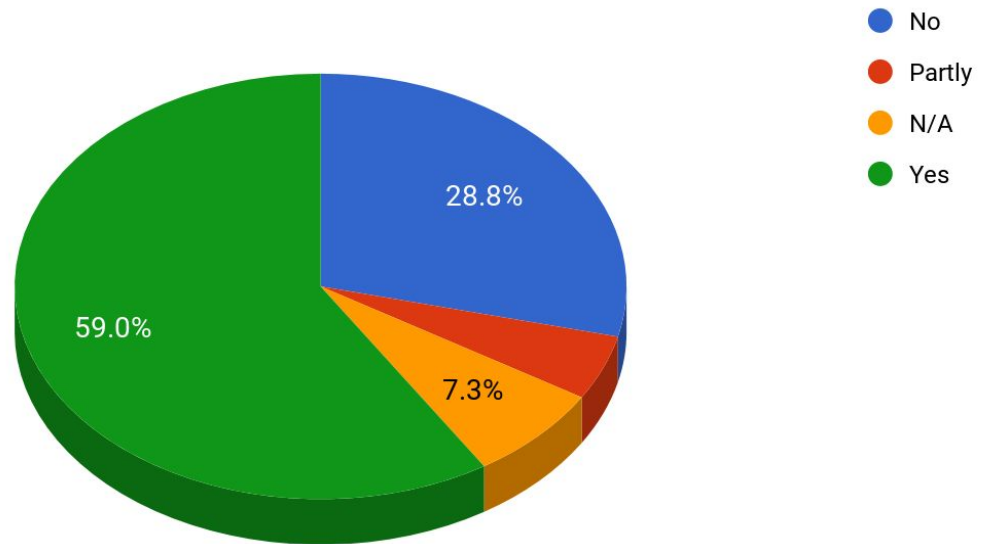
A somewhat similar study is analyzed in “Strangers at Home”. This study shows that although most TCKs did not choose majors that were specifically international in content, they were still influenced by their overseas experiences. (Byttner, 23)

5.2 Careers

The career choices of the respondents of this survey are a major aspect in explaining the life decisions and identity of Adult Third Culture Kids. Many of their past choices including college choices, major choice, and internships have led them to their current life situation. This can be explained in figure 20 by 64 percent of respondents expressing that they are partly or currently in a career path in which they have studied.

Figure 20

Are you working in a field for which you studied?



The current careers of the 506 Adult Third Culture Kids who took the survey can be shown on figure 21. This data reveals some interesting but also expected results that are comparable to Ann Cottrell's and Ruth Useem's study. First, the majority of careers of ATCKs fall into the business category, occupying approximately a fifth of all jobs on the survey, compared with Cottrell's results that represent a quarter. Education was the next popular job amongst ATCKs, representing 16 percent, followed by those who were self employed, unemployed, worked in health care, social services, NGO, and government respectively. (It should be noted that most who worked in government jobs worked in agencies with service, such as aid, development, law enforcement, ect.) Another commonality which can be seen in Cottrell's and Useem's study was that very few ATCKs worked in the military or were affiliated with religious organizations.

Additionally, another trend that was discovered which also reinforces Cottrell's and Useem's study was that ATCKs are independent and like to work for themselves. Out of 506 respondents, 64 (12 percent) worked for themselves, either by owning their own business, their own medical practice or working independently as business consultants. One responded in my survey which highlights this trend, quit her job as a marketing manager at a pharmaceutical company and decided to open up her own nursery in India.

It is also interesting to note how similar the data is between this survey and Cottrell’s and Useem’s in figure 22, with the exception of education, as it shows that there seems to be consistency in the type of careers that ATCKs choose from a variety of age groups. The only area where this data did not correspond with Cottrell’s is in education and military, which had a 6 percent and 4 percent difference respectively. This shows that ATCKs in this current generation are choosing fewer careers in both education and the military. However, this is not a remarkable difference given the small sample size of both our data compared with the amount of TCKs in the world; some differences are to be expected.

Figure 21

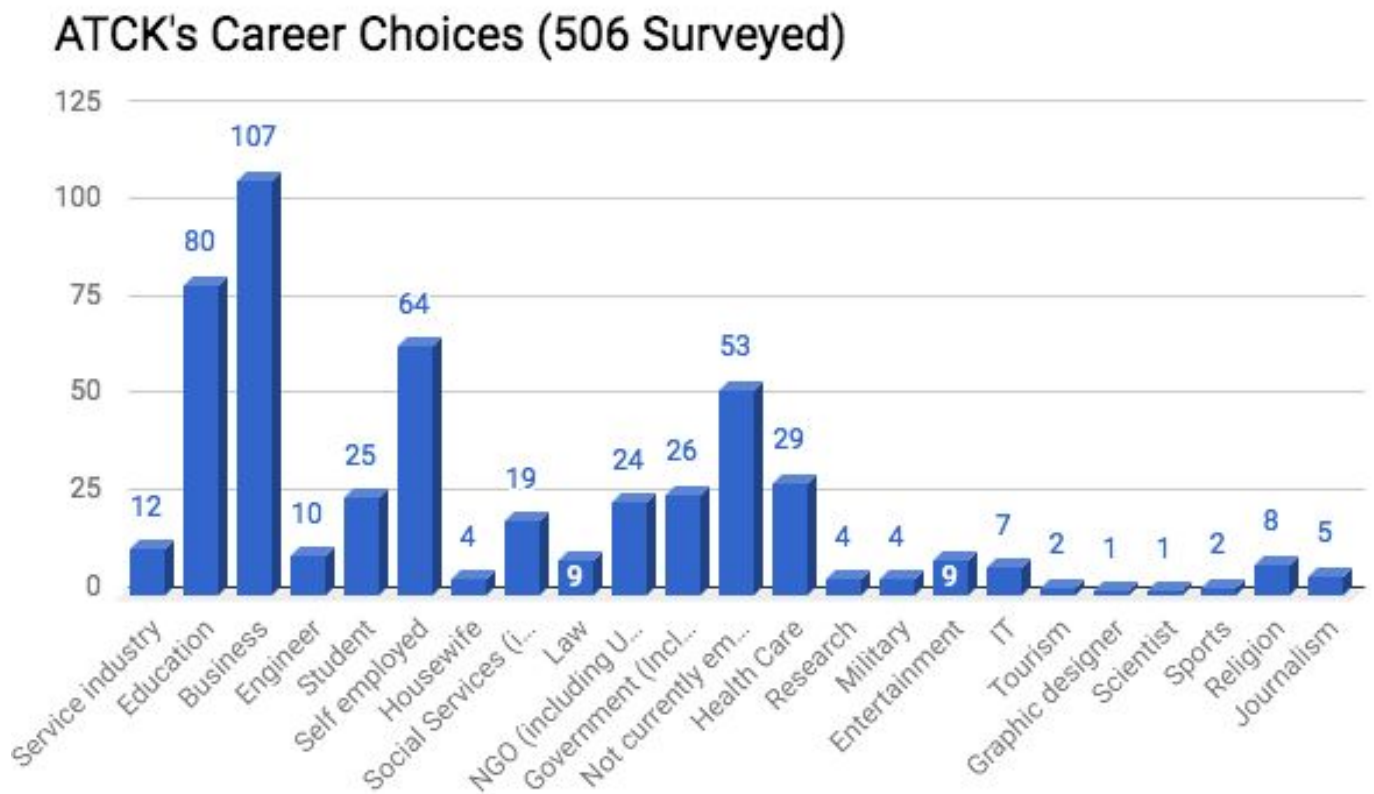


Figure 22

Job	Number of ATCK's	My Percentage	Cottrell's & Useem's Percentage
	N= 506		N=582
Business	107	21%	25%
Education	80	16%	22%
Self Employed	64	12%	13%
Health Care/Social Service/NGO	72	15%	15%
Government	26	5%	5%
Military	4	1%	5%
Religion	8	2%	2%
Student	25	5%	N/A
Service Industry	12	2%	N/A
Engineer	10	2%	N/A
Law	9	2%	N/A
Not Currently Employed	54	10%	N/A
Other	35	7%	N/A

The careers that Adult Third Culture Kids choose to pursue are subsequently very similar to their educational choices and majors taken in university. As with their areas of focus in university, ATCKs tend to choose careers with an international focus and also tend to find jobs with a service element. This again is reinforced by Cottrell, *“Even those who go into the sciences, medical, or business fields may be doing so because of a desire to help people they had known in less developed nations,”* (Useem and Cottrell, 29).

Furthermore, as with Cottrell’s early assessments and ATCKs educational choices we can see that ATCKs are high achievers in their careers as well. This can be exhibited by the survey in which out of 518 respondents there were 4 CEOs of major companies, 1 CTO, 6 business owners and founders, 94 managers/directors/executives, 9 doctors (one who is a medical doctor for refugees), 8 university professors, 2 editors of major publications, 3 scientists, and an aerospace engineer. On the services side, there were 10 nurses, 1 involved in cancer research, and 7 immigration attorneys or lawyers who practiced law for the underprivileged. When asked what influenced their career paths these were some of their statements:

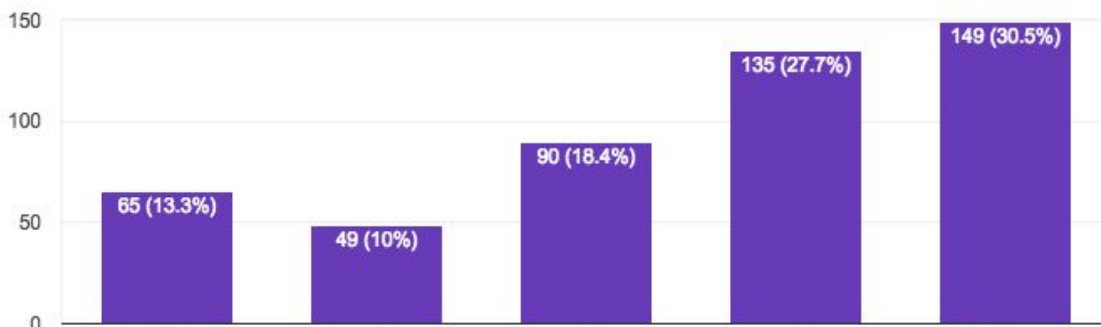
- One who works as an economic development consultant explains that while growing up she had, *“exposure to different socio-economic models and seeing the disparity in living standards across the world.”*
- Another who is an independent environmental consultant explained that she chose her career because of the, *“lack of electricity in India.”*
- A current government worker who works for the government as an analyst at a US Federal agency explains that she chose her career path because she *“wanted to be able to help people and communities be healthy.”*
- A business manager and USAID worker explains, *“... definitely my exposure to developing countries as a kid and understanding how much important work there is to be done in the world to address issues of access to services/resources, economic opportunity, security, and health.”*
- A refugee officer says that she chose her profession because, *“Working abroad on humanitarian issues; desire to influence policy and directly help those most vulnerable and in need of assistance and protection”* were the reasons why she chose her career.

These are only a handful of the hundreds of similar responses received, which site humanitarian and international opportunities as major reasons for their career choice. Figure 23 further reinforces that the majority of ATCKs life abroad and being a Third Culture Kid affected their career choice. Out of a (1-5) scale where a 5 represents that their life as a TCK strongly affected their career choice, 30 percent listed a 5 and another 27 percent listed it as a 4, while only less than a quarter listed it as having little to no effect.

Figure 23

Did being a TCK affect your career choice?

488 responses



5.2.1 Working abroad

An Interesting fact was that the number of ATCKs working abroad (not in their country/ies of nationality) was surprisingly lower than was originally thought. It seems that only 30 percent currently do; 8 percent travel for work and 3 percent had worked and lived abroad in the past. These can be seen in figure 24. However, when asked if they would like to return overseas for work, there was an overwhelming positive response. Figure 25 shows that on a (1-5) scale, 52 percent listed a 5, 35 percent a 3 or 4 and just 13 percent listed a 1 or a 2, meaning there was a strong desire for ATCKs to get back abroad. This is comparable similar to Cottrell’s results in which she explains that, “*Most of these ATCKs desired to maintain a definite international dimension in their lives. The majority agreed that: ‘it is important to have an international dimension in my life.’ (70%) and ‘I would like to live abroad again’ (88%).*” (Cottrell, 237) The fact that many ATCKs don’t live abroad is interesting to note as previous studies have extrapolated that the majority of ATCK’s work with an international element in them, however this data shows the contrary. It will be interesting to see in further analysis if those who work in their home country work for jobs that have international aspects in them.

Figure 24

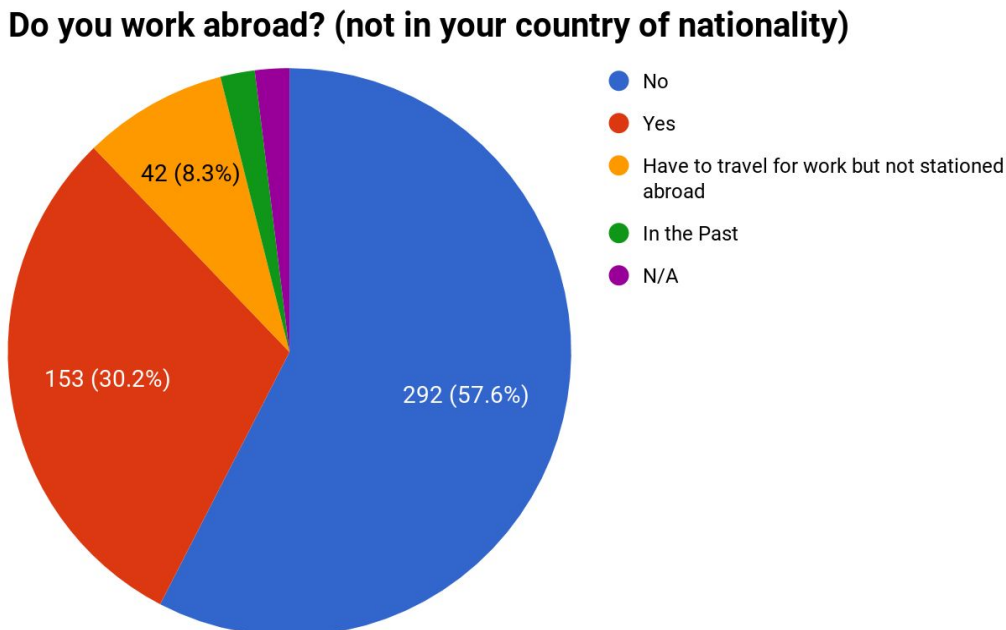
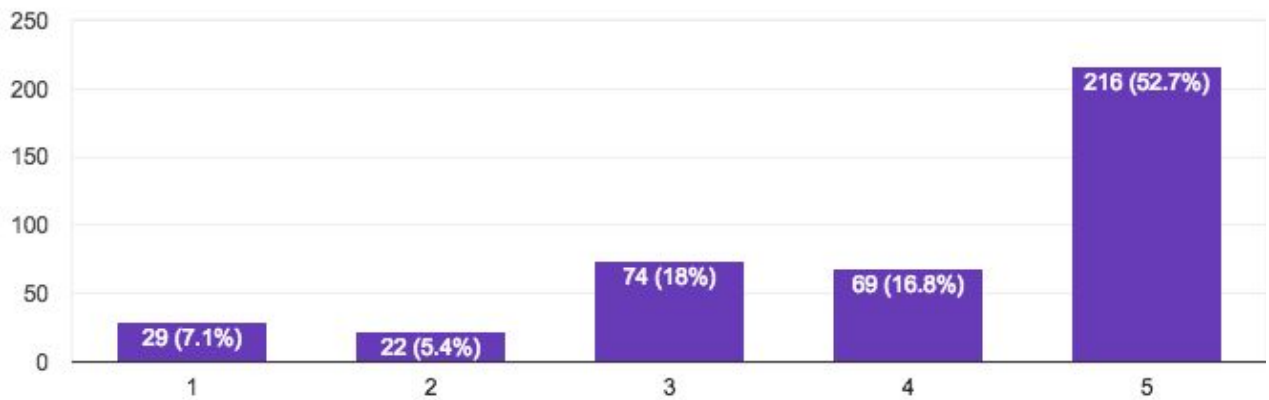


Figure 25

If your current job does not allow you to travel would you want to return back overseas at some point for employment?

410 responses

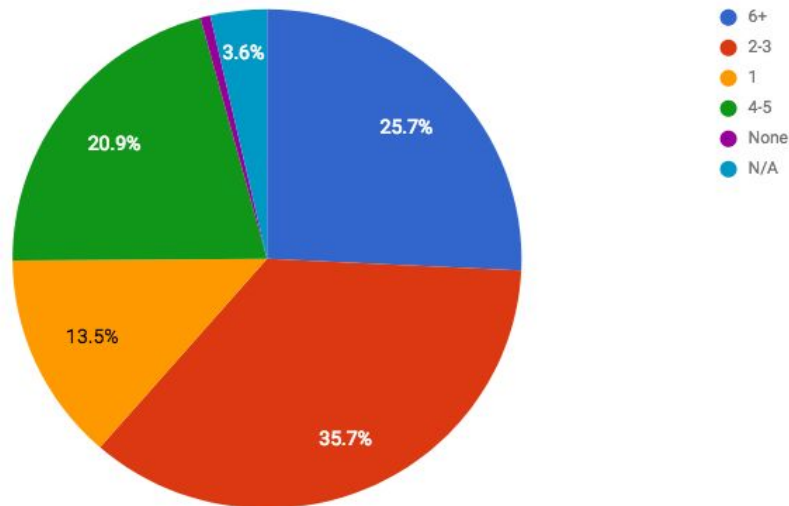


5.2.2 Changing Careers

Many Adult Third Culture Kids change jobs or even careers frequently. According to Ann Cottrell's study she explained that it is not coming for them to change their jobs entirely and go into a different type of career. This study had very similar results, as around 45 percent had 4 or more jobs and a quarter of ATCKs have had 6 or more jobs. The majority of respondents had around 2-3 jobs which occupied around 35 percent of the total. This is all shown in figure 26.

Figure 26

How many different jobs have you had since graduation?



Many ATCKs also credit their upbringing as a cause for wanting to frequently change locations and jobs. They are used to doing it and get restless often, such as this respondent states:

“Living in a foreign country as a teenager significantly affected my world view and had a huge impact on how I interact with others and my ability to adapt to new situations. It created an ever present desire to travel and experience new people and places. I get restless and bored easily. Need to continue to create new coursework and programs.”

Furthermore, similar to Cottrell's statement, many of the respondents also had ‘non-linear career paths’ and some ‘radical changes’ in their careers. Figure 27 shows twelve instances in which respondents in this survey went through unique and nonlinear career changes. This further emphasizes an important identity trait in ATCKs, in which they are extremely adaptable and multitalented, which two TCKs point out:

- *“Living in foreign countries as a child had a great impact on my self-confidence in my ability to manage and adapt to unexplored situations.”*
- *“My greatest asset is lack of fear of and ability to function in unknown / new settings.”*

There again appears to be a trend that those who did change careers went for a more service and internationally focused job and those who wished they would have chosen a different career path would have liked to have gone into a more international or service based line of work. This is shown by figure 28 where 88 out of 181 (48 percent) of those who wished they had gone into a different line of work wanted to more of an international or service based career, such as this respondent:

“If I could have chosen a different path, I would have wanted to work internationally.”

Figure 27

Current Job	Previous Job
Real Estate	Technology Management
Sole proprietor, landscape designer, land use planner, land conservation, and restoration	Refugee Assistance
School counsellor	Marketing
Professional body piercer owner of european wholesale company for high quality body piercing jewelry	Academic assistant in a university
Content writer at Jackpot.com	Field geologist on oil rigs
Freelance English teacher and life coach specialized in habit changes	Project manager
Family Advocate/Forensic Interviewer for a child advocacy center	Human Resources Representative
I am a Marketing and Communication Manager for an online platform that promotes universities and colleges in order to increase their international and domestic recruitment.	Consular Officer at the United States Embassy Beijing, China
Joint Director, of a Nursery to 10th School in India. Mayura School.	Marketing Supervisor- at Roche Pharmaceuticals
Photographer	Nursing
Chef and owner of a restaurant	Journalist
Rabbinic intern at a synagogue, currently completing my studies for ordination	Museum professional

Figure 28

Do You Wish Had Chosen a Different Career Path	
Yes Other Career	181
Yes International Career	33
Yes Service Career	55

No	213
Did Not Answer	124

The wide variety of jobs that appears in figure 27 continues to show how diverse and fickle the jobs of Adult Third Culture Kids are. Many like to change jobs and on average spend about 2-3 years working in one. However we can see in figure 28 that ATCKs still try to work in more international of service jobs which aligns nicely with what previous studies have recapitulated.

5.3 The Bi/Multicultural ATCKs Aspect

This study will continue by focusing on analyzing Bi/Multicultural ATCKs; this again is because not much information has been written about the major life choices of Third Culture Kids that have parents from two or more countries. As stated before there were 159 respondents that fit in this category. To give an example that fits the description of a multicultural ATCK there was one respondent who listed their nationality as Argentinian/German/British, with his mother from Argentina and Germany and his father from Argentina and England. He describes himself as:

“I consider myself a multicultural kid. When you live in places that consist of many expats and people from all over the world, you become very open minded without even realizing it.”

An example of a Bicultural ATCK would be a person who listed their nationality as encompassing two countries, with each of their parents being solely from one distinct country while living and working in neither of their parents countries. An example of this would be a respondent that listed her nationality as Polish and Dutch because her mother was from Poland and her father from the Netherlands.

5.3.1 Similarities

This particular study focuses on the separation of data that was created in order to look closer at bi and multicultural ATCKs. This was done to determine if they present any similarities or differences in their major life decisions in education and career choice compared to the rest of the survey, as well as the previous data analyzed in previous studies, which encompasses data mainly from American ATCKs. The discovery was made that although these ATCKs have different cultural backgrounds, their surveys/responses do not significantly differ from the rest of the ATCKs that were surveyed, or from other studies in the past. These similarities can be seen

in TCK identity, educational choices, and career choices. However, the majority of these similarities can be seen in having international and service elements in their educational and careers choices, with the ratio percentage very similar to the data presented in the entire survey as well as Cottrell's and Useem's. (This information can be seen in the appendix by showing the bi/multicultural results.) This resemblance is possibly due to the fact that Adult Third Culture Kids as well as TCKs share many similarities in identity, education, upbringing, and economic background. As one Bi/Multicultural ATCK respondent pointed out,

"I still do not feel 100% at home in the US. People who do not understand our childhood find us strange, I feel closer to people I grew up with than current friends."

This also can be a factor in why Bi/Multicultural TCK's have similar results. When TCK's attend international schools many of them become friends, create unique bonds and share the same experiences during key developmental years, and also especially share a similar identity, regardless of where they are from.

It is usually true that TCKs come from privileged backgrounds. As expressed earlier in this study, this is usually due to the fact that TCKs parents generally work for a sponsor. A majority of the time these sponsors provide a very lucrative package that also includes tuition to international schools where TCKs of all different backgrounds come together. However, this can cause frustration in some ATCKs when looking back at the formative years. Another Bi/Multicultural ATCK had this to say when asked if she thought she was a TCK throughout her childhood:

"The term has always frustrated me. I used to identify with it, but have realized it privileges "expats" - typically but not always white, and almost always from elite class backgrounds."

Ann Cottrell explains this fact quite nicely in her article, *"Explaining Differences: TCKS and Other CCKS, American and Japanese TCKS"*:

ATCKs tend to resist being put into established categories. But the lack of a group, an "ethnic group," with which they can identify is a source of frustration and concern to most, especially the long-term ATCKs. Many just say "I don't fit," "I don't know where I belong," "no one understands me." Some do begin to understand where they belong but don't have a handy name for it. (Cottrell, 68)

This was also found to be true in the case of Bi/Multicultural TCKs, as was stated in the response above. It was evident that she was clearly agitated that she had to prescribe to the group

of Third Culture Kid; she understands that she has many of the identity traits but is reluctant to accept it. Other bi/multicultural ATCKs who responded also identified that they did or do not fit anywhere and fit more strongly with their peers at high school and their parents:

- *“... I identify with a mix of cultures. We were raised mostly with Norwegian traditions from my mother’s side, and didn’t really know America until moving here for college. My family is biracial and bilingual, although both my parents come from homogenous societies (my father coming from a predominantly African American neighborhood in the south during the civil rights movement. My mother from a small Norwegian coastal town with a population of 800 and absolutely no exposure to diversity during her upbringing).”*
- *“Both parents are from the country, while my brother and I were raised in mostly cities around the world. I know my family in Norway more than my family in Georgia because it’s hard to relate to the thinking in a sense to the mentality in the south-most of my relatives have never left their state.”*
- *“... born and raised in 2 different countries and spent a lot of time in a 3rd country, family all over the world, different language schools and international schools, multicultural friends and family.. able to live in and assimilate in various places, but still feel like an outsider. Most able to connect with people who have had a similar childhood. Same goes for my parents both lives in 3 countries, trouble connected with ancestral roots, same with grandparents.”*
- *“I’ve experienced so many different cultures throughout my childhood and I think it has greatly shaped me into who I am today. Also the question “where are you from?” is the hardest to answer.”*
- *“I am at the same time “at-home” everywhere, but there is no “homeland” for me.”*
- *“... while my culture at home was homogenous, my identity has been defined by my relationship to many countries outside my country of citizenship in which I was raised. Saying I am from the US is easy I suppose, but any more detail than that is simply impossible. In that way I am from nowhere, any answer to the question “where are you from?” feels like a lie.”*

These corresponding responses express many of the same identity traits concerning ATCKs’ different backgrounds. As well, these responses contain many of the same congruent feelings of frustration, connection and ambiguous national identity that are all shared throughout

many of the studies. They are from the top experts of Third Culture Kids to other smaller dissertations, including this one.

5.3.2 Differences (Education)

Most of the data concerning Bi/Multicultural ATCKs' educational and career choices are very similar to ATCKs from other backgrounds. However, some differences do appear. In educational choices, parents of Bi/Multicultural ATCKs had a slightly greater influence on their university choice, having about 4 percent more influence. Again, this difference is unremarkable. However, the greatest difference is the tendency for Bi/Multicultural ATCKs to study in subjects with a high amount of international involvement, which again is international studies, business, anthropology, international politics, area studies, anthropological sociology, and foreign languages. Out of 159 respondents, 65 had a major with an international focus, which is approximately 40 percent. This is 10 percent higher than Cottrell's data (which had 29 percent) and occupies 53 percent or more than half of the total respondents. It seems that Bi/Multicultural students have a larger international focus than the rest, which makes sense given their Bi and or Multicultural background.

5.3.3 Differences (Career)

Although Bi/Multicultural ATCKs exhibit on a whole many similarities, when comparing their career choices to other ATCKs there are minor identifiable differences. The most intriguing differences would be concerning the lower percentage of educational jobs Bi/Multicultural ATCKs have. Education only occupied 9 percent of all their jobs. This number is much smaller when compared to the total results of the 506 ATCKs surveyed, in which education occupied 16 percent of all jobs. Additionally this figure is also much lower than the 22 percent found in Cottrell's and Useem's study, which is shown in figure 29. This difference may be explained by Bi/Multicultural ATCKs having more careers in business as well as having a higher number of surveyors who have not currently entered the working world. Furthermore, this difference should be noted as an outlier and a difficult trend to explain due to the fact that all the rest of the data comparing Bi/Multicultural ATCKs have very similar percentage points when comparing the categories of: career choice, living abroad percentage, career and life satisfaction, TCK life experience, to the original data and (This again can be seen in appendix I and figure 29)

Another point which can be expressed is that Bi/Multicultural ATCKs do not work in careers that have to deal with the military or religion. Out of 159 Bi/Multicultural ATCKs, only one person had a career in the military and another individual in religion. Cottrell expressed that many ATCKs do not like to work in government jobs, in the military, or religious areas, and this survey concerning Bi/Multicultural ATCKs also reflects this idea. This is interesting because in

the past, 50 years or before, the majority or sometimes only jobs overseas were jobs connected to government, military service or missionary work. A possible reason may be because ATCKs have a tendency to not work in the same fields as their parents. This could explain why we see such low numbers of ATCKs in these career fields as a whole and especially with Bi/Multicultural ATCKs. Furthermore the idea of patriotism and nationalism might also explain why ATCKs and especially Bi/Multicultural ATCKs don't usually work in the government and or military because they will have difficulties finding allegiance to a country they would be willing to be of service too and or die for.

The Bi/Multicultural aspect in this research is extremely useful to the overall study in future life decisions concerning Adult Third Culture Kids. This is because it shows a different dimension in the over all field and shows that although they come from different backgrounds and cultures than American ATCKs' their decisions are very similar concerning major life choices.

Figure 29

Job	Number of ATCKs	My Percentage	Cottrell's & Useem's Percentage	Bi/Multi ATCKs
	N= 506		N=582	N=159
Business	107	21%	25%	24%
Education	80	16%	22%	9%
Self Employed	64	12%	13%	10%
Health Care/Social Service/NGO	72	15%	15%	15%
Government	26	5%	5%	4%
Military	4	1%	5%	0.50%
Religion	8	2%	2%	0.50%
Student	25	5%	N/A	4%
Service Industry	12	2%	N/A	3%
Engineer	10	2%	N/A	2%
Law	9	2%	N/A	2%
Not Currently Employed	54	10%	N/A	15%
Other	35	7%	N/A	11%

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to shed light on how identity might influence how ATCKs choose their education and careers in their adult lives, as they are a very distinct group of people. As we have seen, their singularity attracted the interest of researchers such as Ann Cottrell, Ruth Useem, Ruth Van Reken, David Pollock and many others. However, there was limited research on nationalities other than Americans in the last 20 years. This causes a problem because not everyone whose parents work abroad through sponsors and attend international schools are from the United States. It is crucial to study this different aspect to have more clarity in this subject across multiple areas.

In an attempt to reach more insight, this paper has surveyed more than 500 ATCKs from different backgrounds and asked questions concerning their choices in education and careers and what reasons they used to explain them. When comparing the data obtained with those of previous research, we have found that TCKs identity traits are timeless. The fact that Cottrell's results and the survey are extremely similar, even after almost 20 years apart, shows that the educational and career choices of ATCKs are still following the same pattern. And, in addition, we reach some interesting conclusions.

It is important to note that the individual aspects of ATCKs should not be forgotten. Even though many experts agree that ATCKs contain many similar characteristics and traits, and the results that this paper have discovered, there are many aspects that cause an individual to make a decision concerning their future. For instance, they can be influenced by their personal interests, experiences, and other important individuals with whom they have interacted. However, this paper has uncovered that specific similarities do exist between the identity of being a TCK and growing up abroad, and that major life decisions that ATCKs have made for their education and their careers can be a result of that lifestyle.

These similarities even further extend to the subgroup of Bi and Multicultural Adult Third Culture Kids. Although past studies have yet to focus on this specific group, it has been found that even TCKs that grow up with parents from different nationalities have results which are very similar to those from America. The common theme and identity of being a TCK causes these differences to be insignificant and provides evidence that being a TCK can be seen as its own unique personality, where similar traits are expressed in many different ways, and in this case of their future education and careers. Furthermore their experiences attending international schools and the community they live in during their key developmental years create a shared identity that has a profound impact on their future lives and choices.

The most common similarity between TCK and ATCKs' decisions in education and careers comes down to the fact that a high percentage of ATCKs choose education and careers that have an international or service element to them. Whether it be majoring in International Relations or Environmental Sciences, working for the UN or as a teacher; ATCKs do choose to pursue some careers that have these international and service elements. Some might not even work abroad, as we observed with this study, however they are employed as lawyers to help refugees, as doctors to help immigrants, as speech pathologists at an elementary school, or as a study abroad coordinator.

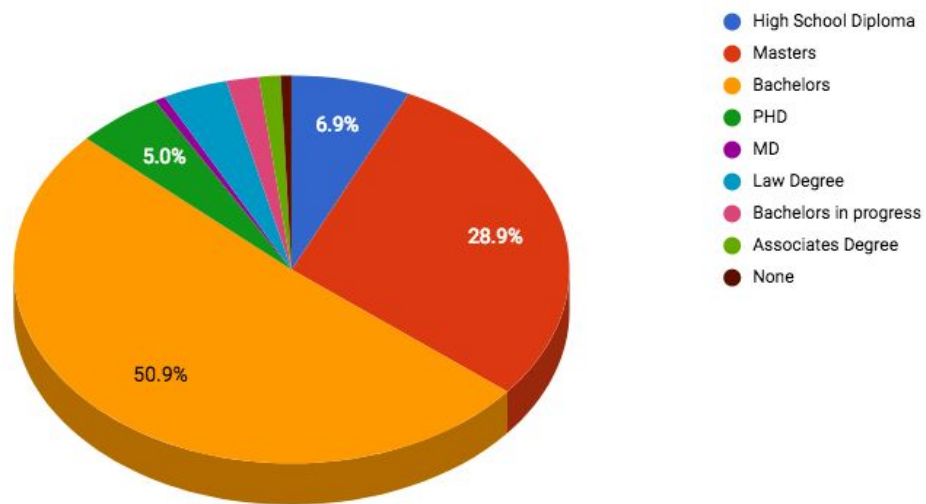
In addition, the age grouping of ATCKs also shows that the identity traits of an ATCK are still similar, even for those who are 60 or 20. It would be interesting to study this more in depth. Instead of separating the data by their parent's nationalities, it would be interesting to see if age has any effect in ATCKs' educational and career choices. Another idea that would be interesting to continue this study would be to ask how many TCKs working in their home country are working in a job that has international elements to them. This would further promote the conclusion that ATCKs choose careers that have an international focus and further provide evidence to this.

Moreover, almost all ATCKs who responded to the survey are extremely satisfied with their TCK international background and cannot even imagine a life without it. It was extremely uplifting to know that a number of ATCKs willingly responded to this survey. This shows that ATCKs are willing to know and answer questions about their unique identity and are hungry for the results.

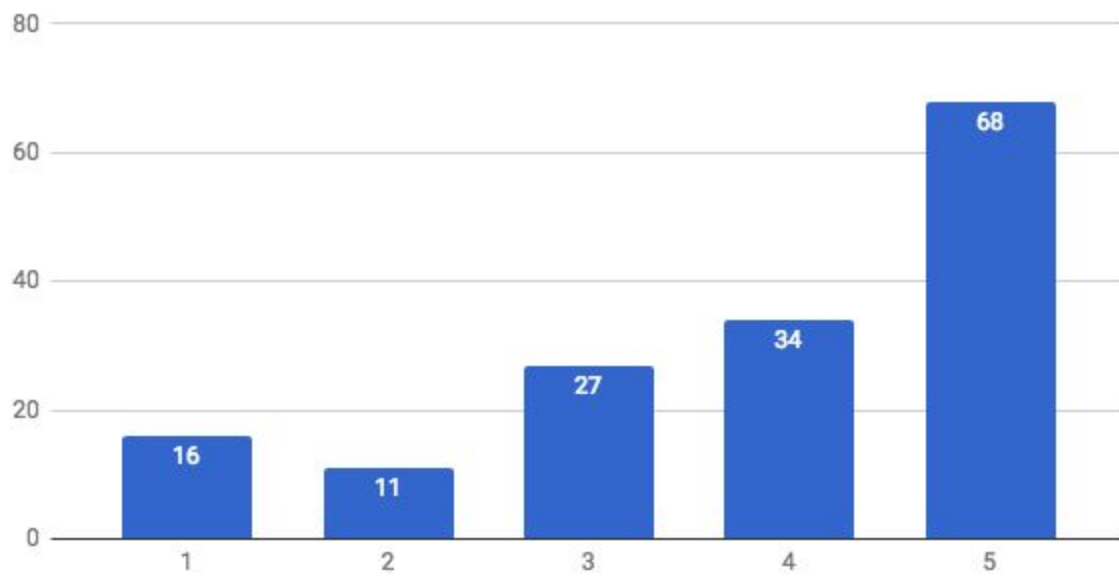
7. APPENDIX I - GRAPHS OF BI/Multicultural ATCKs

7.1 Education of Bi/Multicultural Graphs

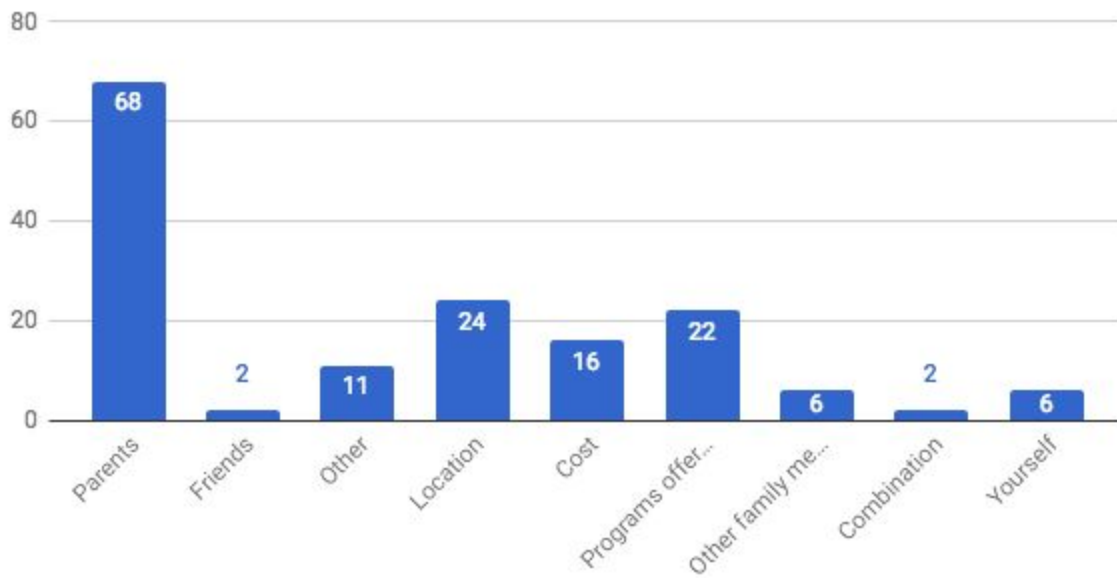
Highest degree of Bi/Multicultural ATCK's (Count 159)



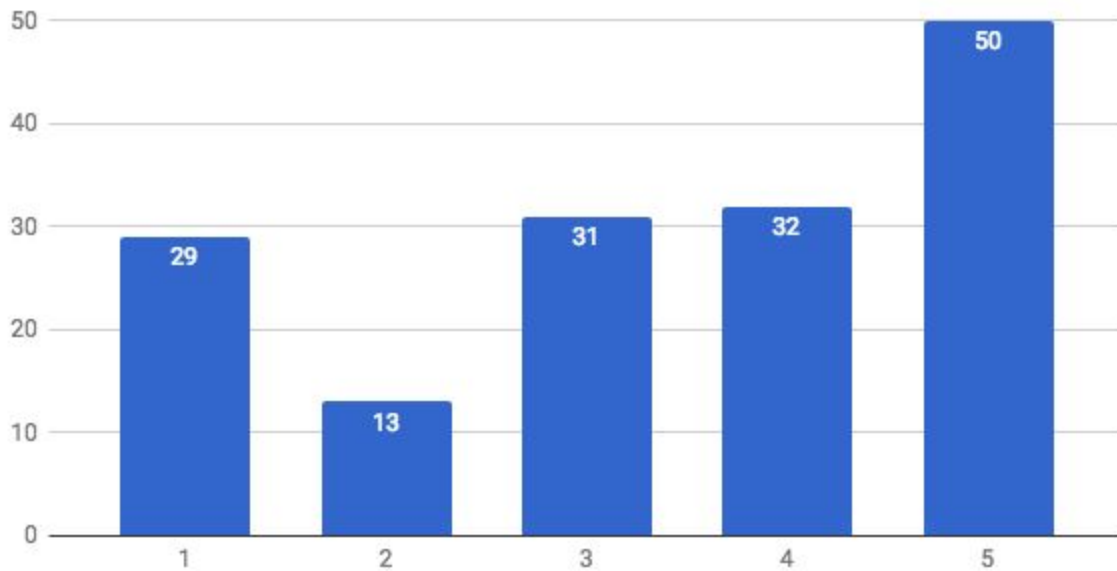
Did Being a TCK Affect Your Academic Interest (Bi/Multicultural)



Greatest Influence On Why Bi/Multicultural ATCK's Went To____ University or College (Count 157)

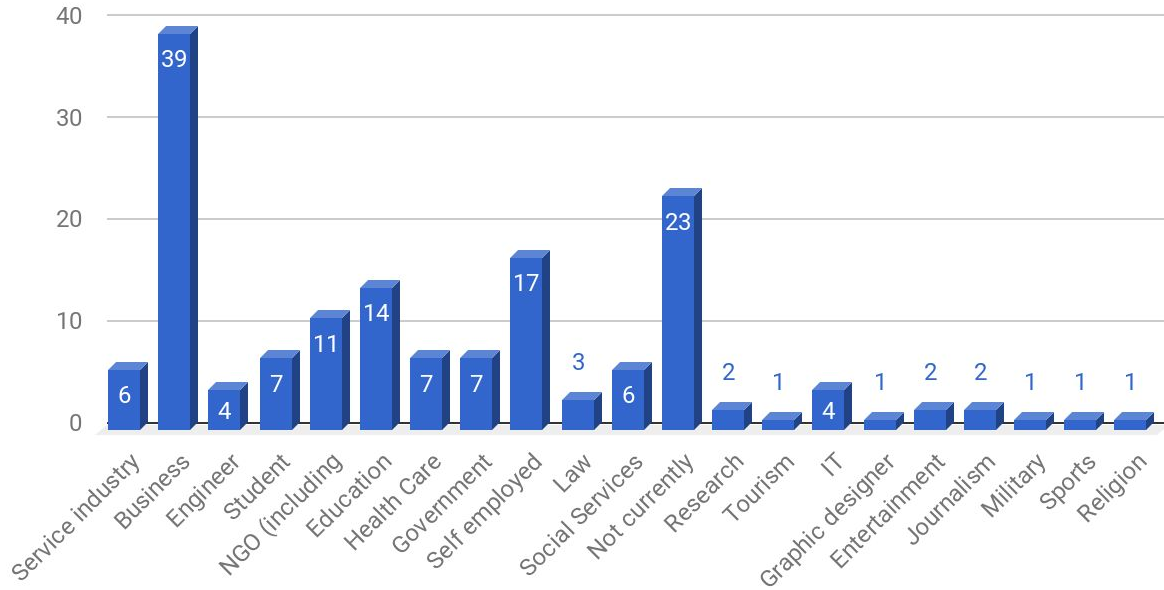


How Much Do You Think Being a TCK Affected Your College Choice? (Bi/Multicultural)

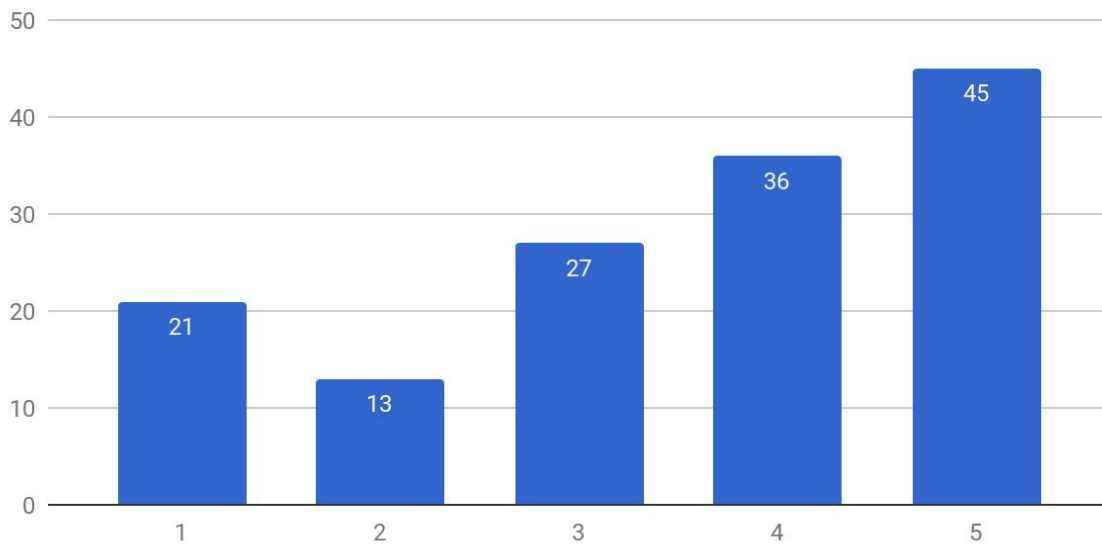


7.2 Careers Bi/Multicultural Graphs

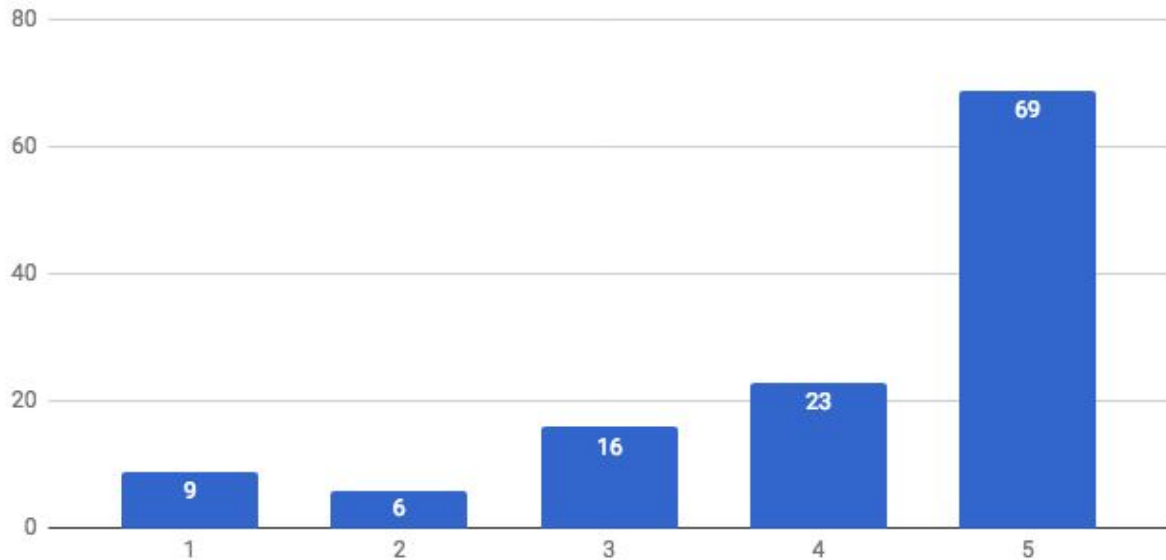
Careers of Bi/Multicultural ATCKs (Count 159)



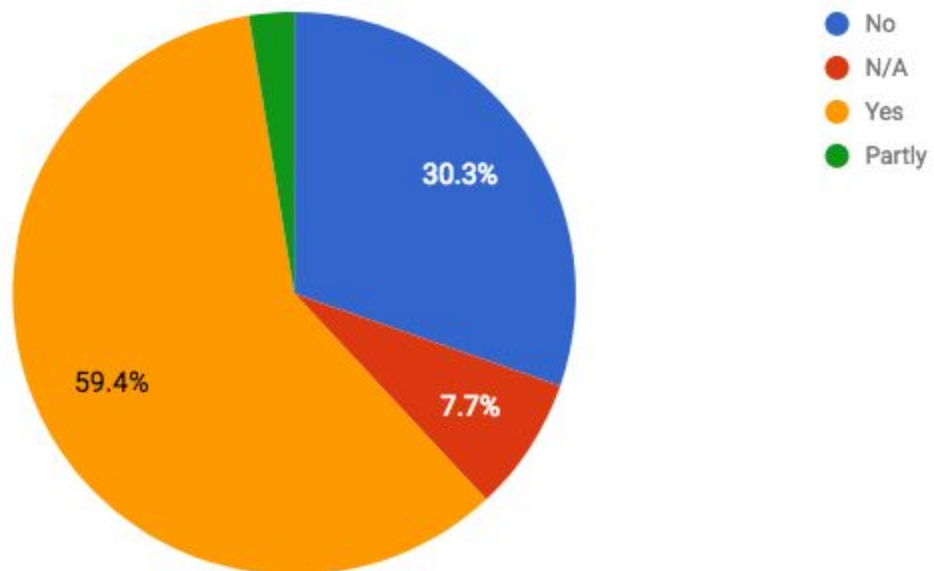
Did being a TCK Affect Your Career Choice? (Bi/Multicultural ATCKs)



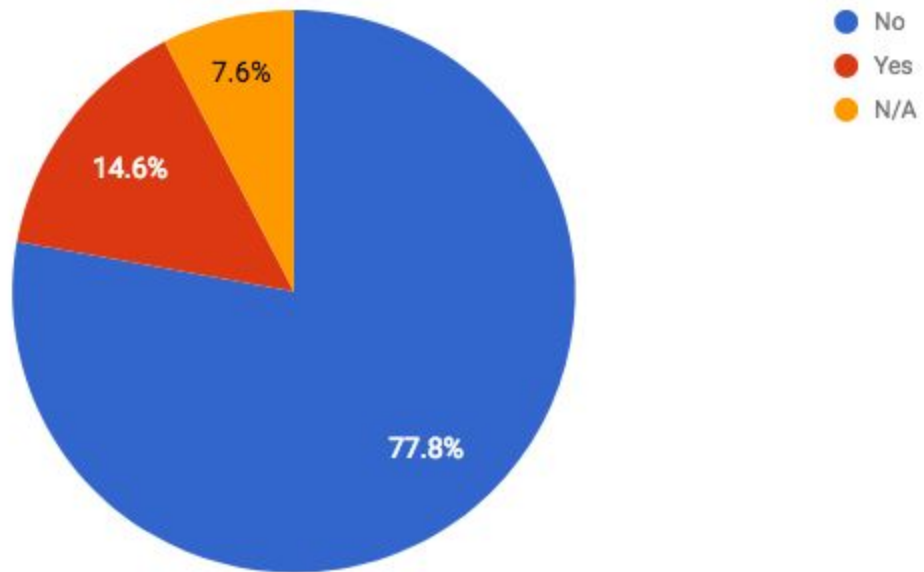
If your current job does not allow you to travel would you want to return back overseas at some point for employment? (Bi/Multicultural ATCK's)



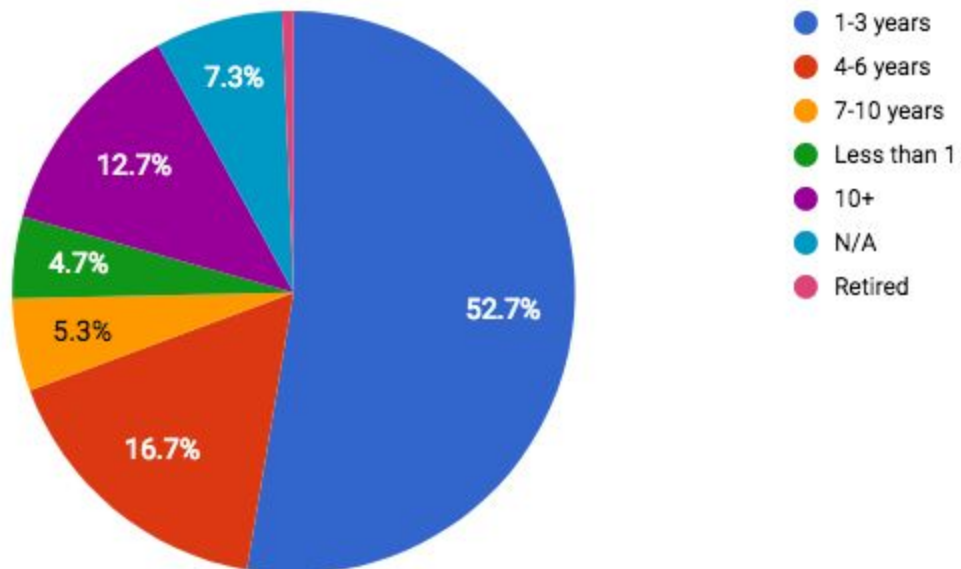
Are You Working in a Career in Which You Studied? (Bi/Multicultural ATCK's)



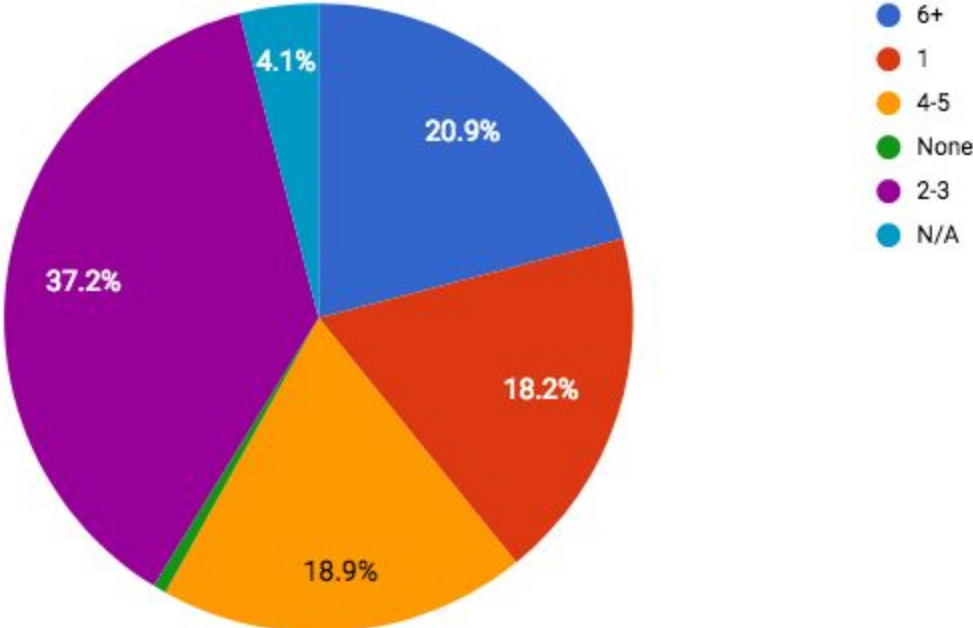
Are you in the same career path as your parents?
(Bi/Multicultural ATCK's)



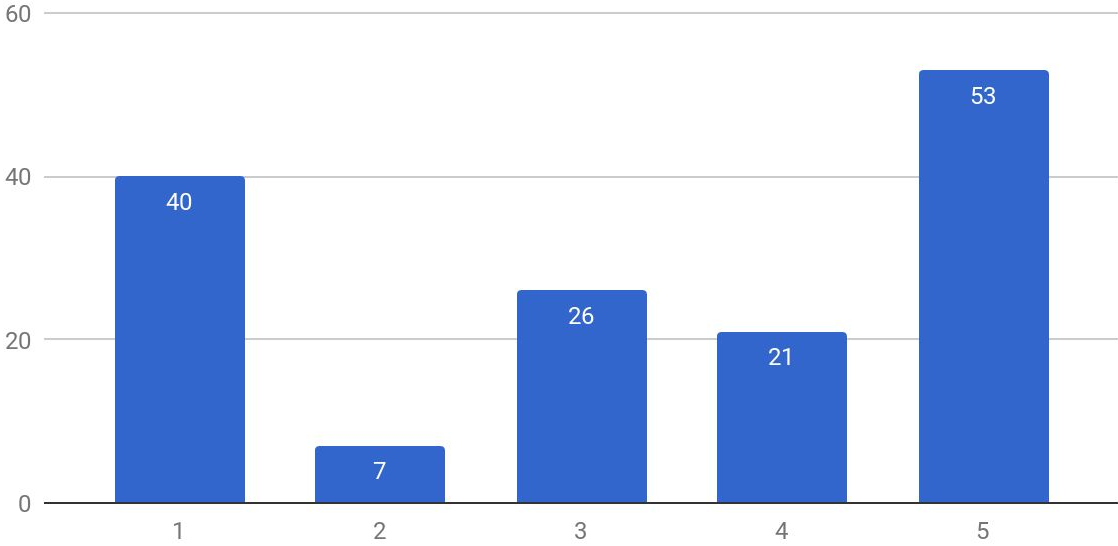
How Long Have You Been Working in Your Current Career?
(Bi/Multinational ATCK's)



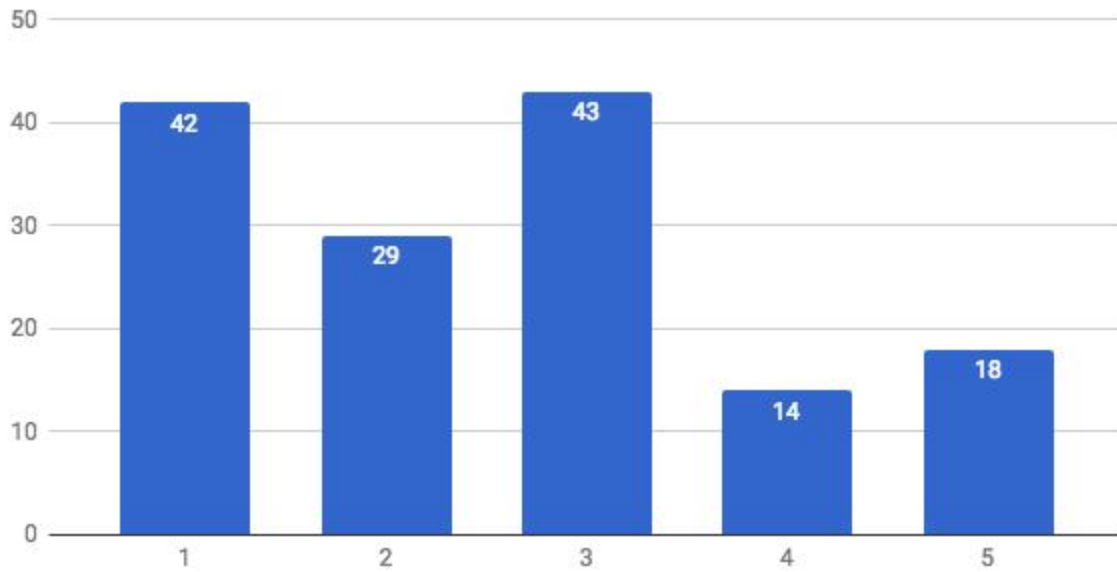
How Many Different Jobs Have You Had (Bi/Multinational ATCK's)



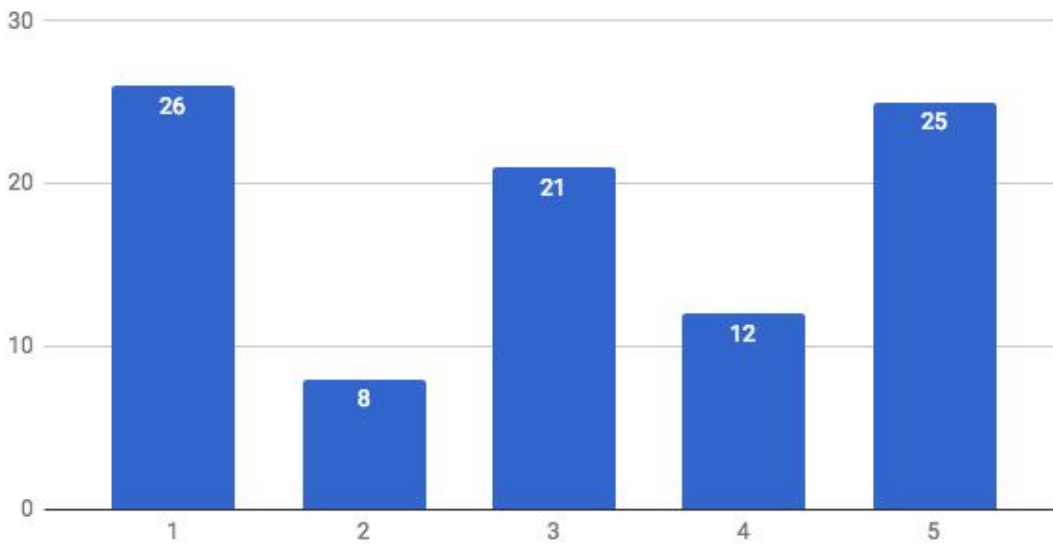
Was Your Career Choice Influenced by the Possibility of Employment Overseas? (Bi/Multicultural ATCKs)



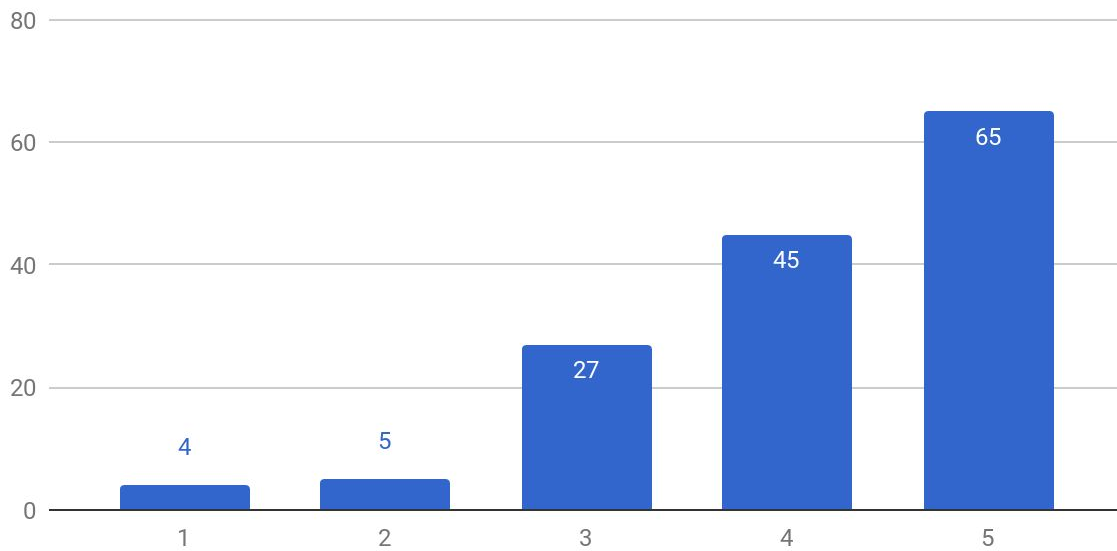
**Did your parents have any influence on your career choice?
(Bi/Multicultural ATCKs)**



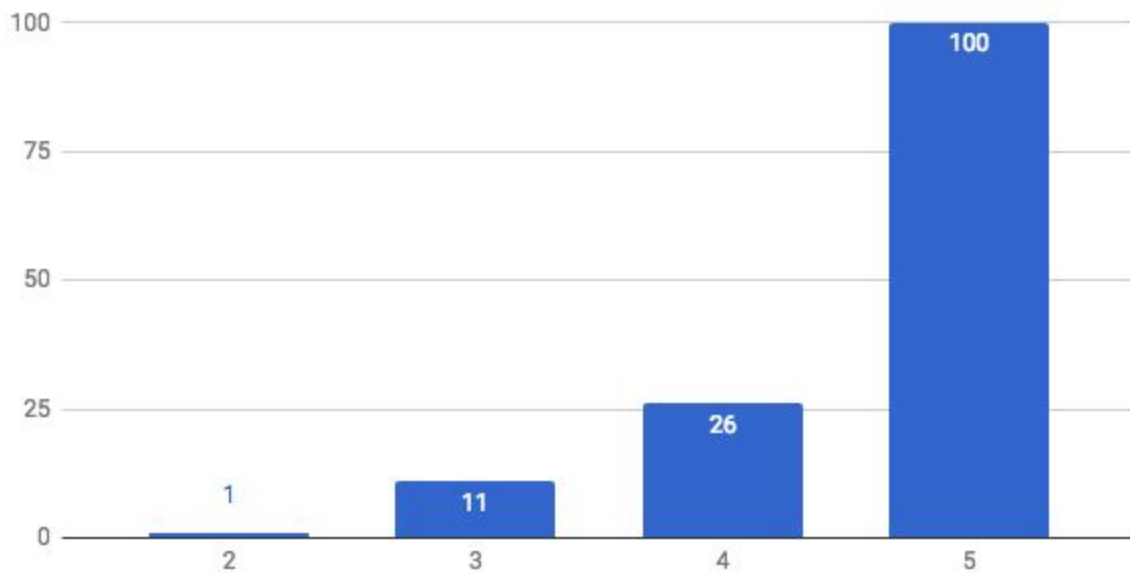
**If you work overseas: Did you go out of your way to pursue a
job that would take you overseas? (Bi/Multicultural ATCKs)**



Are you satisfied with your career choice? (Bi/Multicultural ATCKs)



Overall level of satisfaction with having studied or lived abroad and how it affected your current situation (Bi/Multicultural AT...



* zero respondents listed a 1

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